



Newsletter

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Up Words # 10

THE BIG GAME



I am somewhat surprised how much I've heard about the "big game" in recent days. On the radio I hear of sweepstakes where I can win tickets to the "big game." And my television can't quit talking about the "big game." Every car dealer in town has some sale or incentive that has to do with the "big game." The news and sports programs refer to this "big game" as the Super Bowl. I guess they are allowed to use that term but others are not. As I understand it there is some sort of trademark or copyright on the name that belongs to the NFL and advertisers are not allowed to use it. That may not be the whole story or an exact inter-

pretation of the situation ... all I know is that a great deal of people go to a great deal of effort not to say the name of the "big game."

All this "big game" talk got me thinking about how we use or avoid using the name of Christ or the word "Christian." Sometimes it is easier to talk about being moral or good or wholesome. Sometimes it is more convenient to say we believe in "family values" than to proclaim our faith in Christ. The name of Christ and the word Christian are not copyrighted so there is no legal loophole for failing to speak His name. The reality is that we are sometimes ashamed or embarrassed to claim the name of Jesus. We fear not fitting in or appearing too religious. We fear ridicule or scorn. We may even fear being a hypocrite since our actions do not always indicate a Christian lifestyle and values.

We all know how Peter went to great lengths to distance himself from Jesus when Christ was arrested and being tried on trumped up charges. When a servant-girl saw Peter sitting in the courtyard just outside the courtroom where Christ was being charged and noted that Peter was with Christ he denied it. Then another servant-girl saw Peter and said the same thing to which Peter denied with an oath. Finally, others in the courtyard crowd said Peter was one of Christ's followers to which Peter responded with cursing, swearing and denial. (See Matthew 26:69-74).

What do we do with the name of Christ? Consider Christ's warning about refusing to identify with Him. "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26). Paul told Timothy, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God," (II Timothy 1:8). Paul himself boldly proclaimed, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16).

My prayer for us is that we will " ... abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1John 2:28). Let's determine to name the name of Christ and boldly claim the title "Christian."

Looking Up!

- Pastor Chuck Circle