

Where I Stand #2
By Russ Earl

A question that is asked frequently and deserves an answer is “Can a person be a Christian and not be a member of the Church of Christ?” What we must always keep in mind is that such questions require a Bible answer. Answers based on the standards or the traditions of men are not equal to the word of God. We must always look for what God has said and not what man thinks.

In **Matthew 16:18** we see that Christ reminds us of what He built, the church. Not “a church” but the church.

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” Paul tells us in **Galatians 3:27** that it is in baptism that a person is added to the church, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* Paul also tells us in **Colossians 1:24b** that Christ’s body, which we are placed into at baptism, is the church, *“... for the sake of His body, which is the church,”* In addition to what Paul, an inspired man of God has said, Peter tells us and shows us that baptism is essential in **Acts 2:38**, *“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Therefore, we see what the Bible has revealed and we can determine that 1) Baptism is essential, 2) Baptism places one into the body of Christ, the church, and 3) since these things are true then a person cannot be a Christian if they are not a part of Christ’s church. We can also add that since baptism is also for the remission of sins, then salvation is only in the church which Christ founded, and He only founded one (**Mt 16:18**).

These things being true not because of what I or any man has said but because of what we see in scripture. Since the Bible reveals that a Christian cannot be found anywhere but in Christ’s church then the answer is clear we must be in Christ’s church in order to fit the definition of a Christian as it is found in scripture.

When man is faced with such truths it can be difficult to accept for many reasons. However, if you are to know the truth and want to obey the truth as it is found in God’s Word, then we must accept what God’s Word reveals. A refusal to do so we only result in us being separated from God. Think about it.

