

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Church Problems

Church Problems - posted by Jacob19, on: 2006/10/19 21:02

I am kind of going through a weird time right now. The leadership at my "church" have decided to excommunicate a leader that has adopted calvinistic beliefs. I myself am not reformed, but I don't mind if people view things this way, as long as they are truly seeking God (as with any viewpoint). This person in particular is so incredibly knowledgeable and is truly seeking after God. As of this point he is the only one being kicked out, and I do not know of the others that share his viewpoint. The best part is that he told me "It's not the lack of God's sovereignty being taught, but it's the lack of God's Glory that bothers him." This is about the 3rd time calvinists have been kicked out and there was another time with someone else who started thinking for himself.

To make things more complicated I gave him "Modern American Christianity" by Paul Washer, and of course since he reads his bible, he agreed with it. This particular sermon pretty much completely describes my "church" throughout the whole sermon. Then (sorry for making this so long) he asked me to burn him 20 copies of it for him to give to some of the leaders (not so smart, but needed). So I did and the night that the pastor talked to him about his calvinism and whatever else. He was able to give some out, Praise God!

And you have to know that I wouldn't particularly mind getting kicked out because I don't really like the church, although my parents are way into it. I would like to go join the bible study and prayer meetings of one of the people that got kicked out (the non-calvinist, although accused of it) but his name is basically a bad word at this place as well as in my family who are involved in the leadership of the church. So in light of this already incredibly complex situation, I told the one currently getting kicked out that I did not mind if he mentioned my name with the CD.

I just want a reason to get out because God hasn't given me the courage to forsake my whole family and some friends yet. And I think that this could be how God is showing me to stay. It is things like this that make me want to just move away to a random country and be missionary and forget everything, but I am pretty sure that this is not God's will at this moment.

My Dilemma is (if you haven't gotten it yet) Do I stay and most likely eventually get kicked out, unless revival breaks out there amongst many hard hearts. Or do I try to fit in with this group to get myself kicked out or some other way of leaving. It is strange because I feel as though the whole church is on my hands, although I don't think that it is actually the case. It's weird because I have a burden for it, but I want to leave SOOOOO bad. If any of you could just pray for me or give me any input, that would be great. Sorry about the long confusing story, I think that in a way I am just venting.

God Bless,
Jacob

Re: Church Problems - posted by Jacob19, on: 2006/10/19 21:03

Sorry I just realized I put this under Scriptures and Doctrine. It should probably be under Lounge.

Re: Church Problems - posted by OverSeer (), on: 2006/10/19 21:54

Hi Jacob,

Quote:

-----My Dilemma is (if you haven't gotten it yet) Do I stay and most likely eventually get kicked out, unless revival breaks out there amongst many hard hearts. Or do I try to fit in with this group to get myself kicked out or some other way of leaving.

May I suggest that you carefully read Malachi 3:16-18. Take the time to fellowship with others who truly worship the Lord and allow God to lead you in His way and in His time.

Grace and peace
Olan

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2006/10/19 22:13

It seems that your church uses the Calvinist title with just about anyone they deem unworthy of the G.L. empire. It's not the first time.

Re: - posted by Jacob19, on: 2006/10/19 22:22

Yeah it is pretty funny that if they don't know what to call it, they just think of the worst word in their mind they can: calvinist! It is completely ridiculous

Re: Seek God's direction - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/10/19 22:40

Wow! Jacob, you really are in a tough spot – especially with your parents being so loyal to the powers-that-be – a power that seems to use ungodly control, dominance, and who knows what else – probably intimidation too.

This situation may very well be God's platform for you – his way of drawing you to himself, and weaning you from reliance on the religious institution Thankfully the church does not own you. Nor is it the mediator between God and you. Christ is your real Shepherd, your guide, your counselor. And he will indeed guide you. Wait on him. Get into your Bible, learn what you can. You can learn a lot on your own – with the Spirit's help.

I remember being in a situation from which I needed to be extricated. But I waited on God. He gave me a year warning. Then I waited for his leading. And while I did, I developed a relationship with him that I never had while I was too involved in the church.

Miraculously, all responsibilities I had in the church finished up one after another, without me having to make it happen. All the roles that I had were replaced by others. God did a marvelous job of severing the ties. Finally, one day, in God's perfect timing, he called me out. My first Sunday away felt weird. I had no place to go. In fact, it felt a bit scary, but I knew that God had called me. It was not the result of my own rational thinking, or even my desires.

You can't fix the mess. Yet I'd say that you made a very clever move by distributing the Washer CD's. Far better than Washer points out the concerns than you.

I cannot tell you what to do, but I do know that God's Spirit can guide you and teach you in all things.

You already know that there may be contradicting messages from your church and family. The challenge for you is this: Which voice do you follow?

Do not let the fear of man overrule God's voice.

Diane

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2006/10/20 0:23

Brother I know which church you are speaking of, and I know the individual that was ousted from there before. My brother used to work there, and was threatened with the same treatment.

You must pray about this, but isn't the Monday night meeting a good place for prayer? Also why not just try to find some like minded brothers and sisters, and begin meeting with them. See what GOD does.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/10/20 1:14

Quote:

-----The leadership at my "church" have decided to excommunicate a leader that has adopted calvinistic beliefs

One of my pet peeves is how many dear Arminian brethren will credit arminism's conditional emphasis as being the incentive that keeps a Christian from sinning...as if any legal motivation that we can remind ourselves of has the power to do that.

Another pet peeve is how many dear Calvinist brothers will credit Calvinism with giving them more peace and grace than the Arminian. As if grace begins with a prayer of faith...and not with God's everlasting covenant before the foundation of the Earth!

What is Arminianism or Calvinism without the Holy Spirit? And what are they once we are filled with the Holy Spirit? Theology can teach and point us towards a correct understanding of God...but these things can not give us a life-giving relationship with Him.

Is Jesus an Arminian? Is he a Calvinist? Isn't he free to be sovereign and save whoever he chooses... and yet vindicated in his righteous judgements against all sinners? Why must we write lines of code that mechanize the living eternal spirit of God who was and has always been without beginning or end?!

Bless the Lord for free will! What a divine gift, given only to men and not to any other creature bound by instincts and nature,...yet bless the Lord for he is still Lord above the wills of other lords!

Some claim to specialize in the grace of God as if other Christians are missing the gospel! Yet what is our limited knowledge of grace, compared to the only truly free man in the Universe who used his unmatched liberty to leave his own glory and live among filthy hairy men... to lift them up to heaven?

Today many pastors want to be high priests of these mysteries over other men. They stand in the entranceway of salvation judging our sacrifice and submission...admitting some and rejecting others.

And yet there is only one priest...we know Him because he was also the only sacrifice. Only Jesus was both, and any theology that pretends to know Jesus will lead us to fearfully and humbly desire purity in His presence and happily find forgiveness in his heart.

Thou dost not move men like stones, but dost endue them with life, not to enable them to move without thee, but in submission to thee, the first mover.

O Lord I am astonished at the difference between my receivings and my deservings, between the state I am now in and my past gracelessness, between the heaven I am bound for and the hell I merit.

Who made me to differ but thee?

For I was no more ready to receive Christ than were others. I could not have begun to love thee hadst thou not first loved me, or been willing unless thou hadst first made me so. O that such a crown should fit the head of such a sinner! Such joy for so vile a rebel!...

I know that my sufferings are the result of my sinning, but in heaven both shall cease.

a Puritan Prayer

MC

Re: Church Problems, on: 2006/10/20 2:08

flee, dust your feet off, say "I love you all, and may God bless you all", and let it go.

Maybe you and this beleaguered pastor are friends?

If so, why don't you suggest that the two of you and any others of like mind, just get to meeting on Sundays and Wednesday's and begin to pray and cry out as the Spirit leads, and to go where the Holy Ghost leads...just a suggestion.

just another example of how religion kills and Jesus saves. Jacob, stick with Jesus, let the fleshlings play religion.

I been thru this, the Lord had me outta there before it even began. Praise His Name.

bartle

Re: The Calv/Arm smokescreen - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/10/20 7:56

Quote:

----- What is Arminianism or Calvinism without the Holy Spirit?Â... Is Jesus an Arminian? Is he a Calvinist?

Compton, I wonder if the perpetual tension between the two polarities keeps the historic church from bending towards one side completely. I compare it to the balance of world powers. That, of course is under God's sovereignty, and yet, the people are held responsible for which kingdom they surrender their allegiance to: God or the world.

Even on a personal level, the Calv/Arm point of tension forces me to examine what code I follow. To the extent that I fail to live by the Spirit I find myself wavering between spiritual passivity and reliance on myself, or maybe both at once.

Apart from the Spirit, this tension cannot be resolved. In the Spirit there is neither Greek nor Jew, Calvinist nor Armenian ...

Having said that, I suspect that in Jacob's church, the "Calvinist" is merely a scapegoat - someone to blame, perceived as the threat. I bet "Calvinism" is a smoke screen for abusive leadership, and sinful ambitions. Sounds like this church needs some "threats" to come against it - for the sake of the Church (capitol C). No doubt God has divinely ordained that, or shall I say - predestined.

Jacob, The battle belongs to the Lord! Leave your sword at home. Stay out of the line of fire (so you won't get burned) and watch the hand of the Lord at work.

WARNING: it can get messy.

Diane

Re: Church problems, on: 2006/10/20 8:08

Quote:

-----It is things like this that make me want to just move away to a random country and be missionary and forget everything, but I am pretty sure that this is not God's will at this moment.

Hi Jacob,

I liked your summary of how you feel, and the honesty you applied to reinterpreting your instincts to your understanding.

roadsign gave you a great testimony and good advice, as did Compton regarding how to view 'theology'. It appears to my spirit that you do know the Lord and as you wait on Him and ask Him for specific understanding - knowledge and wisdom - and strive to hold on to the unity of Spirit with those who have the Spirit, the Lord will lead you out of your confusion, step by step. One step at a time is all you need to know. And just keep trusting Him.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/10/20 8:28

Compton's:

Quote:

-----What is Arminianism or Calvinism without the Holy Spirit? And what are they once we are filled with the Holy Spirit? Theology can teach and point us towards a correct understanding of God...but these things can not give us a life-giving relationship with Him.

I think Mike is spot on here. We always seem to be running the risk of either too much or too little emphasis on our doctrines. It saddens me greatly that folk would be put out of a church because they hold those beliefs.

Re: Church Problems - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2006/10/20 10:25

Jacob,

Another point to carefully consider: exactly what are my reasons for leaving this church? Is it really honestly and truly over doctrine? or is because of a power struggle going on or personality conflicts? Sometimes personal issues masquerade as doctrinal ones. If any of these factor in and are causing you unrest in your spirit you will need to take a hard look at the basic issues fueling the controversy.

It is not uncommon for young people to become dissatisfied with the church they were raised in, they strain at the unnecessary (they think) restraints imposed on them. So they leave, and for what? For more liberty to indulge in worldliness without fear of any confrontation by others in the group. This leads to a lukewarm attitude towards sin and then sin becomes the norm. Hence, the apostasy in the church.

I have seen where people left because of personal issues and they take their problems right with them and create problems wherever they go.

Just thought I would share this for your consideration.

ginnyrose

Re: Church Problems, on: 2006/10/20 13:10

Quote:
-----I myself am not reformed, but I don't mind if people view things this way, as long as they are truly seeking God (as with any viewpoint).

Ummm... I have a problem with this. It DOES matter what people believe doctrinally. **Especially** leaders in the church. Being sincere doesn't make things ok. Hitler was very sincere.

I commend your other church leaders for taking such a stand.

Krispy

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2006/10/20 13:33

Brother I again have to say that probably the sooner you go the better. I do not believe that they are truly worried about the doctrinal problem as much as how it would impact their little kingdom.

I went to this church for a short time, and after knowing what my brother and others have gone through to maintain any semblance to godly living, I would say find another like minded individual or group. It's not like you don't have a good brother who has a prayer meeting at his house.

Saddest of all the C.E.O. is loved and adored by so many, and yet when it comes time for crusades there is no mention of Jesus on any of the stickers, or posters, or billboards just all about him, and sadly I believe there are men there who want to be just like him, and not like Christ.

I hope that this helps as perhaps I am one of the few that knows exactly what you are talking about, and it grieves me to say it will not change, because their structure is so set that it cannot.

It is the business model, and a display of pragmatism. That whole denomination(group) is set up that way.

Have a conference, get everyone together to network, get everyone excited about the product (in this case Jesus, but not the Biblical Jesus), everyone gets "fired up", and then back into the field to sell the product to build the business, increase consumers i.e. church goers, and build up the pyramid ;-).

Now multiply this successful formula times a couple thousand, and you've got a wonderful corporation. (Yes it is now a Corporation, and G.L. is the head. Papers were filed a couple weeks ago).

Lord Jesus, on: 2006/10/20 13:33

make it plain. Keep me simple, keep me foolish, keep me with the faith of a child, and protect me from some of your followers, In Jesus Name I pray..amen

bartle

Re: Lord Jesus, on: 2006/10/20 13:52

I admit to skimming this thread when I posted what I did. Let me make a clarification...

If a church has a leader who is delving into wrong doctrine, the leadership of the church has a responsibility before God to correct the person. If the person refuses, then they have a responsibility before God to put him out for the better of the church, and also so that hopefully this person will see the error and repent.

I applaud any church leadership that has the guts to do this. Most do not, and that's one of the main reasons the church is in the shape it's in.

Now... that does not mean that every church leadership that exercises this does it correctly. Many times spiritual pride plays a role, or there is a power-play. This should not be. Everything should be done in order and in love. If there is spiritual abuse going on here, or a power struggle, then they are as guilty before God as the man they are trying to put out.

I do stand by what I said.... that not caring what people's views are, so long as they are sincere is a grave error. Sound doctrine does matter! Read Titus and 1 & 2 Timothy. Paul was adamant about sound doctrine, and how to treat those who would pervert it.

As for Calvinism vs. Arminianism... or any other "ism" Let the Bible speak for itself and forget about belief systems that have to be organized by mere men. If we have to read about Calvinism to understand the Bible, then we are not trusting in God's Word. We're trusting in man. Same thing for any other "ism".

Read God's Word and let the Holy Spirit be your teacher, just as Jesus said He would do. Where is our faith?

Krispy

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/10/20 17:48

Quote:

----- It DOES matter what people believe doctrinally

No doubt, and I am quick to uphold the importance of sound doctrine in this post-modern church age. (edit: I've always appreciated your commitment to maintain biblical doctrine Krispy K.)

However there is always the question as to how narrow we should dial our orthodoxy. If you're B. McClaren you believe in a "generous orthodoxy"...too generous. Yet, I think he was reacting to some like those mentioned in this thread...small minded men whose orthodoxy is too stingy.

I don't think this thread is about the need for sound doctrine in churches...but about the need for sound examples in leadership. Some 'examples to the flock' seem unaware that church history testifies that truly great men of God, who demonstrated spiritual and doctrinal excellence, came from both Arminian and Calvinist traditions. In this light I think it is an extremely aberrant position, contrary to many of the best examples in church history, for these pastors to denounce a 'calvinist' as being unworthy of fellowship.

We are free to teach scripture from an arminian or calvinist perspective in our local bodies, but it is not helping anyone to claim that the other camp is heresy. Consider what you would lose.

If we were to follow these pastors as worthy examples for the

rest of us...what would happen to the fellowship here at SI?

Which half of us should leave? Which speakers should Greg delete from his servers? If we were to follow these pastors example, then Paul Washer, AW Pink, Edwards, and Spurgeon, could not be downloaded along with Wesely, Finney, R avenhill, and Wilkerson.

Like I said, it's a matter of how narrow we dial our orthodoxy squelch...some dial it so tight that they tune out healthy parts of the body. In the case of the pastors mentioned at the top of this thread... they and their church are weaker for it.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by Jacob19, on: 2006/10/23 21:00

Yeah I agree. Sorry I haven't been on to respond to all this stuff. The problem with this situation is that it is almost a don't think for yourself thing. I'm fine with calvinists or arminians as long as they seek God truly. I can't say that for people that preach complete heresy like antinomianism (as this church pretty much does) or other false doctrines. They are now reading a book for everyone in leadership is particular ministries that basically says just bashes calvinism completely, and this is really just indoctrination.

The main reason I do not want to leave is because my family would basically forsake me or something like that. But another big reason is because most of the people in the church are not saved, and I feel as though God may have placed me there to be a light to them.

I don't remember who said it but they said to go talk to the pastor. I could definitely not do this because for one I don't know him and he wouldn't listen anyways.

thanks again,

Jacob

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2006/10/23 22:07

And you'd have to get past his bodyguards ;-)

Re: - posted by Jacob19, on: 2006/10/23 22:34

yeah seriously, they're scary too