Did you know that you can be a ______ of the church that Jesus purchased with His own ______ without belonging to any denomination? Today we’re going to explore _____ you can be just a Christian, just a member of the Lord’s church. The Bible is God’s wonderful ______ of faith, truth, hope, and love. God gave us His _____ to teach us, to encourage us, to comfort us, to reprove us, and to give us eternal life. Read John 20:30-31. The more we _____ the Bible, the stronger our faith will become; and that faith leads to life in His name.

If I told you I just bought a car, you would ask, “What _____ of car did you get?” It’s pretty difficult to _____ about cars without talking about some kind of car. We want to _____ the make and the model. If I said, “Well, it’s ____ a car!” we would have no concept of what that meant; but the very first car was simply a car. It was the one and only car.

When you speak of being a member of the church, the first thing people _____ is, “What kind of church is it?” They want to _____ if we go to a community church or a denomination. The idea of being just a ______ and simply being a member of the church Jesus built is foreign to the thinking of most people. But as you _____ the New Testament, the church is simply “the church.” There was no ______ of church. Did you know that you can be a member of that ________ church? That you can be _____ a Christian!

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

When people speak of the church they attend, they usually ______ themselves as denominational or nondenominational. There are ______ kinds of community churches and denominations. Various denominations developed when religious people began holding to their own ______ about God’s teaching to the point that they refused to work with others. They began ______ their peculiar doctrines or practices. In time, they needed a _____ to represent themselves. This name became a sort of brand or trademark for that particular kind of church having its _____ characteristics. It ______ a denomination. Taking up a brand name implies a ________. A denomination is a “named division.” The divided church at Corinth had members lining up behind individuals and ________ themselves from others by following his name. Some ______ Paul and said, “I am of Paul,” some Apollos, and some Peter. Paul was ________ at that! He said, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:13). Of course, the ________ to these questions is no. No, Christ isn’t ________! No, Paul wasn’t ________ for you! No, you weren’t ________ in the name of Paul!
Many denominations ask their members to go _________ faith in Christ and vow to follow the denominational bylaws or official statements. They follow their brand of Christianity; and this commitment to their doctrines and practices _________ them as a certain kind of Christian. Isn’t this _________ the kind of division that Paul was speaking against? Because so many generations have gone by with “brand name” Christianities, people have become satisfied and settled in their ways, never dreaming that the Lord ________________ of the divisions that come from brand names. God has _______ approved of such division.

Have you ever ________ a favorite dish? When it happened, you probably groaned and wished you could put it back together in its _____ and _________ state. Our religious world is ____________ broken. We need to leave this brokenness and go back to the _________ church, the one that you _____ about in the New Testament. We seek to _______ _________ the pure and unbroken church, as God meant for it to be, by ______________ to the truth and to the ideals that are found in the New Testament.

In the early 1800s, people who loved God grew _______ of the fighting and division among Christian denominations. They believed the Lord wanted His people to be _________. They realized that all of the bad-mouthing and exclusiveness of the denominations _________ the name of the Lord. Their constant conflicts and divisive ways caused people to _____ ______ from Christ in disbelief. Read what the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23. They believed that the division and animosity came from people holding to ________ opinions, and creeds, and councils, and practices, and names. They believed the only way they could have ___________ and unity was to unite on what the Lord commanded.

Many Christians left Europe to find religious _______ in America, but found the same conflicts here. They wanted something _________ – a pure and true Christianity free from the stains of human opinions. They believed that, “If we _________ the human and concentrate on what is truly divine, we can unite.” This unity could only come from following the _______ that’s found in God’s Word. This meant they had to _____ ____ everything that was human and denominational and _________ to the Christianity that was found in the New Testament, a Christianity that knew nothing of denominationalism. They rejected human opinions and human innovations since these things don’t find their _________ in God’s Word, but in men. They believed that “nothing ought to be ________ upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion; but what is expressly taught, and enjoined upon them, in the word of God.” So they said, “We ______ where the Bible speaks, and we are ______ where the Bible is silent.” They wanted _______ in essentials, ____________ in matters of opinion, and _______ in all things. They wanted a pure and true faith in Christ alone found in the New Testament as the _________ of their faith and practice.
It shouldn’t ________ us that people left the pure, inspired teaching and pursued what they wanted. The New Testament __________ that Christians would fall away from the truth of the gospel into error and false religion. God knew the hearts of men would often follow their _____ paths. Read what Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:29-30. Paul, by inspiration, realized that when you ______ the teaching, you cause people to fall away from the truth and from God. Read what Paul warned Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1-3. The devil is a deceiver; he intends to lead people to believe ______ teachings and lies he about certain practices being God’s will. He doesn’t care who he hurts by ___________ people. Paul knew that Christians would be _______ like ancient Israel and would ________ away from God’s teaching. He knew they would rather believe a comforting _____ than to hold to the gospel ______. Read what Paul, inspired of God, predicted in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Once a lie gets perpetuated, later generations become ___________ that this falsehood is true. They don’t even ______ they’ve been deceived.

Many today want salvation, but they don’t want to take up a cross to ________ Jesus. They want a Savior, but not a ______. They’re comfortable believing a lie and will actually ______ the truth. They are so settled in what they believe, they don’t want to ______ it could actually be wrong. For instance, early church history __________ that Christians wandered away from the teaching and practices that were found in the New Testament. The New Testament says absolutely ________ about things like holy water, lent, penance, infant baptism, intercession of the saints, sprinkling for baptism, sacrifice of mass, celibacy of priests, purgatory, priestly absolution, a pope, instrumental music in Christian worship, salvation by faith only, or the doctrine of “once saved, always saved.”

Century by century believers moved ________ away from the simplicity of the New Testament and its Christianity. They no longer followed God’s ________ for the church in the New Testament, but became something different. If we are to please God, we must ________ to what God willed in the New Testament. Returning is necessary, because repentance from ________ is necessary. One cannot remain in error and still ________ God. Read James 5:19-20. By ceasing to follow man-made doctrines and practices, the church could ________ the doctrine, worship, and organization of the New Testament church.

Our intent is to ________ the teaching and the ideals of the New Testament. The Lord Jesus built His church ________ any denomination existed. We want to be in _____ church, the church purchased with His blood. His church is _____ denominational, inter-denominational, or even non-denominational. The church that Jesus built was undenominational. Moreover, it was pre-denominational. Jesus would never approve of unifying the _____ with _____, because Jesus wants the church to remain _____ and ______. Churches of Christ ________ to “do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names.” They believe they must “discard
from their faith and their practice everything that isn’t authorized by the New Testament of the Lord and Savior, and to believe and practice whatever is there enjoined.”

This desire to ________ New Testament Christianity grew out of a conviction that the Bible is the complete and final authority. Therefore, it was and still is sufficient to ________ us all that we need to know for eternal life and for godliness. Just as a ______ will produce only after its own kind, so the seed of God’s Word will produce the same Christianity today that it did in the first century. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 8:11 that the seed of the kingdom is the _______. The Bible gives us _____ of God’s revealed will for life and godliness. Jesus promised His apostles that they would be guided into _____ the truth (John 16:12-13). If men go beyond this Word and begin to preach other things, they will not only _____ their relationship with God, according to 2 John 9, they will also _________ a different product than the church that Jesus built. Who would really want that?

Some believe the primary goal of restoration is to ______ all churches. They believe that Jesus’ prayer for unity in John 17 means all churches should __________ one another on the basis of the most fundamental things. Some feel as long as a person believes in and loves Jesus, he is ______ with God. They seem to ________ everything else that Jesus said and they _________ only what He said about unity. Before Jesus prayed for unity in John 17:20-23, He first prayed for His followers to be sanctified or “set apart” in the _____ (John 17:17). We can’t have unity ________ the truth. We can’t ________ truth with all kinds of error and still have unity. Jesus said, “If you _________ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you ______” (John 8:31-32).

Christ didn’t pray for a unity that sacrifices or compromises the _______. Actually, it’s our ______ in the revealed ______ that unites us. Christian unity is not ecumenism, where groups unite but ________ conflicting and contradictory beliefs and practices. Uniting with those who teach or worship in error ______ the truth for compromise. To be faithful and true to the Lord, Christians cannot ignore or tolerate ______ like the ancient churches at Pergamum or Thyatira did (Revelation 2). Jesus called them to ___________ and He calls us to repentance as well. When people believe or practice something false, God ________ them to repent.

Calling people ________ to the truth is to save their souls. To follow Christ, we ______ to put away what comes from man and follow what comes from God. Love the Lord, and get involved in the Lord’s church. Place your _____ in Jesus as the Christ; ______ of every sin; ______ Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and be _________ into Christ. Peter told the people at Pentecost, “Repent and be baptized ______ of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Both repentance and baptism are __________.