



## Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

Cape Coral, Florida 33991

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

## Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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## Religious, or Righteous

*"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"* (Galatians 6:7).

Ironically, many people equate religion with righteousness, but the two do not always go hand in hand. I suppose the best example in the New Testament would be the Pharisees, the predominate Jewish sect of our Lord's day. They were the religious elite, but they weren't very righteous. Jesus urged the people, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3). Seven times in Matthew 23 Jesus called them hypocrites. They were pretending to be something they were not, and Jesus saw through their hypocrisy. To be sure, they would reap what they had sown (Matthew 23:33).

Christianity is more than ritual and ceremony. The religion of Christ is a religion which makes men holy, righteous, and godly. Those who do not understand this do not understand Christianity.

Holiness is a hard word to define. Scholars are uncertain as to its exact roots in ancient language, but it involves being remade, set apart, and living a radiant and pure life. It is the word which Peter used to describe the nature of God (1 Peter 1:16). Christians are admonished to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

Righteousness involves doing what is right, acceptable, and approved of God. It includes integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting. A religion without righteousness is a religion without redemption. We must live "soberly, righteously, and godly" (Titus 2:12).

Godliness implies reverence and love for God and things divine. Godly men and women have the right values and priorities. Christianity makes men godly, so don't be deceived into thinking that religion is nothing more than a Sunday morning exercise in ritual and ceremony. The religion of Christ is characterized by holiness, righteousness, and godliness. Anything less is unacceptable.

Religious men are not always righteous, but righteous men are always religious!

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## **The Heart Is Where Home Is**

It was Paul's wish for all Christians "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17).

The word "dwell" in this verse brings forth a powerful concept concerning our relationship with Christ. According to *Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures*, the root of the word in the Greek means "to make one's home, to be at home." Isn't that interesting! Jesus is not only to make His home in our hearts, He is to be at home there, as well.

The question to ask ourselves in light of this is: "Is Jesus 'at home' in my heart?" Some people only want Jesus in their hearts as a visitor. But Jesus wants to dwell in our hearts and "be at home" with all we feel, say, and do. This brings a whole different perspective into the picture.

Our whole lives extend from what our hearts desire. We must keep our hearts pure and sincere. Jesus will then "be at home there" and many good things will come to our lives as a result. How do we make our heart so that Jesus feels at home? The text tells us: "through faith."

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## **Hard to Be Understood**

"No one can understand the Bible; it is just too hard for me to know what God is saying." These words express the hearts of many, but are they true? Peter said that in parts of the Bible there are "...some things hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16), but he does not say that even the hard things are impossible to understand.

An amazing truth about the Bible is that the most important truths are stated in a way that everyone can comprehend them. Let's take time to look at the following vital truths of the Bible which are so simply stated.

Jesus is the only way any person can be saved. Is this true? Read the words of Jesus. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Is that hard to understand? **A vital truth simply stated.**

Those who do not believe in Jesus cannot go to heaven, even if they do good things. Read these words of Jesus. "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Read them again and imagine the spiritual destiny of those who are still in their sins. **A vital truth simply stated.**

Not all religious people will be saved. Jesus said, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matt. 7:22-23). If you wonder how this could happen, look at verse 21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." **A vital truth simply stated.**

No man, without God's help, can find the way to heaven. "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." And, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the ways of death" (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 16:25). **A vital truth simply stated.**

The Bible is the final source for all religious doctrine and instruction. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). **A vital truth simply stated.**

Look at how simply God has stated the most important truths. Think about this. It is not the "hard" things in the Bible that should concern us, nearly as much as the "easy" things in it. God has stated eternal truths. God has stated the most vital, eternal truths in the simplest language. Wise men will never overlook the simple truths of the Bible. Be wise!

## **Watching Nickels and Dimes!**

*"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).*

This text teaches a very simple truth, but one that many of us find difficult to embrace. Parents try to rear their children by such principles as fairness, honesty, and dependability with life's nickels and dimes and then, when they are adults, they will be able to handle dollars the same way.

But what we fail to realize is that as adults, most of our lives are also made up of nickels and dimes-small things. Not many of us will write a book, be appointed to a president's cabinet, dine with a queen, or be burned at the stake.

Likely, we are going to have only small opportunities like giving a cup of cold water, visiting a nursing home, writing a note to a lonely person, or speaking a kind word to a distressed and burdened soul. We may only render such a service as kissing a child's skinned elbow or feeding a neighbor's cat.

Don't overlook the small things while waiting for some big thing that would prompt historians to style you as a great Christian. Don't yield to the temptation to be faithless in little while seeking to be faithful in much.

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## **Would They Recognize Me?**

As I examine the example of the early Christians in Acts, I wonder if I would fit in with them, or be so vastly different that they could not recognize me as a Christian.

Ponder these points:

1. Would I be pricked in my heart at hearing my guilt?
2. Would I be interested enough to cry out, "What must I do?"
3. Would I gladly receive the word upon learning the truth?
4. Would I continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers?
5. Would I sell my goods, and part them to every man as he had need?
6. Would I continue daily in the temple?

Could they ever recognize what I do today as the same thing they practiced?