



# Blackfoot Church of Christ

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## Why Do You...?

By Philip Strong

I've jokingly (and more seriously) said many times that "I usually have reasons for what I do- they may not be good ones, but I have them nonetheless." We all do. Usually, the reasons for what we do are simple: either, "It is what I want to do;" or, "It is what I have to do." Let's think about these a bit....

"It is what I want to do" is the controlling factor for most of what we do when we think we have a choice. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this motivation if and when we really have a choice. But when there are obligations or responsibilities in play that are above mere personal preference, then we must choose whether or not our personal desires will trump those duties and control our activities. We will either selfishly choose what we want; or, we will selflessly and submissively choose to obey. The latter seems to increasingly go against the grain of our culture. More and more, we live in a culture and society wherein what I want selfishly supersedes what I should or I must. Personal likes and dislikes have come to dominate us in the area of motivations.

Unfortunately, this cultural trend has invaded our religion also. This is true with our individual commitments to Christ, as well as our collective associations with Him. Individually, we want to be saved in my own personal way and serve Him in the way(s) that I want and desire to do so. The problem with both of these is that salvation and service is not a matter of personal choice. Oh, we can choose whether or not we are willing to do what Jesus requires in order to be saved, and we can choose whether or not we are willing

to do what Jesus requires in order to serve Him, but we do not get to choose how we will be saved, or how we will serve Him. Please read carefully what Jesus said on these matters:

“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned,” Mark 16:16. And,

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father, who is in heaven. And many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness,’” Matthew 7:21-23.

Salvation is not a matter of personal preference, but of obedience to the method and means Jesus chose: belief in Him and baptism in Him for remission of sins, cf. Acts 8:35-38 and Acts 22:16. Likewise, we do not get to pick-and-choose how we will serve Christ. He is either our Lord (Master) or He isn't. If He is our Lord, then we do what He says, how He says, when He says. He addressed this problem in Matthew 15:8-9, “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrine the precepts of men.” Additionally, Paul condemned those “whose god is their appetite” in Philippians 3:19. He wasn't speaking literally of their bellies, but rather of their own desires. These are said to be “enemies of the cross of Christ” whose “end is destruction,” Philippians 3:18-19.

Now, think these things through a bit. We don't get to choose how we want to be saved, or how we want to serve Jesus. He has already determined those things. While salvation is personal in the sense that those saved are saved individually, it is not a matter of personal preference. In every conversion to Christ recorded in the book Acts, three things occurred: 1) the gospel of Jesus Christ was heard; 2) the person(s) believed Jesus to be the Son of God; and, 3) they were baptized into Christ. Isn't this exactly what Jesus stated as necessary in Mark 16:15-16? “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” See how simple that is? After belief and baptism, service to Christ is determined in exactly the same way. We look to the New Testament to “learn what is pleasing to the Lord,” Ephesians 5:10, rather than attempting please ourselves in how we worship and serve. Please, examine your motivations in the light of the gospel of Christ (the New Testament). Were you “saved” in the way it says, or by what you wanted and were willing to do? Likewise, are you “serving” Christ by doing what you want, or what He says? It makes all the difference in the world, and eternity!

## **Don't Atrophy**

Edwin Croizer

Today's reading is Acts 3.

The lame man was healed. He reacted to Peter's statement with a faith-filled response accessing the healing grace of God. He went walking and leaping and praising God. He spent the day making sure everyone knew. Then he went home, went to bed, probably didn't sleep well for joy. Finally, the sun is rising, the city is coming to life. The man starts to get out of bed, and then it hits him. “Oh, wait. I have to get a job!” He has spent his entire life, laying here and there, begging for money. But today, he needs to go to the marketplace and try to get someone to hire him to go into the field and pluck grain or go into the vineyard and pick grapes. Wouldn't it be silly for him to say, “I don't like that! I think I'll just go lay back down at the Beautiful Gate and keep begging”? In fact, what would happen if he decided that he didn't like the responsibilities that came with walking? What would happen if he decided to lay back down, act like he couldn't walk, get his friends to start carrying him around and laying him places again? What would happen to his healed legs? They would atrophy. They would lose the healing strength they had been given. In fact, there would come a day that if he did try to get up and walk, he wouldn't be able to...again. Yes, despite what so many say today, that is exactly like our spiritual healing. That is exactly like our salvation. If we decide we don't like the responsibilities of walking with the Lord, if we decide to lay back down and beg, if we decide to go back to living like we did before we were healed, we'll atrophy. We will lose the healing, the salvation we were given. God healed us to walk. Don't atrophy. Walk like a healed Christian.

## **Prayer Requests & Announcements**

- Larry, Leukemia Diagnosis
- Ray & Ginger, as Ray deals with Alzheimer's Symptoms
- Ross, Debbie, and Rachel are in AR visiting Family
- Scott Boucher (Sparks NV) continues in Hospice Care
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines

## **Worship Assignments**

### **Today**

**Song Leader** – Tom Mitchell

**Lord's Table** – Ray Mitchell

### **Wednesday**

**Song Leader** – Ray Mitchell

**Invitation** – David Porter

Blackfoot Church of Christ  
370 North Shilling Ave.  
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

### **Meeting Times:**

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM  
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM  
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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