

What Does Jesus Want?

“I will remain in the world no longer,
but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you.
Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name,
the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.”

John 17:11 (NIV)

Critics of Christianity often point to the remarkable divisions that exist in the church today.

There are many denominations within denominations.

For example, when you learn that a new Baptist church is developing in your neighbourhood, you might wish to know what type of Baptists they are. There are dozens of kinds of Baptists, and some believe very different things from other groups.

It's not just the Baptists who divide over various issues—most other groups of Christians have their own set of priorities and have divided according to this practice or that doctrine.

Christians feel free to leave a church because their candidate did not get appointed pastor. Other Christians will fight over what colour to choose for the new carpet for the sanctuary. Others will leave a church because the leadership decided to change the name of the church.

What all of us really ought to ask ourselves—when something

controversial happens—is *“When I enter heaven will it make any difference which way the local church went on this issue or that?”*

To our shame we must answer *“No!”*

A wise Christian once told me that his church received Christians on the basis of life and not light.

For example, if a believer came to them and had not yet confessed Jesus in baptism, they would be still be accepted into the life and ministry of the church.

I once heard of a foolish Christian who made controversial statements in a Bible study group *“Just to mix things up a bit.”*

This person knew that the leadership of the study group did not believe that tongues were for this age. So to cause some excitement they insisted that tongues were for this age.

Such behaviour contradicts the prayer of Jesus.

A fine Baptist family were invited

by their Presbyterian friends to attend the christening of their new child. This family willingly went, even though their doctrine taught believers' baptism and not infant baptism.

At the reception after in the home of the Presbyterians, the Baptist family thanked their neighbours for including them in the service.

That is maintaining the unity of the Spirit as we are commanded in Scripture (Ephesians 4:3).

Seek to be united to Christians whose doctrine differs from your own in some ways.

Recognize that Jesus died and rose again in order to make His people one body, and work diligently to maintain the unity Christ produced. This will bring honour to Jesus and it will be an answer to His prayer.

This is what Jesus wants.

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