Does It Really Matter?

The sign out front reads church of Christ. Does it really matter what is being taught inside the building? Consider what Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia. "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7). So, does it really matter what is being taught inside the building? Many today would likely say, not really. Why quibble over every little thing. We can think and believe differently. Let's just all get along.

When Paul writes of the "gospel", he is speaking of teachings - the teachings of Jesus Christ. The teachings of Christ can safely be called doctrine, as doctrine by definition is "a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a Church" (Google, Dictionary of Oxford Languages). Paul's point to the Galatians' is that no man has a right to alter, pervert, the teachings of Jesus Christ. Period!

Following His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus told the apostles to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Mark records the command from Jesus, stating, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Preaching is a form of teaching. Thus, Jesus instructed the apostles to teach and preach His gospel, His teachings, His doctrine. Nothing more, nothing less.

God's formula for the development of faith is through hearing His word. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The difficulty occurs, as it obviously did in Galatia, that some have their own word (idea) that stands outside the teachings, doctrine of Jesus. They pervert the gospel of Christ by twisting it into their own mindset, desire, or ill interpretation. Such is damaging for the church and deserving of the same condemnation Paul wrote toward those perverting the gospel in Galatia. Paul later wrote to the church at Rome, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

Using a striking, stern tone John speaks of the importance of getting doctrine right. “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 1:9). There is no way to separate the doctrine of Christ from the teachings of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).

The only conclusion one can draw, according to the Bible is, yes, it does matter. Let us each purpose to do all according to His will that we may gain His Heaven.