

UNDERSTANDING OUR ROLES 4

April 5, 2015

As this series of articles on understanding our roles as a congregation comes to a close, we turn our attention to the greatest and most important role in the church, the Christian. Every faithful elder, deacon, teacher, or preacher was first a faithful Christian before they were anything else. Exactly what is the role of each Christian in the Lord's church? Like with any organization, the members of the church have varied roles when it comes to the work God has set forth. Christians shoulder a great responsibility in the world and have been commanded to fulfill the necessary requirements that come with that responsibility.

Notice first that the Christian is a trustee. Paul told Timothy, "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust... This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy... O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Tim. 1:11, 18; 6:20). Each Christian has been called to be a trustee for God (2 Thess. 2:14), someone that has been privileged to be the custodian of the most precious gift the world has ever known. Paul called it "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Paul had guarded it, protected it, and preserved it, but he was not going to live forever, so he passed it on to Timothy to guard, protect, and preserve. That is the duty of every single Christian in the world. Remember, it is to be passed on to others, not hidden in the ground (Mt. 25:25).

Second, the Christian is a warrior for God. Paul encouraged Timothy to "war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18). Each Christian must keep in mind that a soldier's duty is to fight, not to sit idly by as the war unfolds. We know that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:12-13). If one hasn't done all he can to stand firm against the powers of darkness and evil, then he has not fulfilled the will of God, and God will judge him. The individual Christian or the congregation that "goes along just to get along" is in danger of having his candlestick removed by God. Jesus told the Laodiceans, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). That congregation was not involved in the war, and Jesus warned them to repent and return to their former state!

Third, the Christian is a craftsman. All are familiar with Paul's statement, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). There are at least two things that need to be understood from that statement. The Christian must be a student of the Word of God period, and he or she must be diligent in properly understanding the teachings of the Bible the way God demands. As the Scripture is studied, the student must be careful not to allow a misunderstanding of passages to contradict themselves. One must always be aware of the context of the section being studied. If that could be accomplished, there would never be any worry or concern about false doctrines being taught in the brotherhood. However, one must also be careful not to confuse the necessary Bible study time with the work of the church. All Christians need to properly study, but then they must put that study to use properly! Hiding the knowledge of God in the heart and never letting it out is not what David intended when he said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11). We sin against God when we do not share our knowledge with others and endeavor to bring as many people as possible to His throne (Mt. 28:18-20).

Obviously, the Christian is the most important position in the church, since Christians are the church! Only faithful Christians can be faithful in the various duties and responsibilities of the church. A congregation can only grow if the members are doing their parts in the work. If a member is not able to teach others about Jesus and how to become a New Testament Christian, then he is not fulfilling his role. Every member should always be striving to have a Bible study or helping have a Bible study with someone at all times. That is the most important role in the church today!