

INAUGURATION AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH Part 3

Introduction

- Let's go back and look at the definition:

Definition: The Church is the New Covenant Community of God as it exists in this dispensation between the events of Acts 2 (Day of Pentecost) through the rapture of the Church prior to the Day of the Lord.

PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Purpose = To glorify God through **worship**, **edification** of the saints, and the **evangelization** of the world.

This is essentially a three-legged stool regarding the purpose of the Church. Glorifying God is the top of the stool while worship, edification of the saints, and evangelism of the world are the 3 legs. Let's go ahead and take each leg and discuss it. The first leg shows us that part of the purpose of the church is to facilitate corporate:

I. Worship of God.

Elements of Corporate Worship:

- First of all, we said that it is prescribed by God and should be directed by God's Word. A good summary of the contents that should be included in corporate worship can be captured in this phrase.
- "Read the Bible, Preach the Bible, Sing the Bible, Pray that Bible, and See the Bible." - *Ligon Duncan*. We looked at each of these, now this week we will move on to looking at the second and third legs. Let's begin with the:

II. Edification of the Saints.

With this, we move from looking up (as it were) to looking across.

In other words, the church's vertical purpose, to worship God, mandates his horizontal purpose: working to edify the other believers and evangelize the lost.

With that goal in mind, look at Paul's words in **Ephesians 4:15-16**.

Ephesians 4:15-16

¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

We can also see this aspect of the purpose of the church in Hebrews. Here the author exhorts his readers to assemble regularly, he points to the purpose of giving mutual encouragement:

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

- So, you see, the whole congregation's life together should aim at corporate edification. As we said our first week, this idea has its roots in the Old Testament people of God. Remember, we looked at the scripture and saw that God created a people in the OT to be specially blessed by his presence, promises, and power.
- His goal was for them to display his faithfulness to his promises, his character by following his laws, and his lordship by looking forward to the promised day of his coming. The nation was to be a people marked by holiness.
- In the New Testament, the people of God are the church. So, in a local congregation, the fellowship is to display the holiness of God through its holiness. God's love is to be reflected in the love we as the church, show to one another. There are many "One Another" passages in Scripture and all of them focus on the edification of the saints:

John 13:34-35

³⁴ “I give you a new command: **Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another.** ³⁵ **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**”

Hebrews 3:12-13

¹² See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ **But encourage one another daily**, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

Galatians 5:13

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.**

Galatians 6:2

² **Bear one another's burdens**, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ **Therefore encourage one another and build one another up**, just as you are doing.

Romans 12:10

¹⁰ Be devoted **to one another** in brotherly love; give preference **to one another** in honor;

Romans 14:19

¹⁹ So then, let us pursue what promotes **peace and what builds up one another.**

James 5:16

¹⁶ Therefore, ***confess your sins to one another and pray for one another***, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.

- These are just some of the passages we could look at; however, I think this gives us the idea. It is clear that one purpose of the body of Christ is the edification of the saints.

Ok, so, when talking about the purpose of the church we have seen that this is a 3-legged stool. The top of the stool is to Glorify God, one leg is worship, a second leg is edification of the saints and now we look at the 3rd leg which is the evangelization of the lost world.

III. Evangelization of the lost world.

I think we all understand this. Look at Matthew 28:19-20.

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

We can also go to Acts 1:8 and we see another exhortation.

Acts 1:8

⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

- You see, I think this is a wonderful truth. You know, we may have evangelism programs or events (which are all good) they do serve a purpose but not everyone is cut out to go door to door or to do cold evangelism on the streets. Now, I would encourage everyone to go. Go and if nothing else observe, you may surprise yourself.
- That is a real need in the church, we need people who will go out into the community and do “Cold Evangelism” but also evangelism opportunities arise naturally in the neighborhood and city where the congregation lives. Right? I mean, as we invite our neighbors over for dinner, as we go to the gas station, the local restaurant and grocery

stores. At family gatherings like the holidays or reunions. Right within your own home with your children.

- Now, as we witness to the lost, it needs to be much more than words. Obviously, we have not shared the gospel if we have not spoken to them. The gospel is a message that can only be shared through language; however, our lives as Christians should be seen as set apart.

- Our non-Christian family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues or coworkers should be seeing a difference in our life. Our witness should be improved not damaged as all these outsiders constantly observe our conduct. Yes, we share the gospel with them, but we also live in such a way that builds on this and does not tear it down.

- The outward purpose of course does not end with the evangelization of the congregation's own city. No, this is where missions come in. Christians today have a responsibility to take the gospel around the world. At the end of Acts 1:8 Jesus declares that we are to take it even to the remotest part of the earth.

- Also, we need to be facilitating discipleship. We are to make disciples, not just converts. Matthew 28:19. This means we need to come along side new believers and teach them from the Bible how to live this new life they have entered into. Help them to grow in their knowledge and in their holiness. Bring them into the body to participate in body life. Help them to get plugged in within the body of Christ.

Well, over the last 5 weeks we have looked at a few things concerning the Church.

1.) **Why we should have a robust understanding of the Church.**

- *The Church is Designed by God.*
- *The Church is Central to God's Purpose in this Age.*
- *Christ Died for the Church.*
- *Christ is the head of the Church.*

2.) **The Nature of the Church.**

- *Definition*
 - *Local/Visible*
 - *Universal/Invisible.*

3.) **Inauguration and Purpose of the Church.**

- *Disagreement as to when the church began.*
 - *Hyper or ultra-dispensational view.*
 - *The Church Began at Pentecost.*
- *Purpose to glorify God by means of 3-legged stool.*
 - *1st leg of 3-Legged Stool.*