

Getting His “Blood’s-Worth”

When we make a purchase- whatever it is, we’re usually interested in getting our “money’s worth.” If we buy something for \$2, we don’t expect much quality, serviceability, or durability; and so, if it breaks the first time we use it, or doesn’t work right or well, we’re probably not surprised or even overly disappointed. After all, it only cost us \$2. But if we spend \$20 the expectations increase. Likewise with \$200, \$2,000, or \$20,000! Now, what would be our level of concern with getting our “money’s worth” if we spent \$200,000... or \$2,000,000? (Yeah, I know- me neither; but just play along for minute or three!) Or what if you literally spent your whole life’s savings or earnings on it? Would you be concerned with getting your “money’s worth” then? Or (last time, I promise), what if you gave your life for it? “Cost/value” analysis would certainly matter then, wouldn’t it?

I’m sure you’ve guessed where this is going by now, but actually there are two possible destinations:

1. As **individuals**, we are “redeemed... with precious blood... the blood of Christ,” 1Pet.1:18-19. His *life-blood* was the “*propitiation*” (redemptive price paid) for our spiritual lives, 1John 2:2; 4:10. And though it is not our purpose in this piece, we would all do well to consider if Jesus is getting His “money’s worth” in our individual case. Of course the answer for everyone is “No!” How could it be anything else? What service could we provide God that would *worth* the “price paid” for us? But it does put things into perspective, doesn’t it?
2. Acts 20:28 speaks of (among other things), “**the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**” This is the application I’d like us to think about a little (or a LOT!). Paul wrote that Jesus “*purchased*” the “*church*” with His *blood*-literally His life. Now...

Is Jesus getting His “Blood’s Worth” with a church/churches that:

- **Change His admission requirements?** Right before He ascended back into heaven, “He who has **believed** and has been **baptized** shall be saved,” Mark 16:16a. Those who did so in Acts 2:41 were “*added*” by Him to His church (the universal body of the saved). How then do some, who claim to be “His” *blood-bought* Body, change His *terms of admission* to something else? Is Jesus getting His “blood’s-worth”?
- **Reorganize His organization?** Eph.1:22b tells us that Jesus is “*head over all things to the church*” (meaning the *universal* body of the saved). The Holy Spirit further revealed that *local* bodies of believers (“churches” in the *local/congregational* sense) were to be administered by *Elders/Shepherds/Overseers* (the terms are used synonymously in Acts 20:17,28). These men: must meet specified qualifications, 1Tim.3:1-7; serve only when there is a *plurality* (more than one) of them, Acts 14:23; 11:30; 15:2; and that there *oversight* was limited only to the *local congregation* in which they served, 1Pet.5:2a. Given these things, is Jesus really getting His “blood’s-worth” in/with congregations that reorganize “His” organization to include: women (or men) leaders that don’t and can’t meet His specified qualifications; one man “Pastors” or other Offices/Officers not provided by Him in the Bible (Popes,

Cardinals, Boards of Directors, Presidents, etc.); and those that endeavor to oversee groups, associations, or even entire denominations rather than serving within the limits He provided?

- **Altar His mission?** Jesus clearly stated “His” mission in Luke 19:10, He came “*to seek and save that which is lost.*” That’s THE mission for which He gave His blood and life. How then do churches claiming to be “His” altar that mission to include: eradicating poverty; defeating diseases; providing childcare; delivering academic education; and meeting social/recreational needs? The church He died to purchase is to be “*the pillar and support of truth*” (1Tim.3:15) rather than a social, recreational, or health and human services center. If we *altar His mission*, is Jesus really getting His “blood’s worth”?
- **“Worship in ways that please them rather than Him?”** In the NT, “Christians” (those bought with Jesus’ blood), were commanded to and worshipped in simple yet profound and purposeful ways. They **sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs** together to praise God and edify one another, Eph.5:19; Col.3:16; they **communed** with Christ and one another by partaking the Lord’s Supper together (for the right reasons and in the right ways on the first day of every week), 1Cor.11:23-34; Acts 20:7; they **heard the word of God proclaimed** together, Acts 20:7b; 2:42a; they **prayed** together, Acts 2:42b; 1Thess.5:17,25; and to meet the financial needs of *preaching/teaching the gospel* (locally and in other places) and *benevolence for needy saints* (locally and in other places), they **gave of their means**, 1Cor.16:1-2; Rom.15:26; Phil.4:10-19. But what about “churches” that claim to be “His” who have turned “singing” into concerts, “communion” into once a month/year or quarterly dramatic performances or fleshly feasts, “*preach(ing) the word*” into comedy routines and motivational talks, “pray” into recitations of wants to a celestial Santa Claus, and “giving” into fundraising for all the programs (and officers and administrators of them) that are not part of “His” mission in the first place? Is Jesus getting His “blood’s worth” with such things by such people?
- **Wears someone else’s (or some other thing’s) name?** Shouldn’t the *body* bought with His blood bear His/God’s name, Acts 20:28; Rom.16:16? What then of churches claiming to be “His” calling themselves *Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Mormons, Adventists, Etc. Etc. Etc.*? In one sense, perhaps it is appropriate for the those departing from “His” admission requirements, organization, mission, and worship to wear another name than His, Matt.15:8-9,13. But if we claim to be “His,” why would we call ourselves anything else? After all, shouldn’t the “*bride*” of Christ wear and bear His name, Rev.21:9?

I know this long by our usual standards - thank-you for reading it all. I also realize that some of these things may sound harsh, but souls are stake, and serious matters demand plain speech. My prayer is that you will think seriously about what I’ve written, paying special attention to the passages provided and the truth they reveal. If I’ve misunderstood or misrepresented them, please let me know, for I seek only the truth of God, and to be part of that church which Jesus purchased with His precious blood. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)