

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

July 10, 2020

Church of the Stump Kneelers

As he walked through the forest, a man wept over the course his life had taken. As he approached a stump, he heard God speak to his heart beckoning him to kneel and call upon Jesus Christ. He knelt and called out for forgiveness and salvation. The Lord met him there and the glory of salvation swept over his soul. He stood up a new creation, delivered from sin and filled with the love of Christ. He went about telling everyone what Jesus had done for him while kneeling at the stump. So amazed were people at this man's transformation that others begin to gather at the stump to seek salvation. Indeed, many found the Lord as they gathered around a stump in the woods.

One day someone said God revealed to them that kneeling at a stump was the way God had chosen to gather souls into Christ. No one could deny the lives which had been transformed, so many began to accept that true salvation had an unbreakable connection to stump kneeling. This was the beginning of The First Church of the Stump Kneelers.

The account given above is entirely fabricated, but this next story is absolutely true. I was in gross darkness and despair when I knelt in repentance by a wooden pew and surrendered my heart and life to Jesus Christ. The

transformation that took place astounds me even to this day. I felt my sin wash away and I stood up a new creation with a new heart and a new spirit just as God had promised. Ezekiel 36:25-27. There has never been a day since that I wanted anything above serving the Lord and being in His presence.

In a few years God placed me in the ministry, but I felt so inadequate in my attempts to relay the glory and power of this great salvation. Repeatedly I found myself pointing to the wooded bench where I called upon the Lord as I recounted what Christ had done for me there. If only I could get others to do what I had done, then they could receive Christ as I had received Him. In the middle of a sermon, I was once again pointing to that bench when the Spirit of God rebuked me. **“What are you doing pointing to a bench? You were not saved on a bench! You were saved on a cross!”** Instantly the power and truth of those words burst into my heart as a great light shining from Heaven.

It was in that hour I realized I had fallen in the trap of presenting a fleshly form as the way of salvation. I believe in calling people to the altar, but that wooden bench has no power to do anything for anyone. On the other hand, if through the Spirit of God I can point them to the work of Christ upon the cross, they can receive this great salvation without my, or anyone else's form. I have seen people saved and transformed sitting in the pew; others standing to worship; others were in their car; and still others were kneeling by their bed. Yet if a person finds salvation, it is not because of where they are sitting, kneeling, standing, or riding. Everyone

who is saved is saved only because of what Christ accomplished upon the cross.

Paul said God's people "...*have no confidence in the flesh.*" Philippians 3:3. He identified this "*flesh*" as religious affiliation, ritual, ordinance, and more. Still many people place their hope in such things. One person believes that water baptism brought them into the Kingdom of God. Another person believes their "sinner's prayer" gave them a guarantee of Heaven. Another thinks their strict adherence to certain commandments will uphold them in the hour of judgment. Still another trusts that being part of a certain religious group insures their salvation. All these things are but "*flesh.*" Jesus said, "*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing...*"

John 6:63. **Those who trust in such things cannot understand that anyone who truly found Christ did not find him because of these things, but in spite of them.**

The Apostle Paul made an astounding statement when he wrote, "*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel...*" 1 Corinthians 1:17. Paul was not "anti-baptism," but he understood that it could never save a single soul. The same is true for every ritual of the church. Our rituals may be symbolic of powerful gospel truths, but not a one of these can impart grace to those who partake of them. The power of the gospel is invested solely in believing the truth and trusting in Christ. To look to anything else is to align ourselves with those who think salvation comes because we kneel at a stump.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed..." Romans 4:16