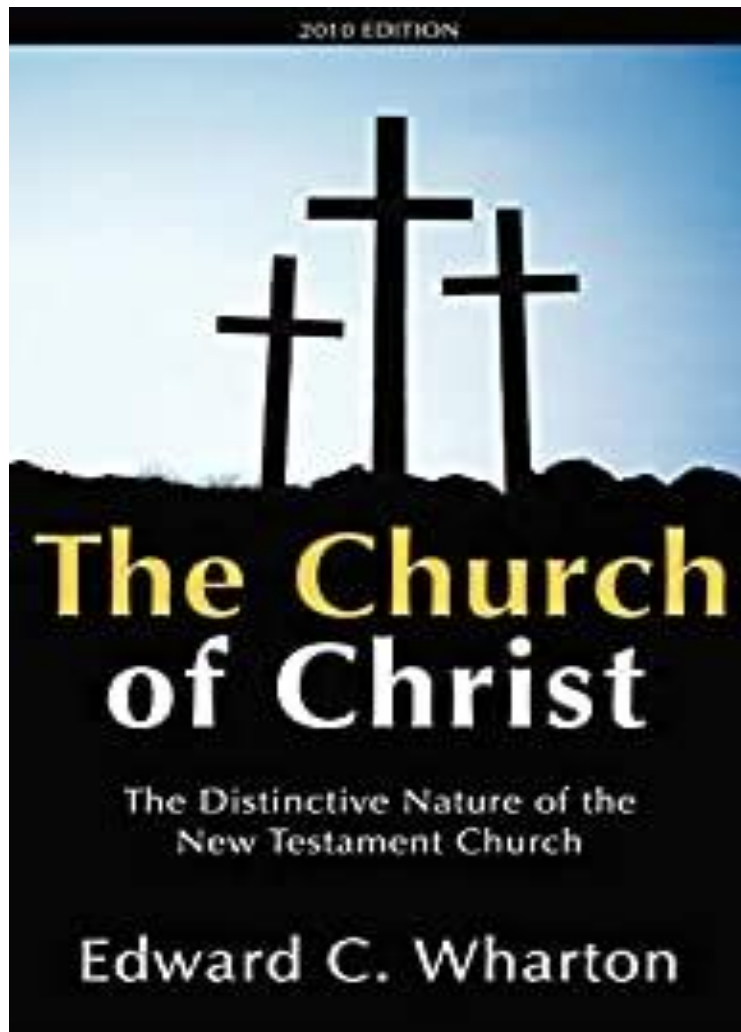


THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

**A Series of Sermons on Identifying and
Reproducing the New Testament Church**



From a book by Ed Wharton

Following Ed Wharton's book as a guide, I reproduced this series of sermons on the church of Christ. I used his book as an outline interjecting my own studies and material into each lesson. (James Dale)

The Foundation of Spiritual Unity

I. A preacher's baby was extremely sick so he took it to the doctor. After careful examination he prescribed a medication. While filling the prescription, the druggist said, "Here is an item the doctor specified, but I do not think it is essential; the baby can probably get well without it."

The preacher asked, "Do you have it in stock?" "Yes, but I think it is unnecessary." The preacher replied, "I want you to give me the exact medicines the doctor prescribed." "Well, I have another drug here that the doctor did not call for. I really like it. I'll just give it to you instead." "No," the minister replied, "I want *exactly* what the physician specified, that and no more."

II. The following Sunday the druggist went to hear the preacher and he happened to be preaching on "the Great Physician Healing the Sin-Sick Soul." In the course of the remarks, the preacher stated that although the Bible taught that all should be baptized, and although Peter commanded "every one of you" to be "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38); he thought that one could be saved without baptism.

As the druggist shook hands with the preacher after the service, he quietly said, "Surely the legs of the lame are unequal."

III. The point of this illustration is clear, many sincere people can go to churches not found in Scripture, and listen to preachers change—add to and take from—the Bible in sermons without ever questioning it; even when they recognize that this type of attitude would be disastrous if practiced in everyday decisions.

IV. It is evident by our current religious atmosphere that this is the way the majority of those who promulgate Christianity live.

V. Robert K. Johnston in his book "*Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice.*" writes.

“Contemporary evangelicals are finding it difficult to achieve anything like a consensus on each succeeding theological topic they address. Moreover, they seem stymied in any effort toward unity, unable to agree on a collective interpretive strategy for moving beyond their current impasse.

If evangelicals cannot discover a way to move more effectively toward theological consensus, can they still maintain in a good conscience their claim to Biblical authority as a hallmark?”

VI. So what then is the solution? Is there a way for all those who profess Christ as their Savior to agree on what the Bible teaches? The answer is yes!

VIII. Religious unity exists when we recognize God as our sole authority in all religious matters.

IX. How do we do this? Unity of faith begins with the local body, Eph 4:11-13.

X. So then, beginning with this lesson I am going to spend a considerable amount of time preaching on the church which Christ built. My hope is that through these studies we can all be united in our beliefs about His church which we as Christians make up.

XI. This morning I want to lay the foundation for this series of lessons by considering the foundation on which religious unity exists, The Authority of God.

Trans: To begin, we must determine if there such a thing as authority in religious matters. Authority is something that guides us, and if it doesn't exist in religion, there is no hope for unity.

1. The Existence of Authority

- A. We all know that various forms of authority exist in this world.
 - 1. Countries
 - 2. Corporations
 - 3. Households

- B. In the realm of the Judeo/Christian religion authority also exist.
 - 1. **Gen. 1:1**

 - 2. This verse asserts that all **physical matter** originated from **God, the Creator**.

 - 3. God is then the author, sole builder and administrator, of our existence
Heb. 3:4

 - 4. He then has the right to do with it as He wishes, **Amos 9:5, 6**

- C. This authority of God does not stop with the creation. God's authority extends to all realms, physical and spiritual, **Matt. 28:18**.

- D. So in matters of religion we also find the authority of God.
 - 1. We see this in the garden, Gen. 2:15-17

 - 2. When Moses was called to lead God's people out of Egyptian bondage God made clear His authority in this matter, **Ex. 3:13, 14**

 - 3. God's authority is also seen in the New Testament,
Matt. 28:19, 20
Mark 16:15, 16

Appl: Just as authority exists in this world in various forms, it also exists in the religious realm. God is the supreme authority and in any religious system which involves Him, you will find His authority because He is I AM.

And so, **Religious unity exists when we recognize God as our sole authority in all religious matters.**

Trans: Having established the fact that religious Authority does exist we can move to our second point which addresses the reason for it.

2. The Need for Authority,

- A. By definition authority is "**The power to enforce obedience - the right to control command or make decisions, jurisdiction.**"

- B. In the creation there is a need for authority. The complexities of this creation require a Divine force able to keep it together, Job 38:1-11; 31-33

- C. In our society there is also a need for the authority God has established, **Rom. 13:1-5**

- D. In religion there is also a need for authority.
 - 1. Man cannot understand the ways of God without God, Isa. 55:7-9

2. Without Gods intervention man will fail in his attempt to live according to Gods will, **Jer. 10:23**

3. Without religious authority man is hopelessly doomed, **Prov. 16:25**

E. To understand the spiritual we need a spiritual guide, **1Cor.2:9-11**

F. God then directs us through His word,
2 Pet. 1:20, 21
2Tim. 3:16, 17

Illust: If I lay 600' of pipe and I am off plumb 1" every 100' when I get to the end I am off 6"

Appl: Here we can see the need for authority. If every man at a plant decided to weld the pipe the way they desired, it would be a mess.

In religion there is a need for authority. In the case of Christianity we have one God who guides us in understanding His will through His inspired word.

In this way we can be certain we are being guided in the same spiritual ways.

And so, **Religious unity exists when we recognize God as our sole authority in all religious matters.**

Trans: So we know religious authority exists and there is a need for it, but it will not achieve its purpose unless we are willing to follow it. This is our third point.

3. Our Responsibility Towards Authority,

A. Because we live in a creation with natural laws we are bound by those laws. They, in essence have authority over us and we are required to adhere to them,

B. The authority they have over us is such that penalties are imposed when we fail to follow those laws. The Laws of Gravity is one of those laws.

C. Even in our Society we have laws we are required to adhere to.

1. We cannot kill anyone we want without paying the penalty.
2. We cannot take whatever we want, (Driving off with someone's car)
3. We cannot say whatever we want, (Yelling Fire in a Theatre)

D. In reference to religious authority we also have responsibilities.

1. We must reverence it, Heb. 11:7
2. We must honor authority, **Jude 8, 9**
3. We must respect authority, **Prov. 25:6**
4. We must obey it,
 - a. This was required in the OT, **Ex. 19:5**
 - b. It is required in the NT, **Col. 3:17**

Illust: Some people view Authority in such a way that they try and make it fit their life. It's the idea that laws were made to be broken. (Real Life Adventure cartoon, man using scissors to cut the piece of the puzzle)

Appl: What we must recognize is that laws are not made to be broken, that's why there are consequences if you do. Even natural laws tell us this.

In reference to God we see that the laws He has established are there for a reason and if we are going to claim to be one of His then we must follow what He instructs.

And so, **Religious unity exists when we recognize God as our sole authority in all religious matters.**

Con: There is no question we live in a world that is religiously divided.

This division also exists in the Judeo/Christian faith. If there is going to be any hope of uniting these religious groups we must realize...

- 1. Religious authority exists**
- 2. There is a need for religious authority**
- 3. We have a responsibility to follow religious authority.**

Religious unity exists when we recognize God as our sole authority in all religious matters.

The Pattern Concept

Lesson 2

I. The Scriptures are very clear that all those who claim belief in Jesus as Lord are to be united as one.

1. John 17:17-22, Jesus prayed for unity
2. **Phil 1:27**, Paul speaks of unity as conduct worthy of the Gospel. (x4)
3. **1Cor. 1:10**, Paul spoke of the sinfulness of division. (x4)

II. And as I noted last week, **Religious unity exists when we recognize God as our sole authority in all religious matters.**

III. But this is only the first step towards unity. Religious unity also requires agreement on some sort of religious guide. For Christians that guide is the Bible, and more specifically the New Testament.

IV. In the New Testament we find God's plan for establishing the unity Jesus prayed for, **Eph. 3:8-12.**

V. Gods' eternal purpose, is that His manifold wisdom be made known through the church. Since this is His eternal purpose, it is a Divine plan which He intended to be a pattern for us to follow.

VI. In doing so, this Divine plan provides the means for unity as it enables us to identify and reproduce the church of the New Testament throughout history.

VII. And so, **Christian unity exists when we follow the pattern of God's Divine plan.**

VIII. Before we can discuss this plan of God, we need to first establish that it is a pattern for us to follow. We do that by considering two points.

1. **The Pattern Concept Defined.**
2. **The Pattern Concept Revealed.**

Trans: Let's consider our first point.

1. The Pattern Concept Defined

A. In the Greek language we have the word **tupos**, which means **standard, pattern, form, figure and example.**

B. In the technical sense the word **tupos** is used of a "pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made"

C. Applying this to Christians, the Scriptures instruct us to follow a **tupos** (pattern) in all we do.

1. Morally, Christians are to be a pattern for others to follow,
 - a. Phil. 3:17
 - b. **1Tim. 4:12**
2. Doctrinally we are given a pattern to follow,
 - a. In becoming free from sin, **Rom. 6:17,18**
 - b. In the things we teach, Titus 2:6,7

Illust: The idea is the same as using a blue print to build something

Appl: A pattern may be thought of as a mold, cast or form into which some substance such as concrete, lead or wax is poured, and each time the same image is reproduced.

Morally speaking the pattern concept should produce those whose lives are morally distinct and thus a pattern to follow, **1Cor. 6:9-11**

Doctrinally speaking the pattern concept should produce a particular doctrinal identity. It is an identity which is distinct, definable and clearly unified, **Rom. 6:3-7; 17, 18 (x3)**

And so, **Christian unity exists when we follow the pattern of God's Divine plan.**

Trans: So we have seen that the Scriptures support the pattern concept. But are there Scriptures which show this pattern concept in action? Let's consider our second point.

2. The Pattern Concept Revealed.

A. The pattern concept is revealed when we look back to the OT and the tabernacle.

B. When Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle, he was to build it following a specific pattern.

1. **Ex. 25:9** - God showed the pattern for the Tabernacle and furniture. (x2)
2. Acts 7:44

C. Some years after the tabernacle was built, David wanted to build a Temple for God. But, God stated that He had a house that was yet to be built and this house would be built by one He would call His Son,

1. **1Chron. 17:1, 11-14.**
2. Some believe that this is Solomon, 1Chron. 22:6ff; 28:2ff
3. That this is not Solomon is affirmed by the phrase, "**who will be of your sons,**" (NAS) "**Shall be of thy sons**" (KJV) **In the original Hebrew this phrase does not denote to be one of, i.e., to belong to him, but to arise, be born, or go forth, from one. The literal Hebrew means "who will come out of (from) they sons."**

D. So which son of David built God's house?

1. Jesus is referred to as the son of David, Matt.1:1
2. It was the Lord who pitched the true tabernacle of God, **Heb. 8:1, 2 (x1)**
3. He is the high priest over this house of God, Heb. 10:19-21
4. Christians make up this house, **Heb. 3:5, 6**
5. This house is the church as Christians also make up the church
Col. 1:24
Eph. 5:23, 30
6. The house of God and the church are one and the same, 1Tim. 3:14, 15

G. The Scriptures also teach that the tabernacle of Moses was a shadow or copy of God's eternal purpose, the church, which Jesus built, **Heb. 8:4-5.**

H. The true Tabernacle of God which Jesus was to build is the church and the tabernacle of Moses was a copy or shadow of that church.

Appl: It is obvious from what we know about the tabernacle that God had a specific plan for how it was to be built, including the furniture. We also know that that plan was to be followed without divergence.

This tabernacle was a copy and mere shadow of something far greater which the Scriptures teach is the church which the Father, Son, and Jesus was to build.

And so as the tabernacle was built according to a specific divine pattern, so is the church. And it is the pattern we follow today to carry out God's plan, His eternal purpose. This is the pattern concept revealed.

We find then, **Christian unity exists when we follow the pattern of God's Divine plan.**

Con: What we need to ask ourselves is this,

If Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle according to the pattern he had seen, and this tabernacle was a mere shadow of the church, should we suppose that the church which was the pattern does not have a pattern?

We find then, **Christian unity exists when we follow the pattern of God's Divine plan.**

The Pattern Principle

Lesson 3

I. When I was a kid my brother and I collected models of all sorts. We had model cars and model airplanes. We had even begun to build the entire Pearl Harbor fleet. The thing about these models is that it took a lot of work to put them together; they came with a lot of little pieces. If it wasn't for the instructions we would have been lost.

II. For the past several weeks I have been presenting lessons on what can be called pattern Theology.

III. Last week I spoke on the Pattern Concept. This is the idea that Christianity has been designed according to a divine plan and that God intended that plan to be the pattern by which the church of the New Testament can be identified and reproduced throughout history.

IV. As a result Christian Unity can be achieved.

V. The pattern concept was shown to be correct by looking at the tabernacle and that it was according to the pattern Moses had seen on Mount Sinai.

VI. Today I want to speak on the pattern principle.

VII. The pattern principle involves no more than going to the Bible to discover what God wants His people to believe, to be and to do as His church.

The Pattern Principle Expounded

A. This pattern embraces all aspects of the Christian life.

1. It embraces what men are to believe and do in order to be saved.
2. It embraces the Christian lifestyle.
3. It embraces the worship of God for God's glory and our spiritual benefit.
4. It embraces the work and organizational structure of the church both local and universal

B. The pattern principle implies that what God revealed to the Apostles to be preached, believed and obeyed in the apostolic age can be identified in the New Testament, and that God intentionally made that clear in New Testament writings so that the same message would be reproduced in proclamation and practice throughout history until Christ returns.

C. The New Testament pattern principle assures the identity of the body of Christ as God purposed it from eternity, **2Tim. 2:2**

D We have many examples which demonstrate that there is a pattern of teaching in the New Testament after which Christianity, and subsequently the church, is to be ordered.

1. The eternal purpose of God includes the church wherein we are to glorify God throughout history, (**Eph 1:9-11; 3:10-11, 20-21**). From this purpose, emerges the pattern of God's own making after which the apostolic church was originally constructed.

2. The Pattern Principle consist of four parts.

A. The Apostle's Pattern of teaching, John 17:20. The ground of belief in Christ and the unity of believers are in the word of the Apostle's. Their word, therefore, necessarily becomes a pattern of belief and results in unity for all who would follow Christ.

- a. **Acts 2:42**
- b. **1Cor. 4:17**
- c. **1Cor. 7:17**
- d. **1Cor. 14:34-37**

B. The Apostle's pattern of tradition

a. Some have a difficult time following traditions, but a tradition is simply that which is handed down. We are cautioned against following the traditions of men, Matt. 15:6. However, the traditions of the apostles, handed down from the Lord, are to be handed on to the church which is to hold firmly to them.

b. What the apostles "received from the Lord" by revelation, they "delivered" to the churches by inspiration, **1Cor. 11:23; 15:3**

c. The churches are to hold firmly to the traditions taught by the apostles, (**1Cor. 11:1, 2; 2Thess. 2:15**).

C. The Preachers pattern of teaching.

a. Preachers are instructed to teach a specific doctrine or pattern of instruction and God expects his church to hold it.

- b. **1Tim. 1:3**
- c. **2Tim. 1:13**
- d. **2Tim. 4:2**

D. The Pattern of The Faith

a. When the NT speaks of "the faith" it refers to the thing believed rather than the act of believing.

b. The Christian religion as a system of justification by faith in Christ is therefore often referred to as "the faith" and is presented in the NT as both singular (one) and distinctive (identifiable), **Eph. 4:4-6**, and Christians are called to the unity of the faith, **Eph. 4:13**.

- c. Religious unity requires unity of belief.
- d. Consider the singularity of the faith,
 - 1) **The faith can be preached, Gal. 1:23**
 - 2) **Obedied, Acts 6:7**
 - 3) **Continued in, Acts 14:22**
 - 4) **We are to strive for the faith, Phil. 1:27**
 - 5) **Contend for the faith, Jude 3**
 - 6) **We can deny the faith, 1Tim. 5:8**
 - 7) **We can go astray from the faith, 1Tim. 6:21**
- e. If all of these can happen then there must be a pattern of teaching for these to happen.
- f. In each case it is **the** faith that is spoken of. Thus, one cannot speak biblically when he speaks of different faiths of the Christian religion.

Con: As we consider the pattern principle, we can see that we have ample evidence to support this teaching.

God did not leave mankind without a guide regarding how we are to conduct ourselves in His church. He did not make His teaching so vague or unclear that we could not all understand it and practice it alike.

The pattern principle is found in the Apostles teachings and traditions. It is found in the instructions given to the preachers and it is supported in our following after “the faith.”

Based upon the pattern principle the church which Jesus built can be identified in the NT and is intended to be reproduced in perpetuity until Jesus comes. If we will simply plant the Word of God, unmixed by human wisdom, the church which belongs to Christ will be brought forth in all its distinctiveness

So we see, **The pattern principle involves no more than going to the Bible to discover what God wants His people to believe, to be and to do as His church.**

Distinct Doctrine

(Lesson 4)

I. A while back I was out driving around and I saw a church sign that read, **“Go to church somewhere this Sunday.”**

II. As I pondered the intent of this message, I thought it could just as easily read, **“Believe whatever you want about God this Sunday.”**

III. Imagine the Pandora’s box this way of thinking opens. Imagine the kind of Biblical confusion this promotes. It doesn’t matter where you go, what you believe, just be in church somewhere this Sunday!

IV. But, is this the way God wants His people to think and believe? Does it really matter what we believe concerning our Christian faith?

V. To help us answer that question consider what the Scriptures say about our salvation.

1. The Scriptures teach that God doesn’t want anyone to be lost, **2Peter. 3:9**
2. Jesus stated that if we wish to be saved we must do the will of the Father, **Matt 7:21**
3. If God doesn’t want us to perish, and if it’s going to take doing God’s will to keep us from perishing, is it be reasonable to conclude that God has preserved that will for us?
4. Jesus answers that question in the affirmative in, John 8:31,32
5. We find then that our salvation is tied to a distinct doctrine, **Acts 4:12**

VI. This being the case, **Within the New Testament we find a distinct doctrine which God desires us to follow, and in doing so we have a fail proof pattern for unity.** In this way we can all teach exactly what God wants us to teach. Nothing more and nothing less.

Trans: Let’s consider how that distinct doctrine is demonstrated within the Scriptures.

The Pattern of Distinct Doctrine

1. What we must first understand is that there is absolute truth, and that we can come to the knowledge of that truth, **John 17:17**
2. How God revealed that truth is the pattern that assures a distinct, pure doctrine.
 - a. To begin God sent His word through His Son, **Hebrews. 1:1,2**
 - b. When the Son spoke He spoke just as the Father instructed, **John 12:49,50**
 - c. In preserving that pattern of doctrinal purity Jesus passed God’s word to His Apostles, **John 17:7,8**
 - d. The Holy Spirit is also involved in preserving doctrinal purity. When He came to the Apostles he guided them into all the truth and revealed the Fathers will to them, John 16:12-15
 - e. To assure doctrinal purity into the future, the Apostles were moved by God to preserve His words. They wrote exactly what God wanted, no more and no less, **2 Peter 1:20-21**
 - f. The Apostles taught exactly what God revealed to them, 1Cor. 11:23; 15:3

g. Christians in the first century followed these teachings, **Acts 2:42**

3. God also made it very clear that all Christians must do the same thing in adhering to doctrinal purity.

1 Peter 4:11

2Tim. 2:1,2

1Tim. 1:3

1 Tim. 6:3-5

2Tim. 4:1-5

4. Christians today should be following the same teaching, nothing more and nothing less.

Illust: Titus 1:5-2:1

Appl: God's word has been given to us by God Himself.

1. Jesus was sent to proclaim the will of the Father.
2. Jesus passed this word to the Apostles.
3. The Spirit of truth, the HS revealed to them God's will
4. The Apostles and other Holy men recorded it for us in written form.
5. All Christians are commanded to follow that word.

The things we teach concerning Christianity must come from the scriptures only. They are God's inspired word for us today. If what we teach is not in God's preserved word, the Bible, then we are not following the pattern for Doctrinal purity.

In the end it is that word which will judge us, **John 12:48**

Within the New Testament we find a distinct doctrine which God desires us to follow, and in doing so we have a fail proof pattern for unity.

Con: The only words we can speak concerning God's will must come from His word, the Bible. If we teach any other word than God's, we take upon ourselves God's authority and we put ourselves in His position. It is His word's that give us eternal life. Let us stay true to His word.

“The Distinct Covenant of God’s People”

(Lesson 5)

I. In **John 17:17** Jesus stated that we are sanctified in the truth, and that God’s word is truth. When you consider this passages you will find that it reveals three facts concerning truth.

1. **There is truth.**
2. **That truth is God’s word.**
3. **We can only be sanctified in the truth of God’s word.**

II. Inherent in this passage is the need to follow the truth. If truth is changed it is no longer truth but a lie. If a lie is taught then there can be no sanctification because sanctification is found only in the truth, not a lie.

III. To assure that that truth be preached Jesus prayed for doctrinal unity in His followers. In **John 17:20-22** Jesus prayed that His followers would be one as He and the Father are one. For this to be accomplished his followers would have to teach the same distinct message,

IV. This is one of the distinct characteristics of the church. The doctrine or teachings it followed never varied from group to group.

V. This pattern for doctrinal unity is found within the Scriptures

1. The same message Jesus taught, John 12:49
2. The same message the Holy Spirit taught, John 16:13
3. This same distinct message has been recorded for us, 2Pet. 1:20,21

VI. It is very important that we do not underestimate the need to follow this pattern of doctrinal purity laid out for us in God’s word.

VII. As we continue our study of the distinctive nature of the church we want to turn our attention to another distinct doctrine of the Lord’s church and that is the distinct covenant of God’s people.

VII. The intent of this lesson is to show that, *God’s covenant people, can be identified by the distinct covenant it keeps.*

Trans: Let’s consider God’s covenant people today

God’s Covenant People Today

A. Through the ages God has always had a covenant with His people.

1. Adam and Eve, **Gen 2:16,17**
2. Abraham, **Gen. 17:1-2**

B. In time God made a new covenant with the children of Israel, the Hebrew nation,
Deut 5:1-4

C. The book of Hebrews records the fact that the Covenant made with Israel would some day cease, Heb. 8:8,13

1. This is a quote from, **Jer. 31:31-34**
2. Notice the words, **“When He said”** in **Heb 8:13**, this pinpoints the time for us when the OC was made obsolete.
3. When Jeremiah made this statement the covenant was at that time growing old and was ready to pass away, **627-586 B.C.**

- D. The fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy was at the cross, in Christ.
1. At the cross the Old Covenant was fulfilled
 - a. Jesus came fulfill that law, **Matt 5:17**
 - b. The requirements of the law were fulfilled in all He did,
Romans 8:1-4
Romans 3:19,20
 2. Through His death the Law was nailed to the cross, **Eph. 2:13-15**
 3. Through His death He took away the first to establish the second,
Heb. 10:8-10
 4. Through His death the NC was established, **Luke 22:19-20**

E. God's covenant people are now those who live under and abide by the New Covenant,
2Cor. 3:1ff

Illust: Gal. 3:15-29 (PP Chart)

Con: What does the passing of the Old Covenant (Law) and the establishing of the New Covenant; teach us about the distinct identity of the church?

1. The church is part of the New Covenant. Just as the church was God's eternal purpose so then is the New Covenant. As such, the church does not live under or abide by the Old Covenant. To do so would go against plain Scriptural teaching.
2. If we are to identify the Lord's church today we will not find it under the Old Covenant.
3. That distinctive nature of the church is seen in that it is a New Covenant church.
4. We can conclude then, that any group which follows the Old Covenant today, cannot be the Lord's church.
5. Jesus' disciples taught that they were minister's of this New Covenant and thus members of His church, apart from the Old Covenant. By teaching this they also showed that they followed the distinct doctrine laid out by God,

And so, *God's covenant people, can be identified by the distinct covenant it keeps, the New Covenant*

“The Distinct Nature of the New Covenant”

(Lesson 6)

I. Last week it was concluded that *God’s covenant people, could be identified by the distinct covenant they keep.* That is to say, God’s covenant people today live under a New Covenant, this being distinct from the Old Covenant or law given under the leadership of Moses.

II. This point is just another proof that the church which Christ built is distinct in its nature; it abides by a distinct covenant, a New Covenant.

III. There is another point we want to consider in reference to the Distinct New Covenant Christians live under and that is the Distinct Nature of that New Covenant.

IV. We know God promised to make a New Covenant with those who would be His children.

Jer. 31:31-34

Heb. 8:8-12

V. As we examine Jeremiah’s prophecy we find that the New Covenant he spoke of would possess certain distinct characteristics different from the Old Covenant.

VI. These distinct characteristics support the distinct nature of the New Covenant. As a result, *The Distinct nature of the New Covenant helps us to identify the Lord’s church today.*

VII. Through Jeremiah’s prophecy God shows two distinct characteristics of the New Covenant.

1. Forgiveness of sins are found in the New Covenant.

2. Salvation through education is found in The New Covenant.

Trans: Let’s consider our first point.

1. Forgiveness of sins are found in the New Covenant.

A. Under the first covenant there was no forgiveness

1. The Old Covenant was a Law of death, **2Cor. 3:7**

2. One could not be justified under the old, **Romans 3:19,20**

3. Man could not be freed from the penalty of their sin, Acts 13:38,39

4. The old reminded man that he was a sinner, **Hebrews 10:1-4**

B. Under the Second Covenant there is forgiveness,

1. **Jer. 31:34;** Heb. 8:12

2. Why? Forgiveness of sins is based upon faith and this is only found under the New Covenant, Gal. 3:21-27

3. The New Covenant allows us to draw near to God to receive forgiveness,

Hebrews 10:14-18

Appl: Jeremiah said that the New Covenant was not going to be like the one God made with Moses. So we ask, in what way? He says that the NC provides forgiveness of sins, something the blood of bulls and goats could never do.

The Law given to Moses simply made you aware of sin and that you were a sinner, it didn't provide the means for forgiveness. The Law is not forgiving, it is a set of rules that must be complied with, if you don't you have broken the Law and the Law cannot provide the means to take that nor the punishment away. Breaking the Law makes you a sinner, you missed the mark of Holiness, you are unrighteous separated from a sinless and righteous God, Rom 6:23

In contrast, the New Covenant provides forgiveness, because forgiveness is based upon a promise which is received through faith in Jesus.

The Distinct nature of the New Covenant helps us to identify the Lord's church today. It's those who have forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus.

Trans: Jeremiah reveals a second distinct characteristic of the New Covenant.

2. Salvation through education is found in The New Covenant.

A. Jeremiah makes this clear in, **Jer. 31:33-34.**

B. The Hebrew writer repeats this doctrine, Heb. 8:11

C. Under the Old covenant God's people did not know Him at the time they entered into a covenant relationship with Him.

1. Hebrew children were born into a covenant relationship with God because of the covenant God had made with Abraham, Gen. 17:1-4

2. Circumcision was a token of their covenant relationship,
Gen. 17:9-11
John 7:22-23

3. As they grew they were taught to know God and their special relationship with Him, **Rom. 7:7-9**

C. Under the New Covenant, without exception says Jeremiah, all who are in a covenant relationship with God will know it.

1. Jeremiah prophesied salvation by education under the New Covenant when he stated, "They shall all know me"

2. Isaiah said the same thing, **Isa. 2:3**

3. Those who want to be in a covenant relationship with God under the New Covenant are going to know what God wants them to do so they can come into that relationship with Him.

D. The NT Scriptures show us that Jesus and the apostles followed this pattern of salvation through education.

1. We know that Jesus calls all to him, **Matt. 11:28**

2. In **John 6:44-45** Jesus explains how this happens.

a) Jesus states that we can only come to Him if the Father draws us, **v.44.**

b) He then explains that God draws men to Christ through being taught, **v.45. (x2)**

c) Those who hear are the ones who learn how to come to Christ, when they do they find salvation, **v.45**

3. Salvation through education is what Jesus taught in the great commission, Matt. 28:18-20
4. Paul taught this same distinct message, **Rom. 5:1; 10:17**

Appl: We can see that the New Covenant is distinct from the old in that it is a covenant relationship that comes through knowledge.

Only those who hear the word of God and learn what He desires can be in a covenant relationship with Him.

The Distinct nature of the New Covenant helps us to identify the Lord's church today. Those who hear and do what God commands are His covenant people.

Con: From last week's lesson we know that *God's covenant people, can be identified by the distinct covenant they keep.* This distinct covenant is the New Covenant and there is only one.

Today we have seen that this New Covenant is not only distinct because it is new and singular, but it is also distinct because of its nature.

1. **Forgiveness of sins are found in the New Covenant.**
2. **Salvation through education is found in The New Covenant.**

God puts his laws into our minds and writes them on our hearts through being taught. Inherent in the term "law" is the idea of obedience.

A. When one learns about Christ and the laws of the New Covenant for the forgiveness of sins and obeys those laws from the heart, he becomes a covenant-related child of God.

B. Thus all who know the gospel and obey the laws of the New Covenant can be identified as God's people.

The Distinct nature of the New Covenant helps us to identify the Lord's church today. It's those who have forgiveness of sins.

Illust: 2Cor. 3:1-18 (PPT Charts)

The Distinct nature of the New Covenant helps us to identify the Lord's church today.

“New Covenant and Remission”

(Lesson 7)

- I.** In our two previous lessons I have spoken on the Distinct Nature of the New Covenant.
1. In the first of those two lesson we saw that God’s covenant people today can be identified by the distinct New Covenant they keep.
 2. Last week we learned that we can identify that New Covenant because of it’s distinct nature, **Heb. 8:9**
 - A. It is a covenant wherein we have forgiveness of sins, **Heb. 8:12**
 - B. It is a covenant relationship that comes about through being taught, **John 6:44,45**

II. The purpose of this lesson is to discuss in greater detail the distinction of the New Covenant because of the remission of sins offered under it. As we will see... *Remissions of sins are only found under the New Covenant.*

Trans: With this in mind let us now consider the New Covenant and remission of sins

1. The New Covenant was established for the Remission of Sins

- A. The Scriptures are clear that remission of sins could not be obtained under the Old Covenant, Heb. 10:1-4
- B. Why? As a legal system the old law required sinless perfection, **Lev. 18:5**
- C. It condemned all who violated it at the first infraction, Gal. 3:10
- D. Thus those who sinned under the old Covenant faced the consequences of their sin.
 1. It’s not that the law was faulty. Paul says in Rom. 7:12 that “*the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.*”
 2. It was the people who were to blame, **Heb. 8:7,8**
 3. They gave into their lusts, **Romans 8:3**
- E. Some might ask, why the Law then? Paul addressed this question, **Gal. 3:19,24**
- F. The NC was established through the blood of Jesus.
 1. **Luke 22:20**
 2. The reason it was through His blood is found in, **Heb. 9:22, Lev. 17:11**
 3. As high Priest, Jesus offered himself unto God as a sin offering, then He took His own blood into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9:11-14; 23-24
- G. The NC was also established on better promises, **Heb. 8:6.**
 1. The better promise was that we would be justified by faith and not by keeping the law perfectly, Gal. 3:24-27
 2. It was also established on better promises for both our sake and for those who lived under the Old Covenant, **Heb. 9:15**
 3. His blood flowed both directions, **Heb. 11:39,40.**
- H. The New Covenant established in His blood is the means of Sanctification for all who choose to do the will of the Father.

Trans: Having seen that the NC has been given that we might have the forgiveness of sins we should now ask, How do we receive this forgiveness?

2. Receiving Forgiveness under the New Covenant.

A. Where does sanctification come from?

1. We are sanctified by the blood of Christ, **Heb. 10:29**

2. But we are also sanctified by faith in Christ, Acts 26:16-18

B. Jeremiah also promised that those who had the laws of the NC in their minds and hearts would have forgiveness of sins, **Jer. 31:33,34**. Three thoughts about this,

1. The laws of the NC are put into our heart through being taught,

2. Inherent in the term “law” is the idea of obedience.

3. It must be concluded that sanctification by the blood of Christ under the NC can only occur when our faith in Him leads us to obey the laws of the New Covenant which we have been taught, **Heb. 10:14-17**.

C. Whatever the NC teaches men to do to receive forgiveness of sins must, therefore, be the laws of the NC, to obey from the heart for forgiveness.

1. Faith is one of the laws of the New Covenant,

a) We are saved by faith in Christ, **Rom. 5:1**

b) Thus faith is a law of the New Covenant

c) We must believe in Christ to receive remission of sins.

2. Repentance is a law of the NC

a) Repentance is unto salvation, **Acts 17:30**

b) Thus repentance is a law of the New Covenant

c) We must repent of our sins to have remission of sins.

3. Confessing Christ is a law of the NC

a) Confessing Christ is unto salvation, **Rom. 10:10**

b) Thus confession is a law of the NC

c) We must therefore confess to have remission of sins.

4. Baptism is one of the laws of the New Covenant,

a) On the day of Pentecost Peter commanded those who crucified Christ to repent and be baptized for the remissions of sins, **Acts 2:38; 1Pet. 3:21**

b) Since the laws of the New Covenant are for remission of sins and baptism is for remission of sins, baptism must be a law of the New Covenant.

c) We must therefore be baptized to receive remission of sins as prescribed by NC law.

Appl: Jeremiah stated that God gave the New Covenant for the forgiveness of sins. Since the blood of Christ was shed for the forgiveness of sins, His blood cannot be separated from the NC nor obedience to the laws of the New Covenant as conditions to receive the remission of sins.

1. All who place their faith in Christ and obey the conditions of pardon under the NC receive forgiveness of sins and thus are saved.

2. In doing this they become covenant related children of God.

3. God's children are thus identified today by identifying those who have met the conditions of this pardon.

As we have seen... ***Remissions of sins are only found under the New Covenant.***

Those who obey the laws of the New Covenant have remission of sins and are identified as God's covenant people.

What Covenant passed?

(Lesson 8)

I. For the past several weeks I have been speaking on the distinct New Covenant of God's covenant people today, Christians

II. We know that at one time God had made a covenant with the children of Israel, but we also know that that covenant was not meant to be permanent, **Jer. 31:31-34; Heb 8:8,9**

III. Jeremiah makes it clear, the New Covenant that was to come was to be distinct in nature. *It was not going to be like....*

IV. In our past lessons it was concluded that this New Covenant was distinct in at least two ways.

1. It would be a covenant wherein one might receive the forgiveness of sins, **Jer. 31:34**
2. It would be a covenant relationship based upon being educated in God's will, **Heb. 8:10,11; Jer. 31:33,34**

V. As we close out this section in our series on the Distinctive Nature of the New Testament church I would like to offer one more lesson concerning the Old and New covenants.

VI. What we want to ask ourselves today is this, "What Covenant passed away?" You're probably thinking, the Old Covenant. This is true but we need to be clear about what that means.

VII. What we will find is that **The Law of Moses, in its entirety is no longer valid for God's people today**

Trans: Honestly, much religious division can be traced to a failure in making a distinction in this area.

I. What Covenant passed away?

1. We know the Law was nailed to the cross, the Scriptures are very clear about this, **Eph. 2:14-16.**
2. What Law was nailed to the cross?
 - A. We know the Law and the Covenant are one and the same,
 1. **Deut. 5:1-3**
 - a) Moses speaks of the covenant, **v.2**
 - b) In vs. 7-21 he then lists the ten commandments
 2. **2 Chronicles**
 - a) The book of the Law was discovered under the reign of King Josiah, **2Chr. 34:14,15**
 - b) A few verses later this book is referred to as the book of the covenant, **2Chr. 34:30-32**
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
3. We can conclude then that whatever happened to one happened to the other.
 - A. **Romans 7:4-7**
 - B. Here Paul reminds the Jews that they were freed from the Law.
 - C. He tells us which law they were freed from in v. 7
 - D. This is the 10th commandment.
6. There is no question that Christians do not live under the Ten Commandments.

7. Some will say then, I suppose we can covet and steal and have other Gods before us etc...

8. We need to understand that the Law did not make these things wrong. They were wrong before the Law was written. This means that nine of the Laws will be just as wrong even if the Law is removed. It was not the Law that made these wrong, **Rom. 3:19,20**

9. They are wrong because they are sins against God and that same principle stands today under the NC

10. Jesus Himself declares this in His sermon on the mount, Matt. 5:20

Con: By understanding which Law was nailed to the cross, we need not worry about what Paul writes in **Gal. 3:10** and replacing one of the commandments (the 4th) with a day that was not authorized under the Old Law.

We should recognize that we live under a New Covenant where sin is still sin even without the Ten Commandments or any other part of the Old Law.

The Distinct Nature of The church (Lesson 9)

I. Over the past several months we have been looking into the concept that the church Jesus built, is distinct in it's nature.

II. Because of this nature, we can reproduce His church today just as it was in the first century. We do that by following the Divine pattern God has laid out for us in the Scriptures.

III. If we do this we eliminate religious division and confusion.

IV. In previous lessons the Scriptures have revealed that the first century church followed the pattern given to them by God, and thus they were united in every congregation.

1. They were united in doctrine.

Gal. 1:6-8

2Tim. 2:1,2

2. They were united in their worship,

Acts 2:42

1Cor. 11:16

V. As we continue this series our lesson today will focus on the Biblical definition of what the church is.

VI. When we finish we should conclude that ... *The Lord's church can be identified by it's distinct nature.*

VII. As we have already seen in past lessons the Lord's church is distinct.

The Lord's church abides by a distinct doctrine, John 17:17

The Lord's church lives under a distinct covenant, Luke 22:19-20

Trans: Let consider another aspect of the distinct nature of the church. We find this distinct nature through understanding what the church is.

1. The Biblical Definition of Church

A. The General sense

1. To the Greeks the word was *Ekklesia*

2. It is a compound word from *ek* meaning "out of" and *klesis*, "a calling"

3. **Acts 19:32,39-41** (Paul in Ephesus and Demetrius the silversmith)

4. *Ekklesia* thus embraced the idea of an assembled group of people who were called out of one realm, like homes and places of business, into another.

B. The word Church also had reference to that which was both local and universal .

C. In the local sense the church is an organized congregation of Christians in a particular locale.

1. Acts 13:1

2. **Acts 20:17**

3. These are the organized bodies in different locales throughout the world.

D. In the Universal sense the church is the worldwide body of the called out.

1. **Acts 9:31**

2. Eph. 5:23,25,32

3. **1Cor. 12:12,13**

4. Paul indicated that local congregations made up the universal church,
Rom. 16:16

Appl: Simply put the word church makes reference to those who have been called out from some place to assemble in some other place.

This called out group can be found either locally or universally.

Trans: Now the nature of being a “called out” group makes you distinct. But there is more involved when we are making reference to the religious body of the called out in the name of Christ. It is here that we see a clear distinction from all other called out groups.

2. The Biblical Use of Church

A. In the New Testament *Ekklesia* is translated “church” where it refers to the saved body of Christ, **Acts 20:28**

B. The redemptive meaning of the word *Ekklesia* is found in the Lord’s statement in **Matt. 16:18**.

1. Jesus said He was going to build His church (called out).
2. When we understand how He does this and what is involved in it, we get a better understanding of what the church is.
 - a. He calls us by His gospel,
 - 1) **John 6:44,45**
 - 2) **Acts 2:38,39**
 - 3) **2Thess. 2:14**
 - b. He calls out of the darkness of ignorance into His wonderful light, **1Peter. 2:9**
 - c. He calls us into His kingdom, **1Thess. 2:10-12**
 - d. He calls us to be holy, sanctified, set apart from the world, **1Cor. 1:1,2**
3. Those who hear the call and answer it in obedient faith become the called out body of Christ.
4. This saved body is His church, His body of believers that He called and saved out of sin.

Appl: In the New Testament the word *Ekklesia* took on a specific meaning when speaking of those who were followers of Christ.

The distinct nature of this group of those called out is realized in understanding what it means to be a member of the church of Christ.

The church in it’s distinct nature consist of,

1. **Those called out of the world of sin through the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
2. **Those called into Christ’s kingdom**
3. **Those called to live righteously and holy**
4. **It is the universal body of believers found in local congregations and referred to as the churches of Christ, Rom. 16:16.**

What this tells us is that... *The Lord’s church can be identified by it’s distinct nature.*

Identifying the Church (Lesson 10)

I. In last weeks lesson I provided a biblical definition for the church, (*ekklesia*)

1. Those called out through the gospel of Jesus Christ, **2Thess. 2:14**
2. Those called out of the darkness of sin into His light, **1Peter 2:9**
3. Those called into Christ's kingdom, **1Thess. 2:12**
4. Those called out to live righteously and holy, **1Cor. 1:1,2**
5. It is the universal called out believers found in local congregations.

II. Now that we have a good Biblical definition of the church, today we will be considering ways to identify the church.

III. Identifying the church is of the greatest importance because it will aid us in removing religious division and avoid the trap of Satan.

IV. It would be naïve for us to think that Satan does not have his own preachers, his own doctrine and his own churches, **2Cor. 11:3, 13-15**

V. Fortunately, **The essential nature of Christ's church manifests a distinct identity making it easily identifiable for those seeking salvation today.**

Trans: In our lesson today we want to consider a few descriptions which define the essential nature of the church. These will take us one step closer to identifying the church.

Descriptions which identify the Church's essential nature.

A. The Body of Christ

1. Paul refers to the called out (church) in this way
2. **Eph. 1:22-23**
3. **Col. 1:18**

B. The Saved Body of Christ

1. When we elect to receive the saving grace of God by an obedience of faith in Christ, the Lord adds us to the body, Acts 2:40,41
2. The body He adds us to is the body of the saved, **Acts 2:46,47**
3. **Eph. 5:23**

C. Those purchased by the Blood of Christ

1. Christians are former slaves to sin who have been redeemed from the auction block, **Rom. 6:17,18**
2. The redemptive price was Christ's blood, **Eph. 1:7**
3. Thus, the called out (church) was purchased with Christ' blood, **Acts 20:28**
4. The called out (church) is therefore composed of all who have been redeemed by Christ's blood.

D. The Sanctified

1. Paul makes this claim, **1Cor. 1:1, 2**
2. The called out (church) is the body of the sanctified, the set apart from sin.

E. The Body of the Reconciled

1. Sinners are reconciled to God through the Christ, **2Cor. 5:18, 19**
2. When we are reconciled, it is "in one body" Eph. 2:13-16

- F. Those washed in water with the word
 1. The church is composed of those whose sins have been washed away by the blood of Jesus in the water.
 2. **Eph. 5:25, 26**
 3. **1Cor. 6:11**
 4. Heb. 10:22.
 5. **Rev. 7:14**

- G. Those who are in Christ
 1. All who are in Christ constitute the church
 2. **1Thess. 1:1**

- H. Those registered in Heaven
 1. The Bible speak of Christians whose names are in the book of life
 2. **Phil 4:3**
 3. The Hebrew writers refers to it as the “church of the firstborn who are registered in Heaven, Heb. 12:23
 4. Christ is the first born, **Col. 1:18**

Appl: What does all this mean? In these descriptions we have been given the essential nature of the church.

Each description shows us that those who have been saved from their sin are actually the church.

The church is the body of all the saved, the redeemed, those reconciled to God, the sanctified; those who have been washed in water by the word and are in Christ; those whose names are registered in Heaven. They are the called out of the first born. The church of Christ

And so... **The essential nature of Christ’s church manifests a distinct identity making it easily identifiable for those seeking salvation today.**

Con: The essential nature of the church is significant to its identity. Inasmuch as the church is the body of the saved, all we have to do is identify how men are saved and the church will immediately manifest her identity.

When we identify...

1. How one is added to the body
2. How one is purchased by the blood of Christ
3. How one is reconciled to God
4. How one is cleansed, washed in water by the word
5. How one comes to be in Christ
6. And how one name is registered in Heaven

Then we can identify the church.

Identifying the church through the Saved

(Lesson 11)

I. As I concluded my lesson last week I stated, *“The inherent nature of the church is significant to its identity. Inasmuch as the church is the body of the saved, all we have to do is identify how men are saved and the church will immediately manifest her identity.”*

II. As we have been going through this series of lessons on the Distinctive Nature of the New Testament church we have been considering those things which prove Christ’ church to be distinct and identifiable in today’s world of religious confusion.

III. What we are trying to do is simply follow what God has clearly revealed for us in the Scriptures so that we might identify the church and do what is necessary to be part of it.

V. Today we want to continue our quest to identify the Lord’s church. To do this we must address the issue of how man is saved, (**remember the definitions of the church**).

VI. *The Lord’s church is manifested when we understand how one is saved from the consequences of their sin.*

VII. The only way to know how man is saved is to search the Scriptures and find what God requires for us to be saved or pardoned of our sins. These acts can be referred to as the laws of pardon and as such they must be obeyed to be saved.

Trans: Before we go on we must back up a little and discuss the need for these laws of pardon.

1. Why the Laws of Pardon?

- A. The scriptures are clear that there is such a thing as sin, Rom. 3:23
- B. The Scriptures also make it clear that sin is lawlessness, **1 John 3:4**
- C. Those who are law breakers are sinners,
- D. Accompanying this, we find that there is a penalty to be paid for sin, **Rom 1:28-32**
 - 1. The reason there is a penalty is because God is infinitely just,
Psalm 89:14
Isa 30:18
 - 2. Justice requires a penalty to be paid for law breaking, **Prov. 21:15**
 - a. For example if a man is guilty of murder, justice is served when this man pay’s the penalty for his crime. If murder were not a crime there is no penalty. But, since it is, to let him walk away without paying the penalty is not justice.
 - b. Likewise, God being infinitely just cannot allow our sins to go unpunished.
 - c. This would violate His own nature and it is not within His nature to do that.
- E. Our sin separates us from God and condemns us to the Devils hell, **Matt. 25:41**

Illust: Adam and Eve Genesis 2&3

- 1. In the Garden we have a law given by God, Gen. 2:16-17
- 2. In the Garden we have the law broken, Gen. 3:6,7

3. In the Garden we have justice served, Gen. 3:16,17; 22-24

Appl: Bottom line? We are sinners, we are guilty of breaking God's laws and as such, God being a just God must punish us in the eternal fires of hell for our sin.

This is why we need the laws of pardon. If we don't have those laws and don't obey those laws, Hell is what we have to look forward to because we have sinned against God!

Trans: Let us now consider the laws of pardon which we must obey to become one of the "called out of Christ" and avoid hell.

2. The Laws of Pardon and induction into the church.

A. The Scriptures teach that we are saved by the blood of Jesus, **1Pet. 1:17-19**

B. The Scriptures also teach that we are saved by grace through faith, **Eph 2:8**

C. Faith then is the preeminent law of pardon, Rom. 5:1

1. We should realize though, the faith that saves is not merely being convinced in our minds that Jesus is God's Son and our Savior, that He died for us and that He rose again.
2. In fact, faith is much more than this.

D. The faith that saves involves more than simply being convinced that Jesus is God's son can be seen in God's word itself,

1. **Hebrews 3:18,19**
2. **John 3:36**
3. In these passages faith and obedience go hand in hand. The two cannot be separated. This is why faith cannot merely be a conviction of the heart.
4. Let me illustrate this, **Heb. 11:30, Joshua 6:3-5**

E. One preacher explains it this way.

1. He says faith is a collecting bin.
2. In his garage he has different bins. Some are labeled "toys," some are labeled "camping stuff," and some are "labeled clothes."
3. If you were to open the camping bin you would find among other things, a tent, a hatchet, fire-starters and a small propane tank.
4. The label "camping stuff" is just a generic phrase that sums up all the specific items that are in that bin.

F. Some words in the Bible are used exactly like those bins with those generic labels.

1. Luke 10:25-28
2. How could Jesus be right in saying this when there are actually hundreds of commands in the law of Moses?
3. The answer is, because "love God" and "love your neighbor" function as collecting bins.
4. Like two big collecting bins, "love God" and "love your neighbor" contain and summarize all the specific commandments in the Law of Moses.
5. Under the bin "love God" you would see specific items such as,
 - a. "You shall have no other Gods before you"
 - b. "You shall not worship them or serve them"
 - c. "You shall not take the name of the Lord you God in vain"
6. Under the bin "love your neighbor" you would see specific items such as,
 - a. "You shall not murder"
 - b. "You shall not commit adultery"

- c. "You shall not steal"
- d. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"

G. So it is with faith.

1. We have seen this in both John 3:36 and Hebrews 13:18-19, where belief and obedience are the same thing
2. Faith is actually a collection bin of all those Laws of pardon that we must obey in order to have forgiveness of our sins.
3. Until we have obeyed those laws we have not expressed true faith, and since it is by faith we are saved, we would still be unsaved.

H. What then is in the collecting bin of faith?

1. It will be all those laws of pardon which follow faith, but come before salvation.
2. All commands which precede receiving Gods grace are those laws of pardon which we must obey. These are all part of true biblical faith. (*Remember faith and obedience cannot be separated*).
3. Simply find those laws and you have the pattern laid out for us in Scripture which leads to the church.

I. Here are the laws of pardon which define the church of called out. **Rom. 5:1 (chart)**

1. First there must be belief, **John 8:24**
2. There must be confession of Jesus' lordship in your life, **Romans 10:9,10**
3. One must repent, **Acts 2:38**
4. One must be baptized, **Acts 22:16**

Appl: The "called out" are those who believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that He shed His blood for their sins; they confess His Lordship in their lives; they repent and they are baptized so their sins might be forgiven, washed away through the blood of Christ.

When a sinner expresses their faith in sincere obedience, they are added to the church. It is here that the church is manifested,

Acts 2:40,41

Acts 2:47

The Lord's church is manifested when we understand how one is saved from the consequences of their sin.

Baptism a Law of Pardon (Lesson 12)

I. In last weeks lesson we were going over the concept that if we could identify the laws of pardon, which one must obey to come into a covenant relationship with God; we could then identify the church. The reason being, the church is the saved body of Christ, those who have obeyed these laws of pardon, (**Eph 5:23**).

II. It was concluded that those laws of pardon are all the commands that accompany faith and come before receiving Gods grace, **Eph. 2:8**

III. Those laws of pardon are...

1. Faith, **Rom. 5:1**
2. Confession, **Rom 10:10**
3. Repentance, **Acts 3:19**
4. Baptism, **Acts 22:16**

IV. It was noted that all these acts come before salvation and accompany our faith; defining what that true Biblical faith is which leads to the receiving of God's grace. (**Chart**)

V. All who have obeyed these laws make up the church.

VI. Today we are going to consider more closely just one of those laws of pardon, Baptism.

VIII. The reason I want to speak about baptism over the other laws of pardon is because this one seems to be a division maker in the religious world.

1. Most if not all denominations will agree that one must believe, repent and confess before they can be saved. But when they get to baptism they balk and claim that it is not part of God's law of pardon. and thus not necessary to our salvation.

2. But as we have seen since baptism comes after faith and before grace it has to be part of the laws of pardon,

IX. I want to make something very clear about baptism and it's relationship to our pardon before we begin. It is no more important than any of the other laws of pardon. To leave out one is to have an incomplete faith and that kind of faith will not save you. (**Heb 11:30; Joshua 6:1ff**)

X. But at the same time we need to understand that... **Because of it's design and purpose Baptism is necessary to receive the forgiveness of sins which comes through the blood of Jesus**

Trans: In helping us have a better understanding of baptism being one of the laws of pardon we need to first look more closely at how it is tied to Jesus as our sacrifice for sin..

1. The shedding of Jesus' blood

A. Last week we saw that God cannot just allow our sins to go unpunished because he is an infinitely just God. So, He did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

B. God sent His Son to pay the penalty for our sins,

1. **1Peter 2:24**

2. **1John 4:10**

C. How did this happen? In His death (the shedding of His blood) life was restored.

1. Heb. 9:22

2. **Lev. 17:11**

D. Jesus offered His blood to make atonement for our sins. Since blood gives life, Jesus gave His blood that we might have life.

1. Think of it like this; our sins killed us but Jesus' blood gave us life.

2. Heb. 9:11-14; 23-24

E. In this one act God remained just and provided a way for justice to be served .

Romans 3:23-26

F. Because God paid the penalty for us every individual can be reconciled to Him.

1. **Rom. 5:1-2, 8-10**

2. 1Pet 1:17-19

Appl: So we see that it is through the shedding of Jesus' blood we have an opportunity to receive forgiveness of our sins. But how does this tie to baptism? We find this is the design and purpose of baptism.

2. The design and purpose of baptism

A. The baptism which is one of the laws of pardon and which is part of our faith is distinct in design and purpose from other baptisms found in the Scriptures or taught by many today.

B. This distinction enables us to know that we have been baptized in the way and manner authorized by God.

C. The baptism, which is one of the laws of pardon, is distinct in its design in at least five areas, and they distinguish it from the design and purpose of other baptisms,

1. The baptism which is tied to our salvation is singular; there is only one,

Eph. 4:4-6

2. The Baptism which is tied to our salvation is immersion,

a. The common original Greek word for baptism is *baptizo*.

b. The meaning is to immerse, dip or submerge

- c. To dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)
 - d. Some today practice a baptism of sprinkling or pouring.
 - 1. But the word for sprinkle is, *rhantizo*
 - 2. And the word for pour is, *cheo*
 - e. To use these words for baptism would be like me saying I'm going to immerse the submarine by sprinkling some water on it.
 - f. Or to say I sprinkled water on myself when I plunged into the pool.
3. The Baptism which is tied to our salvation involves water,
- a. **Acts 8:35,36**
 - b. **Acts 10:47,48**
 - c. 1Pet. 3:18-21
4. The Baptism which is tied to our salvation is a burial,
- a. **Rom. 6:3,4**
 - b. **Col. 2:12**
 - c. The analogy of baptism to a burial corresponds to both the dying of the sinner to his sins in a watery grave and to the fact that baptism, which is immersion, is indeed a burial in water.
5. The Baptism which is tied to our salvation is directly tied to the shedding of Jesus' Blood. We see this in that the purpose of both are identical and distinct. What one does so does the other.
- A. Both are tied to the forgiveness of sins
 - 1. Acts 2:38
 - 2. **Eph 1:7**
 - B. Both are tied to becoming the Lords possession.
 - 1. **Matt.28:19,20**
 - a. *eis to onoma* a common phrase for transfer of ownership
 - b. *ev onomati* at the command of, Col. 3:17
 - 2. **Acts 20:28**
 - C. Both are tied to the washing away of sins
 - 1. **Acts 22:16**
 - 2. **Rev. 7:14**
 - 3. **Rev. 1:5**
 - D. Both are tied to being united with Christ
 - 1. **Rom 6:3-7**
 - 2. **Matt. 26:27-29**
 - 3. **1Cor. 10:16,17**

E. Both are tied to being clothed with Christ

1. **Gal. 3:26,27**
2. **Rom 3:24,25**

F. To receive a clear conscience

1. **1 Peter 3:21**
2. **Heb. 9:14**

G. To be sanctified,

1. **Eph. 5:25,26**
2. **Heb. 13:12**

Appl: As we can see the Scriptures are clear concerning the baptism, which is one of the laws of pardon.

1. Baptism is distinct in that there is only one for the penitent sinner.
2. Baptism is commanded as an act of faith in obedience to the will of Christ
3. Baptism is full immersion in water and as such is an act of burial wherein one is buried with Christ and becomes Gods possession, receives a clear conscience, has sins washed away, dies to sin, is clothed with Christ and is sanctified.

The connection between the shedding of Jesus' blood and baptism can be seen in that they each serve the same purpose.

So, just as we need the blood of Jesus we also need baptism because it is the means by which we acquire the affect of that shed blood, we cannot have one without the other and still be saved.

Con: Before we leave our lesson. I would like to say one more thing in regards to any law of pardon, ***you cannot be taught wrong and obey right!***

There are many baptisms out there today being taught.

But, any baptism being taught and practiced which does not possess these five characteristics cannot be the baptism which is one of the laws of pardon and thus to participate in it would do you no good in regards to salvation.

Only the baptism, which God has commanded as a law of pardon, can be tied to our salvation.

1. Sprinkling or pouring do not qualify simply because they are not immersion. Being "baptized" in this way is not baptism at all.
2. The baptism that many practice as a show of already being saved will not work, because the baptism, which is one of the laws of pardon, comes before salvation not after.

We need to be sure that we have not only been baptized in the right way but we did it for the right reason. No part of this can be left out.

That's why we can, in good conscience say, **Because of its design and purpose Baptism is necessary to receive the forgiveness of sins which comes through the blood of Jesus.**

Without question it is the blood of Jesus which saves us; but we need to go to where that blood is if we are to receive the benefit of that blood.

The blood of Jesus is in a place of faith. By demonstrating faith through obedience to this law of pardon, Baptism, we get to where that blood is and then we receive the benefit of it, the forgiveness of sins.



Christ' church and Denominationalism

(Lesson 13)

I. Throughout this series of lessons on the church, I have often used the word denomination when speaking of other religious bodies that profess to follow Christ and His teachings.

II. Today most religious bodies believe that there is nothing wrong with denominationalism.

1. They believe it is all right to be divided
2. They believe that we can all get to heaven by taking different routes
3. They believe essentially that it doesn't matter a whole lot what you believe.
4. How do I know this? Simply by the fact that they are willing to accept each other even when contradictory teachings and a variety of religious practices are being promoted.

III. In our lesson today I want us to consider this concept of denominationalism.

IV. Our focus will be on whether denominationalism is acceptable to God or not.

1. If denominationalism is not authorized by God then the mere existence of denominations is contrary to His teachings and those promoting this kind of belief will be judged accordingly.
2. On the other hand, if we find that denominationalism is biblical, being authorized by God, then their practices, although varying, will be legitimate simply based upon the fact that God approves of denominationalism, which promotes doctrinal division.

Trans. To begin we need to have a good understanding of what the word denomination means.

1. What is denominationalism?

A. Funk and Wagnall states that a denomination is, *A body of Christians having a distinguishing name; sect.*

B. A second definition I found is this, *“a doctrinally distinct body of professed Christians, but not the only Christians, who believe that they have been saved by grace through faith in Christ apart from any other requirement and who have denominated themselves with a distinctive name by which they distinguish their characteristic doctrine and practice from other denominations.*

C. These definitions don't sound half bad. Here denominations are defined as a body of Christians. The only difference between these denominational groups is their doctrine (teaching from the Bible) and religious practices.

Appl: Here we have a basic definition for denomination. It is interesting to note that I did not once turn to my Bible to find a biblical definition. The reason being, there is not one. So we cannot provide a biblical definition, only a secular one.

Trans: Now that we have our definition, let's consider what God's word has to say about his followers and see if He promotes or approves of denominationalism.

2. Christ church and Unity

A. There is no question that Jesus died for His one church.

1. **Eph. 5:23**
2. **Col. 1:24**

B. Before His death He prayed that His church would be one, John 17:17-21

C. After His death His church was commanded to be united in all things, **1Cor. 1:10-13**

D. Consequently we find in the Scriptures the church following Christ' desire for unity.

1. The church was united in doctrine,
 - a. Gal. 1:6-9
 - b. **2Tim. 2:2**
 - c. **Phil. 3:15-17, 4:9**
2. The church was united in religious practices,
 - a. **Acts 2:42**
 - b. **1Cor. 16:1,2**
 - c. **1Cor. 7:17**
3. The church taught a doctrine of unity in all things.
 - a. **Eph. 4:4,5**
 - b. **Phil. 1:27; 2:1,2**
4. The church taught that there was only one way into the church,
 - a. **Eph. 2:8**
 - b. **Faith**
 - c. **Confession**
 - d. **Repentance**
 - e. **Baptism**
5. Division in the church was condemned,
 - a. **1Cor. 10:16-17**
 - b. **1Cor. 11:17-19**

Appl: Here we have a description of Christ' church. Did His church have struggles with unity? YES. Did they promote division as being something to be pursued to fix that problem, NO!

When they were having struggles being united they were commanded to put away their differences and follow Gods' will.

1. They were to teach the same doctrine.
2. Worship in the same way.
3. Pursue the same spiritual goals, **Col 3:1-2**

The reason Christ' church cannot be a denomination is because denominationalism, which is division, is condemned. By this one simple fact it cannot be a denomination.

Knowing that Christ church cannot be a denomination, denominations cannot be Christ' church.

As long as denominations teach doctrines which are not upheld by the Scriptures they will remain outside of His church.. When they turn to His will then they will no longer be a denomination but will in fact be His church.

Con: If we can find one passage that ever supported God allowing His people to teach differing and contradictory doctrines and still be approved unto Him then we could accept the idea of denominationalism as a legitimate religious practice.

But this would be the strangest concept of all. It would teach that God never really had a plan; that what we teach doesn't matter; and that there are a thousand ways to get to receive forgiveness of sins and to heaven.

If this is the case then the whole Bible is worthless because it doesn't mean anything. It is a book that speaks of a God of confusion who is so vague in revealing His will that He has just left it up to us to determine what that will is; and according to the denominational world that will varies from person to person and from group to group.

Illust: The planting of a seed, Luke 8:5ff, *the seed is the word of God*

The Establishment of The Church

(Lesson 14)

I. Throughout this series of lesson on identifying the Lord's church we have considered such topics as...

- 1. The pattern concept**
- 2. The distinct doctrine of the church.**
- 3. The distinct nature of the church**
- 4. The definition of the church**
- 5. Identify the church through the saved**
- 6. Christ' church and denominationalism**

II. Each lessons was intended to give us greater insights into the identity of our Lord's church.

III. The purpose of our lesson today is to trace the church back to it's establishment.

IV. The time and place of the establishment of the Lord's church identifies His church.

V. By going go back in time and determining when the Lord's church came into existence, we will have another tool to help us identify His church.

VI. You see, any church which came into existence after the Lord's church cannot be His church.

VII. It's like any great landmark, Mount Rushmore for example. We know where , by whom and when it was built. No other can take it's place.

Trans: Before we get into determining when the church began we need to consider the relationship between the church and the kingdom.

1. The Relationship of the church and the Kingdom.

A. The reason it's important to understand this is because many passages refer to God's people being part of both the church and the kingdom simultaneously.

B. When the Scriptures speaks of the Kingdom it is also making reference to the church. These passages then provide additional support as to churches existence.

C. It also enables us to understand that with the establishment of the church came the full realization of the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy and the reign of Christ over His church and kingdom.

- D. We can see the interrelationship of the church and kingdom in several ways
1. **Jesus interrelated the terms church and kingdom, Matt 16:13-19**
 - a. Jesus refers to both His church and the kingdom
 - b. He speaks of both in the future tense.

 2. **The church and Kingdom are both composed of Saints**
 1. **1Cor. 1:2** - (saints, church)
 2. Col. 1:1-2, 12,13, (saints, Kingdom)

 3. **The Kingdom and church consist of blood purchased men.**
 1. **Acts 20:28** - church
 2. Rev. 5:9,10 - kingdom

 4. **The Kingdom and the church are comprised of priests**
 1. The church is God's spiritual house, **1Tim. 3:15**
 2. God's spiritual house is made up of priests, **1Pet. 2:5**
 3. The kingdom is comprised of those priests, Rev. 5:9,10

Appl: These examples show us the kingdom and the church are interrelated. They are so interrelated they cannot be separated.

This being the case we would expect to find the kingdom and the church coexisting. This is exactly what the Scriptures teach.

Trans: Now let's consider the establishment of the church

2. The Prophesied Kingdom

- A. To begin we need to establish a time line for the kingdom. This will help us to see clearly when it came.

- B. Daniel and Isaiah both prophesied the coming of the kingdom
 1. Dan. 2: 31-45 - In the time of the Roman Empire
 2. **Isa. 2:2-4** - From Jerusalem

- C. In the time of Jesus we know that the kingdom was at hand.
 1. **Matt. 3:2** (John the immerser)
 2. **Matt. 4:17** (Jesus)
 3. **Matt. 10:7** (the Apostles were commanded to preach it)

- D. According to **Mark 9:1** it would come before some of those standing there died.

E. After Jesus' death the kingdom had not yet come.

1. **Mark. 15:43**
2. Acts 1:6

G. In Colossians 1:13, Paul states that we are in Christ' kingdom

1. The word rendered "transferred" is often used in the sense of removing a people from one country to another; see Josephus, Ant. ix. 11. 1.
2. The word "transferred" is a verb and is third person. singular, aorist, active, indicative. This means an action has taken place in the past and it is a realized or certain state.
3. The word "kingdom" is singular with the definite article "the" coming before it. Which means Christians are in the one and only kingdom of His beloved Son, **Dan. 2:44**
4. Christians have been transferred from one kingdom to another, as if a people were thus removed.

H. Somewhere between **Acts 1:6** and **Col. 1:13** the Kingdom came.

Appl: There should be no question that the kingdom of Christ came some time during the first century after His death. According to Mark 9:1 it came during the life of some of those standing there.

Also remember, since the church and kingdom are interrelated, whenever we see one being spoken of we can be assured the other is inferred.

Trans: Let's now consider when the kingdom or church came.

3. The coming of the kingdom and church

A. To help us pinpoint the time of the coming of the kingdom we need to look back to Mark 9:1

1. Here Jesus said these people would see the kingdom come with power.
2. Two points to consider about this passage
 - a. The coming of the kingdom would be visible.
 - b. Power would be present at the coming of the Kingdom.

B. We conclude that if we can find a time where we see power coming during the life of those people Jesus spoke to we will see the kingdom come.

C. In **Luke 24:49**, before Jesus ascends He tells the Apostles that a time is coming when they will be clothed with power from on high.

- D. In **Acts 1:8** Jesus says this power will come when the Holy Spirit comes.
1. According to **Acts 1:4,5** this was to take place in Jerusalem.
 2. Remember the prophesy of Isaiah, the kingdom would begin in Jerusalem.
- E. Now look at Acts 2:1-4
1. It is here that we see the power coming with the Holy Spirit.
 2. The Apostles are in Jerusalem, Acts 2:5,6
- F. We can also pinpoint the exact hour of the coming of the kingdom.
1. In Acts 2:14,15 Peter tells those listening that it is only the third hour of the day.
 2. The Jews viewed their days from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and their nights from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The third hour of the day is 9:00 a.m. our time.
- G. I stated at the conclusion of my first point that we would expect to find the kingdom and the church coexisting if they are interrelated.
1. There is no question of the kingdoms existence in the first century.
 - a. **Heb. 12:28**
 - b. The phrase “we are receiving” is in the present tense. Which means at the time of writing of Hebrews, they were presently receiving the Kingdom. It was not something they were waiting for.
 2. There is also ample proof that the church existed simultaneously
 - a. Remember the church are those called out of sin
 - b. In **Acts 2:38**, the day the Kingdom came, the first sermon preached the lost were called out of sin.
 - c. In **Acts 8:3** Paul was persecuting the church
 3. This shows without question the church and kingdom coexisting.

Appl: What does all this mean to us.

1. We know that the church was the eternal purpose of God, **Eph 3:8-10**
2. We also know that Christ’ kingdom and the church are interrelated.
3. If we can establish when the church or kingdom came we can establish what church we are a part of.
4. Since Christ built only one church, Eph. 4:4, any church that came after this one cannot be the Lord’s church. The reason being He did not build it.

Con: The church is Christ's kingdom of willing subjects on earth. On the first Pentecost after Jesus' death, A.D. 33 the kingdom, the church came with power.

The time and place of the establishment of the Lord's church identifies His church

The church manifests the sovereignty of Christ in the hearts and lives of men by their obedience of faith. The kingdom is not to be viewed as a future development; it is a present reality. With the coming of the church, Christ assured his sovereign reign.

The Organizational Structure of the Church (Lesson 15)

Christ is the Head

I. Earl Radmacher once wrote concerning the organizational structure of the church,

“That things were to be done orderly and systematically, even as Paul commanded the Corinthians (1Cor. 14:40) and for which he commanded the Colossians (Col. 2:5), was carried out throughout the organizational structure of the local church... The example of these early New Testament churches becomes the pattern for local churches today. As a representation of the church universal, the body of Christ, each local church should have the symmetry, the beauty, the decorum, the orderliness characteristic of the archetype.” (*“What the Church is all about”*)

II. Francis Schaeffer, a great British Theologian wrote concerning this same thought,

“Right up to the year 100 (if you take the book of Revelation as having been written then) John writing under the inspiration of Holy Spirit, directs the book of Revelation to individual churches. Hence, up to the end of the New Testament, individual churches existed and were important enough for letters to be addressed to them. The picture is clear: As Paul moves over the Roman Empire, as other Christians move over the Roman Empire, individuals are saved and local churches are organized. And this, I believe, is a pattern that holds for the church till Jesus comes” (*“The Church At the End of the 20th Century”*)

III. It’s this same topic I want to speak on today. The Organizational Structure of the church.

IV. Over the past several months we have been identifying specific characteristics of the church, which aid us in identifying the church today.

- 1. The Distinct Doctrine which the church follows.**
- 2. The Distinct New Covenant of the church.**
- 3. Identifying the church through the saved.**
- 4. The fact that the church is not a denomination**
- 5. The establishment of the church.**

V. The organizational structure of the church is another way too identify the church Jesus died for.

VI. If we find individuals throughout history and even today who have organized there particular religious group in such a way that it does not fit the organizational structure revealed within the Scriptures, they cannot rightfully claim to be the Lords church.

VII. If God had not given us any indicator as to what Christ' church was to believe, practice, and teach, or if He hadn't organized it in a certain way, then it wouldn't matter what we do. But since He has, then it does matter.

VIII. We must go back to the Bible and find out how Christ wanted His church organized and then do as He instructed in the Scriptures. In doing this we will be reproducing the church, which belongs to Christ.

C.I. In this lesson we want to consider that... **Christ, as the divine head of His church, stands absolute in His authority over the church. What we practice in regards to how the church is set up and organized is by His command.**

Trans: Let's consider this point

Christ is the head of and authority over the church

A. When we raise the question of who governs the church, we ask who has the right to regulate how the church functions.

1. Is it okay for **anyone** to decide how the church is to worship, what it is to teach and how each one is to live?

2. The Bible makes it clear, that this right belongs to Jesus alone.

B. The reason it is Jesus' alone is because He is the head of the church and has all authority over it,

1. The Scriptures teach that Jesus is the head of the church.
 - a. **Eph. 5:22,23**
 - b. **Col. 1:18**

2. His authority over the church is revealed in, **Matt. 28:18-20**
 - a. Christ's authority is sovereign and universal, extending to all realms
 1. In heaven (spiritual realm)
 2. On earth (physical realm)

 - b. His authority over the church is seen in His command to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that **I have** commanded you.

 - c. Inherent in authority is the right to govern, to command, to lead and, consequently to speak. Jesus has this authority.

3. Having this authority Jesus is our law giver, James 4:12

C. This means Christ's word is the standard by which all things must be measured.

1. **John 12:48**

2. **Acts 17:30,31**

3. Religious differences then must be resolved by appealing to Christ's authoritative word, Col. 3:17

D. The authority of Christ also extends to the words of the apostles'.

1. The apostles were specifically chosen to represent Christ and ultimately the Father himself, **John 13:20**

2. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them into all the truth, **John 14:16-17,26; 16:13**

3. On the first Pentecost after Jesus' ascension the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles, Acts 2:1-4

4. From that time on they spoke by the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
2Pet. 1:20,21

5. The words the apostles spoke are the Words of God and as such are authoritative in our Christian walk.

Illust: I heard a lady who said, regarding the apostle Paul, that he was a male chauvinist because of what he wrote in **1Cor. 14:34**. But Paul makes it clear why he says this, **1Cor. 14:37**. This lady did not understand that Christ as the head of and authority over the church had the right to organize it in the way He desired. This was just one of those ways.

Appl: What does all this mean in regards to the Organizational Structure of the Church?

Christ Jesus stands absolute in His authority at the head of His church. What we believe and practice in regards to how the church is set up and organized is Christ's decision.

What He says goes.

His commands are our rule,

We can only do as the head has instructed because the head leads the body, and the church is the body. **Any body that is not organized according to what the head has instructed cannot be the body of the head, because in it's organization the body will represent the head and thus must look and act like what the head has instructed.**

Christ, as the divine head of His church, stands absolute in His authority over the church. What we practice in regards to how the church is set up and organized is by His command.

The Organizational Structure of the Church, Christ is the Foundation
(Lesson 16)

I. Song - The Church's One Foundation

II. When we sing this song we proclaim that the church has but one foundation.

III. This one foundation is Jesus Christ "the Son of the living God" and it is upon this one foundation that we have built our entire hope.

IV. A question we might ask ourselves is, what makes Jesus the foundation of the church?

V. The answer is found in, **Matt. 16:13-19**

VI. As we consider these passages we see that the church stands upon the work that Christ accomplished at the cross and proved in His resurrection.

Peter stated **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."**

Jesus said, **upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hades will not overpower.**

VII. It's upon the factualness of these two statements that Jesus is established as the church's one foundation.

VIII. The fact that Christ is the church's one foundation is of great importance to each of us.

1. It is the real motive of the Christian's faith and service.

A. If Christ was raised from the dead we will be raised.

B. If he was not raised, His death was but a meaningless sentiment.

2. It is upon the Messiahship of Jesus that we have founded our confidence for an eternal future with God.

IX. **The churches one foundation of salvation is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God.**

X. In our lesson today we will discuss the rock Jesus built His church upon and why it is the foundation of the hope of our salvation.

The rock upon which the church was built.

A. We know that the church was God's eternal purpose, Eph. 3:8-11

B. The Old Testament writers spoke of the one who would be the foundation of that church.

1. **Isa. 28:16** - tested stone

2. **Psalm 118:22** - rejected stone

C. Peter testifies that these passages refer to Jesus, 1 Peter 2:4-8

D. Some have concluded that Peter is the foundational rock which Jesus built his church upon. They claim that he was the first Roman pope. They believe Matt. 16 teaches this. But this is not the case.

1. First, Jesus did not say he was going to build His church upon Peter. He said he was going to build it upon "this rock"
2. This foundation cannot be Peter for several reasons.
 - a. The definitions of the words Peter and Rock
 1. **PETER** = *petros* = a pebble or a stone.
 2. **UPON THIS ROCK** - *petra*. This means a large foundation stone, a huge bolder.
 3. In Matt. 7:24 The wise man built his house on "petra", not a "petros".
 - b. The gender of the words don't agree
 1. Peter is noun masculine
 2. Rock is noun feminine
3. The rock upon which Jesus was going to build His church upon is the absolute truth of Peter's statement.
 - a. Peter stated that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God.
 - b. Jesus tells Peter that that statement is as true as His name is Peter.
 - c. Based upon the fact that Jesus is the Christ, He will build His church.
 - d. **Matt. 16:16**

E. Jesus also supports this claim that He is the foundational rock by claiming that He will build His church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. **Matt. 16:18**

1. Hades is the place of disembodied spirits, it is not Hell.
2. All who die go to Hades.
3. But, Hades will not prevail against the church.
 - a. "It" in verse 18 is a pronoun and is feminine
 - b. The antecedent of it is the nearest noun that agrees in gender and number.
 - c. That noun is church.
4. It will not hold back the church from rising from the dead.
5. This is only because Jesus is the Christ, Rom. 1:1-4

F. Since Christ was raised, He will raise the church. This is the foundation upon which the church is built,

Rom. 6:9

1Cor. 15:12-22

G. The Apostles Paul proclaims that Jesus the is foundational rock as well.

1Cor. 3:11

Appl: What does this mean to us? Several things.

1. Christ being the foundational rock of the church means the church is built upon Him and His teachings.
2. Secondly, Christ is the only foundation.
 - A. **Acts 4:12**
 - B. Any other religion out there, which is not built upon the foundation of Christ, is not his church
3. If we are to have any hope of salvation we must be part of that church where Jesus is the foundational rock. Because it is the only church he built.

The churches one foundation of salvation is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

The Eldership - Name and Number (Lesson 17)

I. As we have been going through this series on the church, recently we have been considering the organizational structure of the church.

II. We have noted that the key to the organizational structure is Christ, He being both the head and the foundation of the church.

III. This being the case the structure of the church is organized by His authority and based upon His word.

IV. It has already been observed that the church exists on at least two levels, the universal church and the local congregation.

V. Since we have examined the structure of the universal church, Christ as head and foundation, we need to turn our attention to the infrastructure the Lord organized for the local church.

C.I. What we find is that **the Lord arranged for the oversight of the local church to be ministered by elders, also called overseers. These are the spiritual shepherds of the local church,**

Acts 14:21-23

Titus 1:4,5

Trans: Today we are going to consider the names and the number of elders in a local congregation. From here and for the next several weeks we will consider their work in greater detail.

Elders, Names and Number

A. There are three nouns in the Greek language that are descriptive of the character and ministry of elders. ***Presbuteros; Episkopos; Poimein***

B. Each one of these names also helps define just what an elder is.

1. *Presbuteros*

- a. This word is translated “presbyter” or “elder.”
- b. This word also refers to an older man, one advanced in life, a senior.
- c. The word itself carries no official meaning but it does show the dignity of the ministry of elders.
- d. **Titus 1:5**

2. *Episkopos*

- a. This word is translated “overseer” it eventually became “bishop.”
- b. In a general sense “a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent.”
- c. In the NT the word is used of elders, denoting the watchful care they are to exercise, **Acts 20:17,28-31**
- d. The word *episcopos* really conveys the job description of an elder.

3. *Poimein*

- a. Properly translated throughout the NT this word is “shepherd.” It can also mean “feed” (KJV), Acts 20:28

b. One time it is translated Pastor, which is actually a Latin word retained from the Geneva Bible translation, **Eph. 4:11**.

C. It is also important to realize that these terms designate the same ministry group.

1. In other words these were not different ministries.
2. Titus 1:5-7, (v.5 Elder, *Presbuteros*) (v. 7 overseer, *Episkopos*)
3. **1Pet. 5:1-2**, (v.1 Elder, *Presbuteros*) (v.2 shepherd, *Poimein*) (v.2 overseers, *Episkopeo*),

D. As for the number of elders we find without exception that their was always a plurality, **Titus 1:5**

1. This is a distinguishing pattern of the NT church.
2. Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, Acts 14:20-23
3. Jerusalem, Acts 15:2,4
4. Ephesus, Acts 20:17
5. Philippi, **Phil 1:1**

E. One might ask, if the church had an infrastructure of a plurality of elders can a group be considered scriptural if they do not?

1. The answer is obviously yes!
2. Remember in **Acts 14:23** elders were appointed in every *church*.
3. It is not unscriptural to not have elders.
4. Apparently there was a time frame before appointing elders.
5. But ultimately having elders in every congregation should be our goal.

Appl: What do we have then? We know that within the first century church infrastructure there were individuals who were called,
elders (*Presbuteros*, presbytery)
overseers (*Episkopos*, bishops)
or shepherds (*Poimein*, pastor)

These designations all referred to the same ministry.

These individuals were given certain responsibilities over the local congregation. These responsibilities in some ways are defined by the names used to describe this ministry.

These were a plurality of elderly individuals who had the ministry of overseeing the flock of God among them. They did this by shepherding them.

The Lord arranged for the oversight of the local church to be ministered by elders, also called overseers. These are the spiritual shepherds of the local church.

The Eldership - Age and Oversight (Lesson 18)

I. As we began this series on the organization of the church we have most recently begun to consider the infrastructure.

II. What we have seen thus far is that the Lord's church has in place those individuals called elders who have a ministry of shepherding or overseeing the flock.

III. We have considered the fact that it was the practice of the local congregations to have elders and that there was to be a plurality. There was never a one elder congregation, **Acts 14:21-23**

IV. As we continue to consider the infrastructure of the church, specifically the elders, we want to focus on a few more aspects of this ministry.

C.I. The purpose of this lesson is to consider the age and limit of oversight of the elders.

Trans: Let's begin by considering the age.

1. The Age of an Elder.

A. We are not given a specific age in the scriptures.

B. One indication for the age could be the name *Presbuteros*.

a. This word is translated "presbyter" or "elder."

b. This word also refers to an older man, one advanced in life, a senior.

c. The word itself carries no official meaning but it does show the dignity of the ministry of elders.

d. **Titus 1:5**

C. In the general sense this word refers to an older man, one advanced in life, a senior.

D. The only specific reference we have of the age of an elder is found in, 1Tim. 3:6, but the reference is not to physical age, but spiritual age

E. Another indicator of the age of an elder might be found in the society in which the early church began.

1. In the Greco-Roman society in which Paul lived and wrote, the age of someone considered an elder was viewed to begin after one's 40th year.

2. Society in New Testament times saw the 40th year as the termination of a man's youth and entry into an age bracket that would no longer allow him to be conscripted into the military.

3. William M. Ramsay regarded as a top scholastic church historian observed that the word youth was a full-grown man “...*strictly, a full grown man of military age.*”
4. Professor William Barclay writes, “**The word that is used for youth (*neotes*) can in the Greek describe anyone of military age, that is, up to the age of 40.**”
5. The Interpreters Bible states: “**Youth...is known to have been applied to full-grown men of military age, up to 40.**”
6. In **1Tim. 4:12** Paul refers to Timothy as a youth. It is generally believed that Timothy was in his mid to late 30’s when this was written.

Appl: The age of an elder seems quite clear.

1. If we consider the word elder this would eliminate the youth.
2. And, since youth referred to anyone who was of military age 20-40, no one would have been considered an elder in the church until he was more than 40 years of age.

It is important for us to understand this for several reasons.

1. It eliminates the appointing of young men to the eldership who have not reached a certain level maturity through age.
2. To many times we wait to appoint men who are in their late 60’s and over. They serve a few years and then we loose them.

Trans: The second aspect of the eldership we want to discuss today involves the boundaries of their oversight.

2. The Limit of The Elders Oversight

- A. To begin, we must understand that each local congregation was autonomous.
- B. The word autonomous means self-governed. This means that the government of each congregation is limited to the boundaries of it’s own members. One congregation cannot control the work of another.
- C. This autonomy establishes clear limits to the oversight of the elders.
- D. Paul’s address to the elders of the church at Ephesus reveals their oversight was limited to the Ephesian church, **Acts 20:17.**
 1. The fact that Paul called to him the elders of the church at Ephesus points to the boundaries of that church as the limit of their oversight, **Acts 20:28.**
 2. Their oversight extended only to the church at Ephesus.

E. Peter's instructions concerning elders also reveal some insights into the limits of the oversight of the elders, 1Peter 5:1-4.

1. **In v. 2** the elders were to shepherd "*the flock of God which is among you.*" This restricts oversight of the elders to the flock, or local church, which they shepherd.

2. **V.3** refers to "*those allotted to your charge.*" Those entrusted to these elders are the members of the local church "among" whom these elders served.

3. In **v. 3** the elders are to be "*proving to be examples to the flock.*" It is only reasonable that the church have the example of their elders before them. No elder can be an example of a caring, helping shepherd if he is not available.

Appl: Based upon these findings, it seems appropriate to conclude that each congregation of the Lord's body is an autonomous.

From this we understand that the elders' oversight is limited to the congregation that they oversee. They have no authority to go beyond this.

Con: As we have seen today, God has provided a pattern for us to follow in regards to those men who take on the ministry of elders in the local congregation.

From what we have considered today, elders must be at least 40 years of age and they are limited to shepherding only those members of the body which are a part of the local congregation that these elders are members of.

The Work of the Elders - Part 1

(Lesson 19)

I. One of the biggest misunderstandings in the organization of the church is the elders.

1. Most understand the plurality aspect,
2. Most understand that each congregation was to have their own elders

II. What is most often misunderstood is their work.

1. Some look at elders more like CEO's than anything.
2. They are seen as money managers.
3. They are considered to be rule makers.
4. Some even look at elders as their personal gripping post.

III. When you get down to it, the work of the elders is far more spiritually based than anything. Overall their focus is to be on the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

IV. There are six areas to consider which will help us understand better the work of the elders. Today we will consider two areas.

V. The elders are the watchman and shepherds of the local congregation.

VI. Understanding these areas of work is of the utmost importance to the entire congregation.

To those who are elders.

To those who are considering taking on the ministry of an elder.

To all the members.

Trans: Let's begin with the first area of work.

1. Elders As Watchmen

A. Acts 20:28-31

1. v.31 (Be on the Alert (NAS))
2. v.31 (Therefore watch (KJV))
3. v.31 (Wherefore watch ye (ASV))
3. **To Keep Awake, be vigilant**

B. This is the same ministry given in, **Heb. 13:17**

C. This passage also tells us what they watch over, **Your Souls**

D. Inherent in this term "watch" is the ancient responsibility of the watchmen of the city.

1. The cities were protected by walls, and if an enemy were detected, the watchman would warn the city to prepare for defense.
2. The security of the city was placed in the hands of the watchman.

E. This term watchman can also be applied in a spiritual sense.

F. A good illustration of this is found in **Ezek. 3:16-21**

1. Notice their job is to warn the people with the word of God.
2. If he fails to warn them it will be at the expense of his own soul
3. We have a similar warning the elders of the church, **Heb. 13:17**

G. How do elders warn those they watch over? They warn the brethren of sinful error and practices through the word of God.

1. This agrees with Paul's statement that elders must be "able to teach"
2. **1Tim 3:2**
3. **Titus 1:7,9**
4. This is the aptitude to teach and the qualification of having been taught.
5. He cannot run in times of peril, John 10:12-15.

Appl: As we see the work of an elder is a serious one. Each individual who chooses to be an elder must be prepared to take on the responsibility of being a watchman.

They must be willing to put their own salvation in jeopardy; because if they fail to watch after God's people and live up to what God has called them to do, a heavy price will be paid.

The only way elders can truly watch over God's people is by possessing the knowledge needed to teach His word and remove error and sin from the midst of the camp.

Wishy-washy men need not apply.

Trans: Let's consider a second work of the elders

2. Elders As Shepherds

- A. This is what Paul instructs the elders to do in **Act 20:28**
 1. They do this because savage wolves will come in among them, **v.29**
 2. The elders must be on guard overseeing the flock and shepherding them.
- B. This phrase echoes the words of Jesus in Luke 15:3-7
 1. If the shepherd loses one sheep he will leave the flock to search out the lost.
 2. He tenderly bears it upon his shoulders and returns with rejoicing.
- C. We have further insights into the work of the elders as shepherds in **1Peter 5:1-3**.
 1. A shepherd is one who takes on the work freely and not under compulsion.
 2. He is one who is not seeking to control the flock by lording, but rather by leading them by example.
- D. As with the elder not doing the work of a watchman; we also have a warning against the elder not shepherding, Ezek. 34:1-10
 1. Shepherds must be willing to go after the stray sheep.
 2. They must be willing to mend their wounds.
 3. They must be willing to heal the diseases.
 4. Shepherds must be willing to give an account to God as to how they have taken care of His sheep.
- E. Ultimately the shepherd must be willing to give his life for the sheep, **John 10:11**
 1. He must be tireless in his work of shepherding the flock of God.
 2. He must know his sheep and His sheep must know him, **John 10:14**
 3. I know these passages are speaking of Christ, but consider, **1Pet. 5:4**

Appl: Here we have another example of what the work of elders is all about. In the truest sense elders work as shepherds over God's sheep.

They watch out for the welfare of the sheep and are willing to lay down their life for them. Elders are tireless, courageous servants of the highest caliber.

It is this kind of shepherd that sheep are willing to follow. The sheep will follow the shepherd only when they are secure in his leadership and they secure in the path he is taking.

Con: So far I haven't seen any indication of the CEO status of an elder. As a matter of fact they seem to be more like the hard laboring, in the field, blue-collar workers.

1. I stated at the beginning of this lesson that understanding the work of an elder is of the utmost importance.
2. The reason being, too often men are appointed as elders in a hurried fashion without ever considering the work they are called to do. There is great danger in this approach. To many congregations have been adversely affected by men who were simply not prepared or qualified for the work ahead of them.
3. It would be no different from putting an evangelist or deacon or any other individual in a leadership position that was not prepared or qualified to handle it.
4. From what we have seen today great caution must be applied before any man or congregation decides to place another individual in this position of elder.

Remember the elder has a ministry. That ministry has certain works that must be accomplished.

The elders are the watchman and shepherds of the local congregation.

If any man is not willing to put their own salvation on the line in taking on this work with utmost seriousness and diligence let him not seek it and spare the flock of God great harm.

The Work of the Elders - Part 2

(Lesson 20)

I. In our last lesson we were considering the work of an elder.

II. It was concluded, from the Scriptures that the elders primary work is that of a spiritual nature. The elders are to be looking out after the spiritual welfare of the local congregation. I noted there are two areas of the Elders work that support this.

- 1. Elders are Watchman,**
- 2. Elders are shepherds,**
3. Acts 20:28
- 4. Acts 20:30,31**

III. As we continue our study on elders we want to consider two more areas of work that are involved in their ministry.

- 1. Elders are personal workers.**
- 2. Elders serve through prayer.**

Trans: Let's begin by looking at our first area of ministry.

1. Elders are personal workers

A. 1 Thess. 5:12-15

B. We should understand this to be the elders based upon several points.

1. Paul refers to these individuals in three specific ways, **v.12**
 - a. Those who “diligently labor among you”**
 - b. Those who ”have charge over you”**
 - c. Those who “give you instruction”**
2. All of these are used in reference to the work of an elder.
 - a. 1Tim. 5:17 – (Labor)
 - b. Acts 20:28, 1Pet. 5:2,3, (charge over)**
 - c. 1Tim. 3:2**
 - d. Titus 1:9, (instruction)**

C. This passage manifests a personal involvement in the private lives of needful brethren, **1Thess. 5:14,15**

- 1. Admonish the unruly**
- 2. Encourage the fainthearted**
- 3. Help the weak**
- 4. See that no one repays another evil for evil.**

D. This type of involvement cannot always be accomplished at a church service, by a brief prayer at the end of a worship service. Often times the elder is visiting a member who has gone astray, Luke 15:3-7

E. The true shepherd must genuinely care for the children of God.

1. **1Thess. 5:12** shows how active the elders are to be.
2. This most certainly involves being in the homes of those whom they have been appointed over.
3. A shepherd will have a difficult time attending to the personal needs of a Christian if they do not know that individual Christian personally.

Illust: John 10:1-5

Appl: Elders must be personal workers. There is no question this is an area of their ministry.

For a shepherd to take care of the sheep he must know his sheep. Elders cannot help a wounded sheep if they do not know their sheep.

Those who are over the spiritual welfare of the congregation must be willing to attend to the individual needs of the congregation; and this does not always take place in the building.

Elders must be involved in the lives of each member as needed if they are to truly know the needs of each member.

Trans: Let's look at our next area of ministry for the elder.

2. Elders serve through prayer.

A. James 5:13-18

B. Notice that if one is sick they are to call for the elders to pray for them.

1. The "sick" here is either physical or spiritual.
2. Either way, the elders are called upon to pray.

C. I believe the evidence supports a spiritual sickness rather than a physical based upon **vs. 15,16.**

1. Our sins do not always cause a physical sickness.
2. Our sins always cause a spiritual sickness.
3. Prayer in faith does not always restore the physically sick.
4. Prayer in faith can help restore one spiritually sick.

D. The power of the elders prayer on behalf of the sick should not be overlooked.

1. James refers to Elijah as an example of prayer offered in faith,
1Kings 18:41-46
2. The result was God heard and did as Elijah requested.
3. It is the effective prayer of a righteous man that can accomplish much.

Appl: Elders have an area of work that must be attended to. It is the ministry of prayer for those who are sick, be it either physical or spiritual it makes no difference.

James specifically mentions that the elders are to be called upon to offer prayer. As the spiritual leaders of the flock this would only seem logical to do.

As they attend to the personal needs of the flock they offer prayer on their behalf.

If someone is in the hospital the elders are praying for them.

If someone is ill at home the elders are praying for them

If someone is having spiritual struggles the elders are praying for them.

This is why it is wise to have the elders offer prayer for an individual who has come forward.

Con: Today we have seen two more areas of ministry for the elders.

1. Elders are personal workers

2. Elders serve through prayer.

Putting this with the areas of ministry we saw last week,

1. Elders are Watchmen

2. Elders are Shepherds

What can clearly see the elders main area of work to be the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

What we as members must do is allow them and help them to fulfill this work by not bogging them down with things that consume their time and which are not of a spiritual nature.

The Work of the Elders - Part 3

(Lesson 21)

I. When I began this series of lessons, I set out to help us understand the pattern God has established for the church. In previous lessons we have seen this pattern laid out for us in the NT Scriptures.

II. The concept for this pattern can be seen in **Eph 3:8-11**.

III. Having this pattern is a great blessing to us for several reasons,

1. We need God's guidance to help us understand spiritual things, 1Cor. 2:12-16
2. In following this pattern we will be assured that we are worshipping and serving God in the manner that pleases Him, **Phil. 3:17**.

IV. Over the past several weeks we have focused out attention on the infrastructure of the church; what some might call church government. As we have seen, this infrastructure is part of the pattern for the Lord's church,

V. In considering this infrastructure it has been noted that God has set up within His church a group of individuals know as elders. The work of these elders is part of that pattern.

1Tim. 3:1

2Tim. 2:1,2

VI. A problem that has arisen concerning the elders is a misunderstanding of their work.

1. Many times we find the elders being shackled with responsibilities that should be handled by others in the congregation.
2. Acts 6:1-4

VII. What we have seen so far in our lessons is that the elder's main responsibility is to tend to the spiritual needs of the congregation. We understand this by considering the work the elders are called to do.

- 1. Elders Serve as Watchmen**
- 2. Elders Serve as Shepherds**
- 3. Elders Serve as Personal Workers**
- 4. Elders Server Through Prayer**

VIII. Again this is a wonderful blessing for God's children. Our Lord has made sure that His flock will be taken care of on earth as He reigns from on High.

IX. Today we want to continue considering the work of an elder by noting the final two areas of ministry the elders are to be serving in.

- 1. Elders Serve to Mature the church**
- 2. Elders Serve as Stewards**

Trans: If you consider that the church is to always be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, it seems logical that there be those within the church who can help us accomplish that task.

1. Elders Serve to Mature the church

A. It is common sense to know that all who become Christians are immature in spiritual matters.

B. But Christians cannot stay immature, Heb. 5:12-14

C. To make sure the body matures Christ placed within His church elders who carry out this work, **Eph. 4:11-16.**

a. As we see this work of the elders has a purpose, **v.12.**

b. This work of the elders also has a goal. **v.14.**

D. The elders carry out the work of maturing the church in three ways.

1. Through the example of their own life,

a. The qualifications of an elder teach us this, 1Tim. 3:1-7

b. **1Pet. 5:1-3**

2. Through their knowledge of the Scriptures.

a. The work of service is found within Gods word, Rom. 12:1,2

b To keep us from chasing every wind of doctrine they must be teaching the one true doctrine, **Titus 1:7-9**

c. This provides the means for the Christian to speak the truth in love, **v.15**

3. Providing opportunities to mature, Gospel meetings, training seminars, Bible class, Sunday night services etc...

Appl: It is true that others within the church are given the responsibility to help mature the body. Paul lists Apostles, prophets, evangelists.

But it is also clear that this is a primary work of an elder given that teaching is part of their qualifications. The elders must always be seeking ways to help mature the local congregation so it might be a viable work for the Lord.

In maturing the congregation souls will be saved, because those who are matured will not follow every wind of doctrine. They will follow the truth.

Trans: When we consider that the elders have been given the responsibility to mature the church, we should recognize that God has placed something very precious in their hands.

2. Elders Serve as Stewards

A. A steward is one who is given the responsibility of caring for the possessions of another. This is like the manager of a household.

- B. Paul, in speaking of his work referred to himself as being a steward, **Col 1:25**
- C. He indicates that a steward must be found trustworthy in what he does, **1Cor. 4:1,2**
- D. This same concept is used in regards to the work of an elder, **Titus 1:7**
1. Elders have stewardship over the church of God, the household of God, 1Tim. 3:4-5,15
 2. The possessions they are to watch over are the children of God, 1Pet. 5:1-3
- E. As stewards, elders must look to themselves as such and understand the seriousness of this work. They must be sure they are trustworthy in what God has allotted to them.
1. **Luke 16:1-2**
 2. **Heb. 13:17**

Appl: In many cases the elders get caught up in the stewardship of the monies and the day to day “plant” operations of the church. Although this might be a part of their work, they are far more responsible for the stewardship of the souls of the congregation.

God has put His children into the hands of elders and elders must manage those souls in a trustworthy manner. They must be doing whatever is necessary to keep those souls growing and faithful, because they will give an account to God of their stewardship.

God doesn't want to hear that as a steward an elder allowed Satan to take captive one of His children and then did nothing about it. This is serious business!!

Con: So once again what the Scriptures show us about the elders is that their work is overwhelmingly directed towards the spiritual welfare of Gods flock.

It's not that they can't do physical works, or shouldn't do them, But it is far more desirable for the elders to minister to the flock spiritually.

God' flock needs protecting and we are blessed to know that through His divine pattern, He has put in place those individuals who can carry this out.

They are the elders, and they....

1. **Serve as Watchmen**
 2. **Serve as Shepherds**
 3. **Serve as Personal Workers**
 4. **Server Through Prayer**
1. **Serve to Mature the church**
 2. **Serve as Stewards**

Qualifications of an Elder - Part 1

(Lesson 22)

I. Did you know that for the most part the leadership of the congregation sets the tone of the congregation.

II. People tend to gravitate towards the example set by their leaders and so congregations will rarely rise above the leadership, and if they do they become dissatisfied with their leadership.

III. If you find a congregation that is not growing spiritually and numerically or is in constant turmoil, generally it's the leaders that are leading it in this direction. The example set by the leaders will be the congregation's target.

IV. This is where the qualifications of an elder come into play.

1. *The demands put upon an elder requires a person to possess both **superior** spiritual and moral qualities. (The cream of the crop)*
2. We know this to be true because any man can be a Christian but not every man can be an elder.
3. Only those whom the Holy Spirit calls, through the qualifications given, can participate in this honorable ministry, **Acts 20:28**.

V. The qualifications of an elder can be found in three passages,

1. **1Tim 3:1-7**
2. **Titus 1:5-9**
3. **1Peter 5:1-4**
4. These qualifications can be broken up into two categories.
 - A. Negative Qualifications
 - B. Positive Qualifications.

VI. Sadly, many congregations today are a product of their own doing.

1. They lower the standard when it comes to appointing leaders.
2. They do this for one of two reasons.
 - A. It keeps them from having to raise their own spirituality.
 - B. They don't have men who reach that standard, so they lower the bar.
3. But when the standard is lowered the work is headed for destruction.

VII. With this in mind we want to now turn our attention to the qualifications of an elder. As we move forward in our study of the Lord's church and it's infrastructure, we need to come to a complete understanding of the standard that God's has set for the shepherds of His flock.

VIII. Every Christian needs to understand this because it pertains to and affects every member of the body. A congregation must be sure that they allow the Holy Spirit to appoint the elders through the standard He has revealed and not lower the standard and allow unqualified men to serve where God never intended them to serve.

Trans: In our lesson today we want to address the Negative Qualifications of an elder.

1. Negative Qualifications of an Elder.

1. Negative Qualifications simply refer to characteristics an elder must not possess.

2. The Holy Spirit will not appoint a man as an overseer of the Lord's church who does not excel spiritually.

3. The Holy Spirit reveals 10 negative qualifications in the Scriptures.

A. Not addicted to wine, 1Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7

B. Not pugnacious, 1Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7

C. Not greedy for money, 1Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7

D. Not contentious, 1Tim. 3:3

E. Not a new convert, 1Tim. 3:6

F. Not self-willed, Titus 1:7

G. Not quick-tempered, Titus 1:7

H. Not under compulsion, 1Pet. 5:2

I. Not for sordid gain, 1Pet 5:2

J. Not as lording it over, 1Pet. 5:3

4. Let's consider each of the negative qualifications individually.

A. Not addicted to wine, 1Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7

1. Not given to wine (KJV)

2. *Paroinos*: *Para* (at, near, by the side) *oinos* (wine)

3. The elder then must not be at, by the side of, or near wine.

4. This would seem to indicate total abstinence.

5. Why? Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35

B. Not pugnacious, 1Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7

1. Not quarrelsome, striker, brawler

2. A man who is not a bully and does not push his way around.

3. He cannot be of an angry, belligerent, aggressive disposition.

4. He cannot be ungoverned in his temper.

C. Not greedy for money, 1Tim. 3:3

1. He must **not** be one who is a lover of riches, 1Tim. 6:9,10

2. The elder must set an example to the congregation through his generosity and unselfish attitude towards money.

3. Since elders can be financially supported in their work, it is necessary that they do not take on the work of an elder for money.

1Tim. 5:17,18

D. Not contentious, Titus 1:6

1. Uncontentious,
2. One who is not always arguing or violent or rebellious
3. One who is averse to strife and not inclined to fight.
4. 1Peter 3:8,9

E. Not a new convert, 1Tim. 3:6

1. *neophytes*: *neos* (new, fresh), *phuteia* (a plant)
2. Refers to one newly planted in the faith.
3. He cannot be a novice, Heb. 5:12-14
4. Elders are required to set the example through teaching and spiritual maturity. This would be difficult for the newly planted member.
5. There is also the possibility of becoming conceited

F. Not self-willed, Titus 1:7

1. One who is not always seeking to get his own way.
2. He must be willing to give in and submit to others.
3. He must have the ability to give and take.
4. In all he does his purpose must be to follow the will of God.

G. Not quick-tempered, Titus 1:7

1. Not a striker, not a hothead
2. The elder must be one who does not become angry when things do not go his way.
3. He must demonstrate patience under the most trying circumstances.
4. **Gal. 5:22-26**

H. Not under compulsion, 1Pet. 5:2

1. This ministry cannot be taken on as a mere sense of duty.
2. This ministry cannot be void of a right heart.
3. Not because you didn't put up a hard enough fight.
4. A man must desire this ministry, **1Tim. 3:1**

I. Not for sordid gain, Titus 1:7; 1Pet 5:2

1. Elders can receive full support to work on a full time basis,
2. It is possible that some will take on this work merely for a livelihood.
3. If this is the case the funds they receive becomes sordid gain.
4. In the process the word of God and the soundness of the oversight might be compromised.

J. Not as lording it over, 1Pet. 5:3

1. Elders have no right to use their ministry to become dictators.
2. They are not to have an authoritarian rule over God's children.
3. On the contrary they are to be examples to them,

Con: These are the negative qualifications of an elder. Characteristics an elder must not possess

Within the Scriptures the Father, through the Holy Spirit has already revealed whom He will appoint as shepherds over His flock.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to appoint those men who meet the qualifications given. We must never lower the standard required of them, **1Tim. 5:19-22.**

When men are appointed who do not meet this standard, it is not the Holy Spirit appointing them it is man. The Holy Spirit does not appoint an unqualified man.

Qualifications of Elders - Part 2

(Lesson 24)

- I.** Last week when I began our lesson on the qualifications of an elder I stated, that for the most part, the leaders of a congregation set the tone for the congregation.
- II.** The leaders will be the example that the congregation follows and this can either be good or bad.
- III.** Understanding this, we were considering the qualifications God requires of someone before they can take on the responsibility and work of being an Elder of the church.
- IV.** It is clear from the qualifications given in **1Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1Peter 5:1-4**, that the **elders are men of great *spiritual and moral character***. This is required of those who might lead God's flock through sound doctrine and proper example.
- V.** The qualifications can be divided into two groups,
1. The negative qualifications, (Characteristics which an elder cannot possess).
 2. The positive qualifications, (Characteristics which an elder must possess).
- VI.** Last week we considered the negative qualifications one desiring the work of an elder cannot possess.
- VII.** As we conclude this series on the work and qualifications of an elder we want to now turn our attention to the positive qualifications of an elder. There are fifteen of these.

The 15 positive qualifications of an elder

- A. These fifteen positive qualifications are traits, characteristics or qualities that one must possess prior to taking on the work of the elder.**
- B. He must be a man who aspires the work, 1Tim. 3:1**
1. The word for **aspires** literally means *to extend or stretch out*.
 2. In 1Tim. 3:1 the word is in the middle voice and thus means "*to stretch one's self out, to reach forward.*"
 3. The word **desires** means *to set one's heart upon*.
 4. It is the image of an individual who has set his heart on this work and is stretching towards being an elder.
 5. The individual has been preparing for this work. It is something that is planned and not a last minute thought.
 6. Some might not see this as a qualification, but if a man does not prepare himself and does not set his heart on this work, how is he qualified to do the work.
 7. Would the Holy Spirit appoint a man who is unprepared and without desire?

Note: From here on the qualifications are under the command of “Must Be”

1. This word is third person singular active present.
2. It is in the infinitive mood which indicates that the words which this applies to normally are words indicating ability, authority, desire, freedom, hope, need, obligation, or readiness.

C. He must be above reproach, **1Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7**

1. An elder must be one who has a blameless reputation
2. The Greek term is defined as, “not open to censure, irreproachable.
3. It implies not merely acquittal, but absence of even a charge or accusation against a person.”

D. He must be the husband of one wife, **1Tim. 3:2**

1. In all likelihood this is in reference to polygamy. Many Jews of the first century had multiple wives.
2. This implies that an overseer must be married, but only to one wife. An elder cannot be an unmarried man.
3. This is also implied in the fact that he is a family man, **1Tim. 3:4,5**
4. This also shows that an elder must be a man, no women as elders.
5. What if the elder’s wife passes away is he still qualified?
 - a. The qualification clearly states that he must be married, *third person singular active present*
 - b. If one’s spouse passes away one is no longer married, **Rom. 7:1-3**
 - c. Can an unmarried man serve?
 1. Let’s say there is a man who was an elder in another congregation and this man’s wife has passed away. If this man came into a congregation and after sometime it was determined that he wished to serve as an elder who he be qualified?
 2. If we answer yes then we are stating that the qualification is must have been married, when in fact Paul clearly states Must Be – active present.
 - 3, No other qualification is given this leniency – yet all fall under the requirement of “Must Be.”
 - a. At one time I was temperate (Must Be)
 - b. At one time I was prudent (Must Be)
 - c. At one time I was respectable (Must Be)

E. He must be Temperate, **1Tim 3:2**

1. The elder must be reasonable, restrained, and conservative in his behavior.
2. The idea of being moderate, not given to excess of temper.
3. One who is sober, alert and aware, **1Peter 1:13**

F. He must be prudent, **1Tim 3:2**

1. The elder must be of self control.
2. One who is of sound-mind and sober-minded, sensible.
3. An elder is to be serious, not flippant

G. He must be respectable, **1Tim. 3:2**

1. The KJV translates this “of good behavior”
2. The life of an elder cannot be is disarray, but he must be a well behaved person.
3. He must be an orderly individual who has reason to be respected.

H. He must be hospitable, **1Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9**

1. The Greek literally means, “*lover of strangers.*”
2. This quality requires the elder the “opening of his house freely to guest.”
3. He must be generous to guest.
4. In Biblical times extending hospitality was a sacred duty, **Rom. 12:9-13**

I. He must be able to teach, **1Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:9**

1. The elder must be skilled in teaching
2. It not only means the knowledge but the ability, training.
3. **Titus 1:9** explains why he must be able to teach.

J. He must be Gentle, **1Tim. 3:3**

1. The idea of being forbearing as distinct from violent and quarrelsome.
2. He must be fair, not showing partiality over another.
3. 1Pet. 2:18

K. He must manage his own household well, **1Tim. 3:4**

1. He must be one who is a good head to his own family
2. He does not rule with a heavy hand but instructs *well*, governs.
3. This ties directly to his children and their behavior.
4. One who has unruly children is not ruling well.
5. A proper example in the house should be reflected in the children.
6. This quality is also tied directly to his ability to take care of the church,
1Tim. 3:5

L. He must have a good reputation from those outside the church, **1Tim. 3:7**

1. An elder should be well spoken of by outsiders.
2. He must have a good reputation with those who are not Christians.
3. If he does not have a favorable reputation his influence can be negative.
4. A bad reputation could bring reproach upon the church.

M. He must be a lover of what is good, **Titus 1:8**

1. An elder is a good man because he loves that which is good, **Phil 4:8**
2. This would be good things and or good men.
3. The heart of an elder must has room for all that is good and noble and generous, **James 3:13**

N. He must have children that are faithful or are trustworthy, **Titus 1:6**

1. This does not necessarily mean the elder have more than one child.
2. Children can be either singular or plural, male or female, **Gen. 21:7**

3. If I asked, does anyone here have any children, and you had only one would you say no?
4. The word believe in Titus 1:6 is *pistos*, and is commonly used for trusty, faithful. It is used in referring to persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties.
5. The more common word for belief as in a Christian is, *pisteuo*, **John 3:18**

O. He must be just, **Titus 1:8**

1. This is a state of being right or having right conduct.
2. He is an individual who seeks to do what is right, as defined by God's will.

P. He must be Holy, **Titus 1:8**

1. He must be a man of holy life.
2. His conduct is observant of God's will.
3. He must be devoted to God.

Con: As we consider what we have covered concerning the elders, both their work and qualifications, there should be no question that this is a serious work and it requires men of high spiritual character.

But let me make a few clarifications before I close out my lesson.

Although elders are godly men, they are not perfect.

They must meet the qualifications

But they are not all knowing and will make decisions that are sometimes flawed.

Their oversight of the flock has its limits

1. Although elders are called to "shepherd the flock exercising oversight." Their responsibility and influence only extends so far.
2. If the elders have done their duty and one still refuses to live faithfully, ties are severed. (For example one who chooses to go back into the world).
3. **1Cor. 5:1-5**
4. So although one who was a watchman was required to warn the city of impending danger, and if they failed, their blood was required of them, it would not be required if they did warn and the people refused to listen, **Ezek. 3:17-19**

From all that we have studied it should be concluded that, neither the men seeking this ministry nor the congregation seeking elders should take lightly whom they recognize as their leaders.

The Evangelist - Part 1

(Lesson 25)

- I. As I have noted over the past several weeks, God has set His church according to a specific pattern. Most recently we have been considering the infrastructure.
- II. This specific infrastructure helps us to identify the Lord's church in the midst of the religious confusion we see in the world today.
- III. This infrastructure is also designed to assure the survival and purity of the church.
 1. We have the elders who are the spiritual leaders. They keep watch over the church by shepherding through the doctrines of Christ, leading by example and refuting those who contradict sound doctrine.
 2. There are the deacons who are called to labor for the church. They handle overseeing and maintaining the works of the church.
- IV. There is a third party involved in the infrastructure of the church.
 1. We find this in **Eph. 4:11-12**
 2. Grouped with the apostles, prophets and elders Paul speaks of the Evangelist.
 3. By doing this he identifies a specific ministry found within the infrastructure of the church.
- V. As we continue our study of the Lord's church I want to now focus on the Evangelist and his work.
- VI. The point being **the work of an evangelist is an important part of expanding the borders and maintaining the well being of the Lord's church.**

Trans: To begin we want to consider some words which help define what an evangelist is.

1. Terms that define the evangelists.

A. Like the words which refer to the elder, the words which refer to the evangelist provide a description of the work one who chooses this ministry would do.

B. The first word is Evangelist

1. This word is defined as "a bringer of good tidings."
2. The word for evangelist comes from the word translated "gospel"
 - a. **Evangelist is *euangelistes***
 - b. **Gospel is *euangelion***
3. Since the gospel is the good news message and the evangelist is the bringer of that message, an evangelist is actually a **"gospelizer," a bringer of the good news message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.**
4. In the NT this name was given to those who proclaimed salvation through Christ who are not apostles.

Acts 21:8

Eph. 4:11 (we have already seen)

2Tim. 4:5

C. Another word we want to consider is Preacher.

1. This word has both a noun and verb form.
 2. The noun form of the word is *kerux*. Vine states that *kerux* is “a herald, is used of the preacher of the gospel, it indicates the preacher as giving the proclamation.”
 - 1Tim. 2:7
 - 2Tim. 1:11
 - 2Peter 2:4,5
 3. The verb form is *kerusso*, and it means, “to be a herald, to officiate as a herald, to proclaim after the manner of a herald; always with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and on the **authority** which must be listened to and obeyed.”
 4. In Kittels Theological Dictionary of the NT, we read, “usually it is transitive and describes the activity of the herald in the discharge of his office.” Since the main quality demanded of a herald is that he should have a good voice, it always carries the basic meaning, “to cry out loud,” “to proclaim,” “to declare,” “to announce.”
- He goes on to say, *It repeatedly has the sense of “call to something”, to summon someone to something.” “to appeal to, to implore someone.” In accordance with what is declared by the herald it can mean, “to offer,” “to forbid,” “to order.”*
5. This is what Paul instructed Timothy to do in **2Tim. 4:1,2**.

D. According to **Ed Wharton**, “**The prophets of the OT were kindred spirits with the preachers of the NT in passionate delivery and content of their message.**

1. Far from being mere foretellers, the prophets were speakers for God, speaking the message God gave them whether it related to the past, present or future.
2. The biblical definition of a prophet is a “mouth, a spokesman.” Ex. 4:14-16
3. Thus the prophet would speak exactly as God had instructed, **Deut. 18:17-19**
4. The Prophet then was God’s spokesman, God’s mouth, and according to **Haggai 1:13** the prophet was God’s messenger.
5. Thus the work of the gospel preacher is the same as the prophet’s task, to proclaim the message revealed by God. The work of one is the work of the other.
6. The only difference between the ancient prophet and the modern preacher is the method by which the message is received.

Appl: So we see that a preacher is simply one who proclaims the truth of God’s word and he does so with authority.

He is a messenger of God, being God’s mouthpiece for the proclamation of His word.

Trans: Knowing what a preacher is it would be good for us to consider some qualities a preacher should possess.

2. The qualities of a preacher

A. The reason I use the term qualities is because we don't find a list of qualifications for a preacher as we do with the elder and a deacon.

B. But to some degree these could be considered a list of qualifications. Qualities one must possess if they are to be a preacher.

1. The preacher must be an example to believers, **1Tim. 4:12**
2. Diligent in and devoted to the work,
 - a. 1 Tim. 4:13-15
 - b. **2 Tim. 2:15**
3. He is to take heed to himself and his doctrine,
 - a. **1Tim. 4:16**
 - b. This likely refers to the Christian character of the evangelist.
 - c. The preacher must seek personal spiritual development.
 - d. This would also involve a continual study of the scriptures.
4. He must be one who can stand strong in the face of opposition in his preaching
 - a. 2Tim. 4:1-5
5. He must be gentle, an able teacher, patient and humble,
 - a. 2Tim. 2:1,2
 - b. **2Tim. 2:24-26**

Appl: God's preachers must be those who will be steadfast in the faith, loyal to the truth, refusing false and speculative doctrines and uncompromising toward error.

At the same time he will conduct himself in a manner that is gentle, patient, and humble rather than quarrelsome.

He will manifest the kind of loving spirit that says he genuinely cares about the person who is in opposition to him.

The Evangelist - Part 2 (Lesson 26)

I. In 2Tim. 4:5 Paul charged Timothy “do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

II. In this statement it is clear that there is a work for the evangelist to do and both Paul and Timothy knew what that work was.

III. In today’s lesson we want to consider this work the evangelist is called to do.

IV. As we will see... **The work of an evangelist is a multifaceted effort directed at heralding the greatest message of all time.**

Trans: Let’s consider the whole of an evangelist’s work he is called to do.

1. An evangelist is called to preach

A. The words evangelist and preacher convey an important part of the preacher’s work.

B. A local preacher has the task of preaching the word to those who are saved,

1Tim. 4:6

1Tim. 4:11-16

C. But a primary work of the gospel preacher is to proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel to the lost.,

2Tim. 2:24-26

D. An evangelist fulfills his work in the pulpit, in the class and in people’s homes.

2. An evangelist is called to equip the church

A. Eph. 4:11-16

B. In v. 12 the evangelist is to help equip the saints for the work of service and the building up of the body.

1. This work also helps Christians attain to the maturity of the measure of the stature, which belongs to Christ, **v.13**

2. The work of an evangelist insures that the body will not be led away into error, **v.14**

3. This work helps the body to grow, **v.15,16**

C. The preacher’s job of equipping the church begins with leading brethren in the ways of the Lord through the teachings of the apostles, **1Cor. 4:17**

3. The evangelist is called to appoint elders.

A. Titus 1:5

B. God wants elders in every church, and no church is fully structured to meet the spiritual needs of its members until qualified elders are in place.

C. So the evangelist is given the work of appointing these elders.

1. The word appoint carries the idea of an appointment to administer and office.

2. Appointment of elders is a recognition of the churches, of those who had already been raised up and qualified by the Holy Spirit.

3. The concept we see in Acts 6:1-6 is carried over to the appoint of the elders, **Acts 14:23**

4. This appointment of elders would have been done with the approval of the churches these men were to oversee.

E. The idea of Titus appointing elders by the selection and approval of the church is to be distinguished from the claim that the local preacher has evangelistic authority over the local church and thus authority to appoint elders of his own selection.

F. Through preaching and teaching the evangelist assists the local congregation to mature, select and appoint elders.

4. The evangelist is called to train other preachers and teachers

A. 2Tim. 2:2

B. As in Eph. 4:11-16 the word of God is taught to prepare others to teach.

C. It seems that in Acts 16:1-5 Paul took along a young Timothy to train him.

D. In **Acts 19:9-10**, Luke speaks of Paul teaching in the school of Tyrannus

E. Later Paul passes this work to Timothy, 2Tim. 2:2.

5. The evangelist is called to defend the faith

A. This is a key aspect of the evangelist's work.

1. **1Tim. 1:3, 6:20-21**

2. **Titus 1:10-13**

3. 2Tim. 4:1-4

- B. This is sometimes the most difficult part of the preacher's work.
- C. The work of an evangelist requires him to have a doctrinal expertise so that he might defend against those who would teach contrary to God's will.
- D. He must be one who is willing to stand against those who oppose the truth and be willing to accept hardship and mistreatment, because it is part of the work he has been called to do.
- 2Tim. 2:24**
2Tim. 4:5

Con: So, we see the work of an evangelist is not an easy one.

- 1. An evangelist is called to preach**
- 2. An evangelist is called to equip the church.**
- 3. The evangelist is called to appoint elders.**
- 4. The evangelist is called to train other preachers and teachers.**
- 5. The evangelist is called to defend the faith.**

The work of an evangelist is a multifaceted effort directed at heralding the greatest message of all time.

Distinctive Worship of the Church - Part 1 (Lesson 27)

I. Over the past several months we have been discussing how to identify the Lord's church in this world of religious confusion.

II. In past lessons we have been considering the Distinctive nature of Christ' church.

1. The Distinctive Pattern of the church.
2. The Distinctive Nature of the New Covenant.
3. The Distinctive Identity of the New Testament church.
4. The Distinctive way into the church.
5. The Establishment of the church.

III. From there we moved to the organizational structure of the church.

1. Christ as the head and foundation of the church, having all authority over the church.
2. The infrastructure of the church
 - a. Elders - Spiritual Shepherds
 - b. Deacons - Servants
 - c. Evangelist - Gospelizer

IV. The purpose of these lessons have been to show that the nature and design of the Lord's church is so distinct, it can be easily identified. All we need to do is look into the Bible and follow what it teaches about the church and then we have reproduced it.

V. What I would like to do now, in helping us to identify the Lord's church, is to consider the worship of the church.

VI. Like all other aspects of the Lord's church, the worship of the church is so distinct that we can identify the church by seeing what the Scriptures have to say about it's worship.

VII. When I say we can identify the church by What I mean is this. The church, as we have seen, is made up of God's people. God's children are the called out, (ekkklesia). So, how can you identify whether a group of people meeting together really are God's people, the Lord's church?

What you do is look into the NT and see how the church, the called out, were supposed to conduct themselves, in daily living, righteousness, and worship and when you find a group of people that are reproducing the doctrines of the church as found in the NT you have found the church.

VII. Before we discuss the specific acts of worship, I would like to first discuss the concept of worship itself. By understanding the concept of worship, we will be better prepared to understand the kind of worship God desires.

Trans: Let's consider the first point in our lesson.

1. A definition of worship

A. In John 4:24 Jesus says *God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

B. To understand what worship is we must understand what He is saying.

1. Many go to church for what they can get.
2. They see worship as more "performance oriented" with the worshiper being thrilled and entertained.

C. But how does God define worship?

1. Our English word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word **worthship**. It means to declare the worth of God. (Revelation 4:11;5:12) Note: Only God (deity) is worthy of worship! Not man, idols, beasts, etc.

2. There are four Hebrew words translated in our English Bibles as worship. The most commonly used one means, "to bow down, to do homage."

- a. Genesis 18:2 – "Abraham bowed before the three divine visitors."
- b. Exodus 4:31 – "the people bowed their heads and worshiped."
- c. Exodus 12:27 – In bowing or bodily prostration is seen the principle of reverence.

3. The key Greek word translated "worship" in the New Testament is PROSKUNEO.

- a. "to do reverence to"
- b. From *pros*, **towards**, and *kuneo*, **to kiss**)
- c. It is an act of homage or reverence.
- d. Also means "to kiss the hand toward."
- e. This is the word Jesus used with the Samaritan Woman at the well and it carries the idea of reverence, **John 4:20-24**

4. We have another word which means "to serve, to minister." This has reference to "a priestly minister," and involves a priestly approach to God (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

D. Now, let's put all of these together:

1. Worship ascribes worth to God.
2. It is done in a spirit of wonder, awe, and reverence. Our hearts bowed before Him!
3. It involves attitudes (awe, reverence and respect) and actions (bowing, praising, serving).

4. It is a subjective and objective activity.
5. It is a balanced activity involving the mind, the emotions and the will.
6. It must be intelligent, reaching deep within us and motivated by love, and then must lead to obedient actions that glorify God.

Appl: The word **proskuneo** is most commonly used to describe what we do when we come together to worship.

Each thing we do in our assembly is considered a specific act of worship. But it is not worship if we do it out of mere formality. For an act to be worship the concept of reverence or homage must be present.

In other words, the one performing the act (worshiping) must be offering the act in reverence to the one being worshiped.

The act must be offered with the concept of reverence in mind or it is not worship.

Con: Dwight Bradley, gave this description of worship:

"Worship is the soul searching for its counterpart, It is the thirsty land crying out for rain. It is a cradle in which a baby lies. A drop in quest for the ocean.

Worship is a candle in the act of being kindled. It's the voice of the night calling for help. It is a sheep lost in the wilderness. Pleading for rescue by the Good Shepherd.

Worship is the prodigal running home to his father. It is a soul standing in awe at the wonder of the Universe. It is a poet enthralled by the beauty of the sunrise. It's a hungry heart seeking for love.

It is our spirit seeking to connect with the Spirit God in spiritual ways.

Distinctive New Testament Worship - Part 2
(Lesson 28)

- I.** In the late 1500's there was a man by the name of Sir William Cecil.
1. Sir William Cecil was the Lord Treasurer of England from 1572-1598.
 2. Whenever he would go to bed he would take his gown off, throw it to the floor and say, lie there Lord Treasurer.
 3. What he was doing was casting off the cares and worries of his work, so he might engage in a peaceful nights rest.

II. One individual said concerning this, *“As we come together to worship, we too should cast off the thoughts of the world, all secular cares, all household affairs, cast off all, as we set our minds to engage in the Lord’s worship, as did Sir William Cecil as he cast off his gown.*

III. All who come before God to worship Him should see it is an opportunity to pay homage to their Creator.

1. It is an opportunity to show reverence to the one who has saved us from our sins.
2. Worshipping God is the greatest privilege we will ever have.
3. As such it also carries the greatest responsibility on the part of those worshipping.
4. We have a responsibility to worship God in the manner He desires and accepts.

IV. Psalm 84:1-4 provides the proper view of those who seek to worship God.

1. We should long to be in God’s presence, **v.2**
2. Our whole being should be given to His worship, **v.2**
3. We should have a desire to always praise Him in His worship, **v.4**

V. John 4:7-26

VI. In our lesson today I will be speaking on the distinct nature of Christian worship. I will do this by considering two points.

- 1. Recognizing Unacceptable Worship**
- 2. Recognizing Acceptable Worship**

VIII. What we will come to learn is *God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.*

Trans: Let’s consider our first point.

1. Recognizing Unacceptable Worship

- A. To understand what true worship is we need to consider whether God accepts all “worship.”

B. What we find in an investigation of the Scriptures is that all worship is not acceptable to God.

C. We find this in the OT

1. Lev. 10:1-3
2. **Lev. 22:17-21**

D. In the Scriptures we can see that there is such a thing as unacceptable worship.

1. Vain Worship,
 - a. **Mark 7:6-9**
 - b. Here one has to set aside God's will for their own.
2. Ignorant worship,
 - a. **Acts 17:22-23,**
 - b. What did God require in regards to this? **Acts 17:30**
3. Will Worship, self imposed worship,
 - a. **Col. 2:18-23**
 - b. This is worship which one imposes on himself to get to God.
4. Misdirected worship
 - a. Romans 1:21-23
 - b. What was the outcome of this worship? **Rom. 1:24-25**

Illust: Gen. 4:3-7; Heb. 11:4

Appl: As we can see from these examples, not all worship is acceptable to God.

If we are to worship God we must do it according to His desires since it is His worship.

We cannot simply offer something up to God and then expect Him to accept it if He has not requested it. We can say this in all confidence because as we have seen the only worship God has ever accepted is that which is accordance to His will.

2. Recognizing Acceptable Worship

A. As has been noted, simply going through the motions of what might be called worship is not worship.

B. We see an example of this in Matt. 15:7-9

1. They are going through the acts, honoring God with their lips.
2. But their heart is far way. There is a lack of reverence.

C. The question then is, what is true Christian worship?

D. In turning to **John 4:20-24** Jesus clarifies the distinct nature of true Christian worship.

1. Jesus speaks first of the worshiper, **v.23**
 - a. He refers to the “**true worshipers**” which infers that there are false worshipers.
 - b. The word true is a rare usage and has the force of “real, genuine and authentic”
 - c. Not all worshippers are acceptable to God. There are those who are not genuine or authentic. In fact they could be considered play actors.
 - d. Also note that God can identify them, “**for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.**” He knows who they are you.

2. Jesus also discusses the true worship of the true worshipers and declares that it possess two distinct elements by which it can be identified, **v.23**

- a. Spirit
 1. The spirit of worship is the *how* of true worship.
 2. The basis of this worship is the fundamental nature of God. God is not flesh and blood nor bound to this earth.
Acts 17:22-31
 3. This is worship is void of the physical material things of worship. It is worship which focuses on the spiritual.
 4. It is not this physical place, not this mountain, not Jerusalem. **John 4:19-21**
- b. Truth
 1. The truth of worship speaks of the *what* we do in worship.
 2. The truth is the standard of true worship as revealed in God’s word.
 3. According to John 17:17 God’s word is truth. If we are to worship God in truth then we must worship Him according to His word.
 4. True worship can only be determined by the revelation accomplished in Jesus, **John 4:25,26**
 5. True worship can only be determined by the Revealer who is the only way of access to God.
John 1:18
John 14:6

3. This was not the worship that was offered by the Jews, again,
Matt. 15:8-9

Appl: In identifying true worship we see that it is distinct in its nature.

There must be the right attitude and it is worship set out in the pattern of sound words by which we must worship God.

It is a worship that is in spirit and truth. This is the only acceptable kind of worship and we can identify the Lord's church by finding those that follow this practice.

Con: What should we take from this lesson? First, we must understand some things about worship

- 1. Recognizing Unacceptable Worship**
- 2. Recognizing Acceptable Worship**

Second, if we are to worship God in the way He desires we must remember...

God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.

Worshipping God While the Evangelist Preaches

(Lesson 11)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 100:1-5

I. When we consider our coming together for worship we understand that we are collectively worshipping God as a congregation. At the same time, we recognize that we are participating in this act of worship individually.

II. Worship is the act of demonstrating our respect and reverence towards God. It is an act of love. The worship we offer God on Sunday is carried out in various acts of worship.

III. One of those acts of worship is preaching. Now preaching may not seem to fit into my worshipping God, after all I sit and listen. ***But the fact of the matter is, preaching is an act of worship, and like all acts of worship, I must be sure I am engaged in it so as to offer God acceptable worship.***

IV. Romans 15:15-16

1. In this passage Paul reveals some very interesting facts about preaching.
2. The word Paul uses for **minister** is the word for "public servant" often "priest."
3. The word **ministering** is related to the word for "temple."
4. The word **offering** is a "sacrificial offering."

V. Paul is comparing his preaching to a priest offering a sacrifice. *The Gentiles converted and established in the faith by his preaching are compared to a sacrifice he is presenting to God.*

VI. Because preaching is a sacrificial act offered to God, it is acceptable worship to Him.

VII. How does this apply to all those who are not preaching?

VIII. The early Christians held the public exhortation of God's word in high regard,

1. Acts 2:42.
2. 1Tim. 4:13

IX. We should do no less. We should desire to take in and ponder the message that is presented, so as to worship God through the preaching of His word.

X. ***We worship God during the sermon when we set our minds on the Word of God reverencing it and its source.***

XI. Jesus stated in John 4:24 that the true worshipers worship God in spirit and truth.

1. Since preaching is an act of worship it must follow these two tenets.
2. The preaching of Gods Word must be in spirit and truth.

XII. In our lesson this morning we will consider these two points

1. Preaching in Spirit
2. Preaching in Truth

Trans: To begin preaching God's word is not something that should be done half-hearted.

1. Preaching must be in conjunction with the right attitude or spirit.

A. There are two aspects to this.

1. There is the one doing the preaching.
2. There are the one's listening to the preaching.

B. The one preaching must have the desire to do so.

1. Some have preached with the wrong spirit, **Phil. 1:15-17**
2. A desire to raise up God and Christ before mankind must be foremost on the preacher's mind, **1Cor. 1:22-24**
3. A desire to call attention to God's holiness must be present as well, **Matt. 6:9** "*Our Father who art in Heaven Hallowed be Thy name*"
4. All glory must be directed towards God. In other words, the preacher must get out of the way. No show boating or outlandish dramatics.
Romans 16:25-27 (*He is the only wise God*)
Phil. 1:9-11 (*Fruit of righteousness through Jesus to His praise*)
Jude 24,25

C. Those who are listening to the preaching of God's Word must have the proper attitude as well.

1. There must be a longing to hear God's word, **Psalm 119:1-8**
2. There must be a desire to lift up God in your heart and before the world, **Psalm 111:1-10**
3. There must be a desire to hear God's Word so that we might be a doer of God's Word, **James 1:21-23**

Illust: Imagine a congregation where the preacher is preaching not because he desires to but because he gets a paycheck. In that same congregation can you visualize members that feel they have to come to hear God's word and have no real intent of changing their lives when God's word is preached?

Should we believe these individuals are worshiping God in the preaching of His word?

Appl: It is a joyous thing to be able to come and hear God's word presented in a proper manner. When one preaches out of the love of God's word then those listening can truly engross their whole being into the beauty and Holiness in His word.

It is a joy to know that on this Lord's day as we come together we desire to lift up and bring glory to God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ through the preaching of His Word.

As a member of this Lord's body there should be no greater joy than to hear, as it were, "another portion of God's Word"

We worship God during the sermon when we set our minds on the Word of God reverencing it and its source. We worship in the preaching when we do so in spirit.

Trans: Not only must the preaching be with the right attitude but it must also be according to the second aspect of God approved worship.

2. Preaching must be in accordance with truth.

A. For preaching to be according to truth we must preach what God has authorized us to preach.

2 Tim 1:13,14

2 Tim. 3:14

2 Tim. 4:1,2

B. There are three reasons for this.

1. The scriptures come from God, **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

2. God's word is the truth, **John 17:17**

3. It is the Truth that will set us free, **John 8:32**

C. If honor and glory are to be given to God in preaching, His word must be proclaimed in truth, separate from our opinions or unfounded beliefs.

D. As a matter of fact we are warned against preaching error, **Romans 16:17**

E. The consequences are serious.

Galatians 1:6ff

James 3:1

F. As for those who listen to what is preached we should be as the Bereans of Acts 17:11 and receive the word with eagerness yet seek to see if these things are so. *In other words see if it is the truth and if it is not reject it.*

Appl: One who is a preacher must preach the truth. Regardless of any situation or any pressures that might be put upon him to do otherwise.

It is God's word that will set us free we must desire to preach that word. We must desire to hear that word.

We worship God during the sermon when we set our minds on the Word of God reverencing it and its source. We do this when the truth is being preached and received.

Con: It is a joyous thing to be able to come and hear God's word presented in a proper manner with the right spirit and in truth.

I cannot imagine someone desiring to hear a preacher who preaches with an improper attitude and adds to this by not preaching the truth.

We worship God during the sermon when we set our minds on the Word of God reverencing it and its source. If we are to truly worship God in the preaching of His word, two things must be present.

1. The Preaching must be in conjunction with the right attitude or spirit. Both by the one preaching and the one is listening.
2. The preaching must be in accordance to Gods word, the truth.

If these two things are involved then we can worship God through the preaching of His word.

The Lords Church and Prayer - Part 1 (Lesson 30)

I. For the past several weeks we have been considering the acts of worship God has authorized for His church to participate in.

II. It has been noted that these acts of worship help us to identify the Lord's church through their distinct design and purpose.

III. In **Acts 2:41,42** we have several of these acts of worship listed.

IV. Today I will be addressing Prayer as an act of worship.

V. Prayer has always been a part of man's relationship with God.

From Adam – Jesus – to the NT church, man has communicated with God in prayer.

VI. We also find that prayer was offered for various reasons.

Abraham prayed for healing - Gen. 20:17

Hannah prayed for a child - 1Sam 1:10

Samuel prayed for guidance - 1Sam. 8:5-9

Job prayed for his friends - Job 42:10

Daniel offered a prayer of confession - Dan. 9:1-5

VI. As we turn to the Lord's church we find the same is true. Prayer is an intricate part of the Christian life.

VII. In our lesson today I will be discussing two matters pertaining to prayer.

1. What is prayer?

2. Basic Characteristics of acceptable prayer

Trans: To begin an understanding of what prayer is necessary.

1. What is Prayer?

A. There are several words for prayer in the NT, but the two most commonly used are,

1. **prosuekae** - Is the most common and is for prayer in general. This is the fact of prayer with no narrow indication of it's content.

1Pet 3:7

Phil. 4:6

2. **daesis** - A wanting, need and then an asking, or entreaty. It is used for specific prayer in concrete situations.

Luke 22:31,32 - Strength for Peter

1Thess. 3:9,10 - Paul's missionary plans.

B. Ultimately, prayer is simply communicating to God your needs, wants, desires appreciation and gratitude either in a general sense or through specific requests.

Appl: In prayer are communicated the thoughts of the Christian to the infinite mind of God.

Prayer is the Christian's means of expressing to God his requests for divine assistance and his utterances of praise and thanksgiving.

The faithful Christian prays to God because he needs divine assistance, and because he believes that God answers prayer.

Trans: Understanding what prayer is we can now look at some basic characteristics

2. Basic Characteristics of Acceptable Prayer

A. Must be offered in faith. God will not answer a prayer unless it is in faith.

Matthew 21:22

B. Must be offered according to His will. We must strive to offer prayers that are in keeping with the teaching of God's Holy word.

1 John 5:14,15

C. Must be offered in sincerity, humility, and fervency, not halfhearted, listless, and lethargic. Our whole being must be projected toward the mind of God.

Psalms 17:1

Colossians 4:12

D. Must be offered in the name of Christ. Since Jesus is our High priest He alone can take our requests before the Father.

Hebrews 4:14-16

John 14:13,14

E. Must be preceded by faithful, righteous living. The child of God who persists in the course of sin is not on praying terms with his heavenly Father.

James 5:16

1 John 3:21,22

Appl: For prayer to be acceptable it must possess certain characteristics. Without these characteristics prayers will not be heard nor answered.

Con: There is a story about a man named Ivan who endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God."

The Lords Church and Prayer - Part 2 (Lesson 31)

- I.** For the past several weeks we have been considering the acts of worship God has authorized His church to participate in.
- II.** In last weeks lesson we were discussing the Lord's church and prayer.
- III.** According to **Acts 2:40-42** we understand that prayer is a part of worship. The early church was devoted to prayer.
- IV.** In discussing prayer, I had stated that in the Lord's church it is basically the same whether in the worship service or not. In other words, the basic characteristics and elements involved in prayer are no different from our everyday life and the Lord's worship.
- V.** We also noted that prayer has always been a part of man's relationship with God.
- VI.** As we continue our study on prayer in the Lord's worship we will be considering several other aspects of what is involved in prayer.

Trans: As well as having certain basic characteristics in our prayer there are also certain elements involved in acceptable prayer. This is our first point.

1. Elements of Acceptable Prayer

- A. When I say elements, I am speaking of that which makes up our prayers.
- B. Adoration, praise and reverence. The very act of the Christian praying acceptably to God presupposes his respect for the infinite grace, dignity, love, majesty and goodness of the heavenly Father.
Matt 6:9
Psalm 4:1
- C. Thanksgiving; expressions of thanksgiving to God are prominent throughout the whole Bible. It is indeed necessary that our prayers be permeated with thanksgiving to Him.
1 Chronicles 16:8-12
Colossians 4:2
- D. Confession; prayer devoid of the confession of sins is prayer devoid of the spirit of humility. No Christian can come into the righteous presence of God in the spirit of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving who fails to penitently confess his sins.
Daniel 9:4,5
1 John 1:9

E. Dependence; a sense of his need of divine help. Righteous prayer to God assumes that man is weak and God is strong, that man is insufficient in himself. Out of man's sense of weakness goes his cry for divine assistance, and prayer becomes reality.

Matt. 6:11-13

Philippians 4:6

F. Intercession; prayers which are entirely self-centered, which seek God's blessings for oneself alone, are not acceptable to the Father. Every human being stands in need of God's help; thus every human being comes within the scope of our prayers.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Eph. 6:18

Col. 1:9

James 5:16

G. Righteous intercessory prayer is expressive of good will toward all men, the seeking of their good and never their harm. It is in truly loving all men that we find the motivation to pray for them. The greatest service that loving Christians can render any human being is to pray for him.

Rom. 1:9-11

Appl: As we approach God in prayer we must do so with an attitude of speaking to Him in an acceptable way.

These elements of prayer help us to do that. These are the foundations of our prayers.

Trans: I have stated that prayer in our every day life is really no different that how we pray in the Lord's worship. But there is one difference would like to bring up. This is our second point.

2. Who should pray in our Lord's worship?

A. In our everyday worship all Christians, male or female, can offer individual prayers to God, **Matt. 6:5,6**

B. But in matters of public worship prayer is restricted to specific individuals.

1. Those living righteous live's,

James 5:16

Isa. 59;1,2

2. Men, **1Tim. 2:8**

C. Based upon 1Tim. 2:9-14, I would also say that this should be the case of mixed meetings between Christian men and women, outside the worship.

Trans: One other point we want to look at before we move on.

Con: As we think of prayer in the Lord's church we need to ask ourselves,

1. Are we praying without ceasing -- morning, noon, and night?
2. Are we praying for all men everywhere, for our enemies as well as our friends?
3. Are we praying in adoration, praise and thanksgiving?
4. Are we praying in penitent confession of our sins?
5. Are we praying for the necessities of life, both spiritual and physical?
6. Are our prayers preceded by lives that strive to follow the footsteps of Jesus?
7. Are we praying both alone and with our brethren?

Prayer is an intricate part of the everyday life of the Christian and we must be sure we are praying, as God desires. Go to your God in prayer, He will hear.

Giving is an act of Worship - Part 1 (Lesson 32)

I. A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church "Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself," she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. "Well," said the little girl, "I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I'd be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did."

II. I think a lesson we can take from this story is that often people don't understand what God desires of them in their giving.

III. With this in mind we will continue our lessons on Scriptural NT worship, focusing on the principle of giving as an act of worship.

IV. There should be no question that giving is an act of worship.

1. The basic premise of worship is paying homage in a reverent way.
2. Giving simply implies taking some of what you have earned from your labors and freely passing it on to another.
3. But giving, as an act of worship, pays homage to God, because we give to Him whom we believe has blessed us with all that we have.
4. **Phil. 4:15-20**

V. Since giving is an act of worship, it's imperative that we give in a way that pays homage to God.

VI. To help in our understanding of how we do this we will consider three points

1. **God is the originator of giving**
2. **The nature of God's giving**
3. **The nature of Christian giving**

VII. Ultimately we learn, *in understanding Gods giving nature, we are compelled to give in a worshipful way.*

Trans: One way to understand giving is to consider the originator of giving.

1. God is the originator of giving.

A. The first book of the Bible establishes God as the originator of giving **Gen 1:1**

B. Throughout the Scriptures we see Gods giving nature in that it encompasses all aspects of our existence.

1. He is the giver of physical life, **Acts 17:24-25**
2. He is the giver of the necessities of life, **Acts 14:16-17**
3. He is the giver of spiritual life

- a. **Eph. 1:3**
- b. Rom. 5:1

- 4. He is the giver of eternal life
 - a. **1Pet. 1:3-5**
 - b. Rom. 6:23

Appl: To understand our giving we need to first understand the originator of giving.

From what we have seen, that originator is God, thus giving is part of God's nature. He is a giving God.

God demonstrates this giving nature in all aspects of our life.

Trans: Understanding that God is the originator of giving we can learn more about how we are to give by considering the nature of His giving. This is our second point.

2. The nature of God's giving

- A. Above all, God is a selfless giver.
 - 1. The cost of giving was never too high, Phil. 2:5-8
 - 2. Jesus states this selfless giving nature, **Matt. 20:25-28**
- B. This is reflective of God being a loving giver.
 - 2. Psalm 136:1-26
- C. God is a generous giver.
 - 1. **Luke 6:38**
 - a. It will be in good measure
 - b. Poured into my lap - *Typical carrying place for goods*
 - c. Pressed down – *Medical term, Pressing strongly on a body part*
 - d. Shaken together – *Like Dry Goods*
 - e. Running over – *Abundance*
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 9:6-11
 - a. God will make all grace abound to me
 - 1) I will have all sufficiency in everything
 - 2) I will have abundance for every good deed
 - b. He will supply my need
 - c. He will increase the harvest of my righteousness
 - d. I will be enriched in everything in all liberality
- D. God is a joyful giver,
 - Heb. 12:2,3**
 - Psalm 40:6-8

Appl: God being the originator of giving possess giving as part of His nature. He is a giving God.

When we consider the nature of God's giving we see that it really defines true giving and by understanding the nature of His giving we can understand how we are to give.

Trans: Being that God possess a giving nature we find that those who follow Him are to posses the same character. This is our third point.

3. The nature of Christian giving

A. We are to imitate the nature of God, **Eph. 5:1**

B. In imitating that nature, our giving should possess the same characteristics we see in God's giving.

1. God is a giver and he expects us to be givers,

1Cor. 16:1,2

Matt. 25:34-36

2. We are to be selfless and generous in our giving, **1Tim. 6:17-19**

3. In 2Cor. 9:6-7 we find the other characteristics of God's giving nature that we are to imitate.

a. God expects us to be loving in our giving, **2Cor. 9:7a**

b. God expects us to be joyful in our giving, **2Cor. 9:7b**

C. God also expects us to give in a trusting way.

1. Matthew 6:25,31-34

2. **Hebrews 13:5-6**

3. Not trusting God will affect our giving. If you do not trust an investment plan you won't invest.

Appl: It has been said that imitation is the greatest form of flattery. In a similar, as we imitate God's giving nature, we honor him.

The Scriptures are clear; God is a giver and He calls His children to be givers.

As God's children our giving must posses the same characteristics of our God.

The Christian must be a...

Selfless giver

Generous giver

Loving giver

Joyful giver

Con: To really have an understanding of giving as Christians we must first consider the originator of giving.

By going to the source of giving we will have a clearer picture of what giving is all about.

By going to the source of giving we will understand how we are to give.

In understanding Gods giving nature, we are compelled to give in a worshipful way.

Giving is an act of worship - Part 2

(Lesson 33)

I. “The rich family in our church” (*The story about a family that collected money for a poor family, only to find out they were the poor family and had ended up giving 80% of the monies collected for that poor family*)

II. In thinking about this family it would be easy for us to focus on what seems to be a destitute situation of poverty. But what really stands out is their perspective of their situation. This family did not see themselves as poor. And rather than dwelling on what they didn't have, they sacrificed and joyfully pursued helping others.

III. Last week I spoke about the nature of giving. I noted that for us to give properly we need to understand the originator of giving. By understanding the nature of His giving we can understand what the nature of our giving should be.

IV. It's clear from the Scriptures that God is a giver and He expects us to be givers as well. In imitating the nature of His giving we find that our giving is to be...

- 1. Selfless**
- 2. Loving**
- 3. Generous**
- 4. Joyful**

V. Recognizing the nature of God's giving helps us to have the proper attitude in our giving. This is what I would like us to consider this week in regards to our giving.

VI. *As imitators of God we must develop the proper attitude towards giving.*

Trans: It begins with the right perspective. This is our first point.

1. We must have the right perspective in our giving.

A. We know the nature of how we are to give.

B. But we need to discover how to develop that nature.

C. It begins with having the right perspective, **2 Cor. 8:1-5**

1. The Macedonians possessed the proper nature in their giving
 - a. **v.2,** They were not concerned about their own poverty, (Selfless)
 - b. **v. 2,** They overflowed in joy, (Joyful)
 - c. **v. 3,** They gave beyond their ability, (Generous)
 - d. **v. 4,** They wanted to help the saints, (Loving)

2. They possessed this nature because they had the right perspective,

1. **2Cor. 8:5**

2. **They gave themselves first to God.**

3. **They gave themselves by the Will of God.**
4. They entrusted themselves to Him and so were able to give in a way which honors God.

3. This is what Christians are called to do,
 1. First, we possess the right perspective, Heb. 13:5,6
 2. Then the nature of our giving will be right, 2Cor. 9:6-7

Illust: “*The Wise Woman and the Stone*” (A woman finds a stone which she knows is of great value. A poor man whom she is helping asks her for the stone, he too knowing its value. She gives it to him without hesitation. A few days later he brings the stone back and asks for something greater. He wants what was within her, which enabled her to give him the stone.)

Appl: Giving in the way God desires will not take place until I bring things into perspective.

I will not possess the nature of proper giving until I possess the right perspective.

That right perspective is founded in my giving myself to God first. Trusting in Him for all things.

Trans: Knowing it begins with the right perspective does not necessarily mean I have that right perspective. I need to learn how to develop the right perspective. This is our second point.

2. Developing the right perspective in our giving.

- A. The Macedonians had the right perspective in their giving because they first gave themselves to God.
- B. But I can know that I am to imitate His nature and still not give in the right way.
- C. To overcome this I must develop the right perspective.
 1. First, I must have the right perspective of my relationship with God,
 - a. I belong to him, **1Cor. 6:20**
 - b. All I have belongs to Him and used for Him, **Col. 1:16**
 2. Second, I must have the right perspective on my relationship with money.
 1. I must see its limitations.
 - a. There are greater things than money, Luke 12:13-21
 - b. Money is only temporary, **Prov. 23:4,5**
 - c. Money is not trustworthy, **Prov. 11:28**
 - d. Misplaced fondness ruins you, 1Tim. 6:9,10
 - e. In the end money cannot save you, **Prov. 11:4**

f. I cannot take it with me, **1Tim. 6:7**

2. I must see it as a blessing

a. It helps me to bring glory to God, 2Cor. 9:13

b. It enables me to help others, **Eph. 4:28**

c. It can help my own spirituality, **1Tim. 6:17-19**

3. I must understand that with or without it I am to be content,

Job. 1:20,21

Phil. 4:10-13

Appl: We live in a world where many see money as the means to all ends.
Love, Friends, Contentment, Joy, Peace, Happiness

But if I am to possess the nature of God in my giving I must possess the right perspective when it comes to money.

If money is the means to all ends that means without it all ends are never achieved.

But we know ...

We can have love without money

We can have friends without money

We can be content without money

We can have joy without money

We can have peace without money

We can have happiness without money

We can have these things by developing the right perspective.

Con: If we are to give in the nature of God's giving we must possess the right perspective.

It begins with God as our foundation.

Giving ourselves to him first and seeing money for what it really is.

We use it for what God intended.

1. To take care of our needs.

2. To serve and glorify Him.

As imitators of God we must develop the proper attitude towards giving.

Giving As Worship - Part 3 (Lesson 34)

I. I have this cartoon in my file that shows a little boy with his family standing at the door of the church building. Next to them is the preacher. The little boy looks up at the preacher and says, “I’m sorry my dad didn’t put any money in the offering basket today, he said he didn’t have any change.

II. One of the questions that is often asked when discussing giving is, how much should I give?

III. When we study the NT concept of giving we find that God never tells us of a specific dollar amount to give.

IV. The NT principles of giving are not based upon a specific dollar amount but upon a specific kind of heart. ***The best way then to determine how much to give is to follow the heart principle.***

V. Today we want to discuss the heart principle of NT giving so that we can be sure we are worshiping God correctly in our giving.

Trans: Let’s begin by establishing the reality of the heart principle in our giving.

1. The reality of the heart principle of giving

A. When I say heart principle I am referring to the way God wants us to give.

B. God wants us to give from the heart, not from the balance in our checking account.

C. We have several examples of the heart principle in the Scriptures.

1. **2Cor. 9:7**

2. **Definition of Heart**

3. **Mark 12:41-44**

Illust: 2 Cor. 8:1-4 - They didn’t give based upon what they had, they gave from the heart regardless of what they had. This is the heart principle.

Appl: Some today conclude that they are giving correctly because of the amount they give, but the amount we give doesn’t determine if are giving is right.

For example, I could be giving \$100.00 a week in offering and my giving still be wrong. If that \$100.00 is given based upon an intake to output ratio, it’s not proper given.

The same can be said if I only gave \$5.00, \$10.00 or \$20.00.

It’s not the amount that determines if it is right it’s the heart.

Trans: Having seen that there is such a thing as the heart principle in our giving we now want to consider how to follow that principle.

2. Following the heart principle in our giving

A. Following the heart principle simply means putting into action the kind of giving God desires based upon the condition of your heart.

B. As we look into the NT Scriptures we can see how the heart is involved in our giving. We must set our heart on the right path first.

1. Faith - **Matt. 6:31-34**
2. Love - 1John 3:17,18
3. Joy - **2Cor. 9:7**
4. Contentment - Phil. 4:10-12
5. Sacrificial - **Phil. 4:18**

C. Wrongful giving, **Matt. 6:1,2**

Illust: Mark 10:17-22

Appl: If I want to give the way God desires, then I must set my heart on the right path first.

Again the amount is not the determining factor. If I give a large amount but do so grudgingly, my giving is not acceptable to God.

If my heart is right, then my giving will be right as well. The amount I give whether large or small will be acceptable because it is given from the heart.

Trans: There are other principles of giving that we want to consider which are directly related to the heart. This is our third point.

3. Other principles of giving

A. When should we give?

1. In the general sense we should always be ready to give.

Eph. 4:28

1Tim. 6:17-19

2. In the specific sense of giving in worship, we are instructed in that giving as well,

a. **1Cor. 16:1,2**

b. As we have prospered,

c. This is literally as to what we have prospered.

B. As we have purposed, planning ahead, 2Cor. 9:7

C. Growing in our giving.

1. **Eph 4:14,15**
2. We are to grow in our giving.
3. We can increase in our given but never grow in it.

Illust: The man who goes to the elder and asks for help in his giving, because he is giving far more than he did when he first started. The elders say they will pray the Lord bless him less so he can give less.

Appl: These other principles of giving are directly tied to the heart principle of giving.

With the right heart we will always be ready to give.

With the right heart our giving will be in proportion to our prospering

With the right heart our giving will be planned ahead.

With the right heart we will grow in our giving.

Con: Sometimes it is easy to forget or overlook how wonderfully giving our God is. When this happens we also tend to forget or overlook how giving we are to be. Christianity is about giving. From the giving of Jesus' life for us to the giving of our lives for Him and we cannot forget this.

Now some might say, well we can give in other ways besides financially, and this is very true. But this type of giving is not to take the place of giving financially but it goes along side of it. We cannot trade one for the other. We have been commanded to do both.

As we think of this idea of our giving we need to consider what God asks of us. Are we doing as He asks? Do we make sure we have plenty before we give what is left to God or do we give God the leftovers?

The best way then to determine how much to give is to follow the heart principle.

The Lord's Supper - Part 1 (Lesson 35)

I. A man once wrote, "If a friend gives you a ring at his death, you wear it to keep up the memory of your friend; much more, then, ought you to keep up the memorial of Christ' death in the Lord's Supper.

II. On the first day of every week we come together to worship our God. One act of worship distinct to New Testament Christianity is our partaking of "The Lord's Supper," as Paul refers to it in 1Cor. 11:20

III. According to Scripture, the Lord's Supper consists of two emblems and one purpose.

- a. **The unleavened bread**
- b. **The fruit of the vine**
- c. The purpose of partaking is to **remember Jesus' death for our sins until He comes again.**

IV. As with all acts of worship we seek to honor God through partaking of the Lord's Supper.

VI. We honor Him because **The Lord's Supper is an act of Worship authorized by God and we observe it accordingly.**

Transition: Let's begin by considering the validity of the Lord's Supper as an act of worship

1. The Validity of the Lord's Supper

A. The Scriptures are clear that every act of worship must be backed by the authority of God, **Col. 3:17.**

B. If we are going observe the Lord's Supper as an act of we must be sure that this is what God desires, not just the partaking but also how, why and when.

C. In the Scriptures we find that Jesus instituted this memorial.

Matthew 26:26-30

Mark 14:22-26

Luke 22:14-20

D. From these we can also see that the Lord's Supper was instituted on the night before his crucifixion, to commemorate His death, Luke 14:22.

E. Following Jesus' death, we find have examples of the early church participating in this act of worship.

Acts 2:42

Acts 20:6-7

1 Cor. 11:20-26

Application: From these passages we can determine that the Lord's Supper is indeed authorized and commanded by God.

1. Jesus instituted it
2. The early church participated in it
3. They were even corrected in the manner in which they were to keep it.

The Bible being our example and authority, we can be assured that the Lord's Supper is part of our worship.

The Lord's Supper is an act of Worship that God has authorized, and we must observe it accordingly.

Transition: Understanding that we have authority to partake of the Lord's Supper as an act of worship, we need to explore a little deeper the purpose of it.

2. The Purpose of the Lord's Supper

A. The Lord's Supper is referred to in several ways, but in the end, it serves one crowning purpose.

B. It is a communion.

1. It is a communion of the body and blood of Christ.

2. 1 Corinthians 10:16,17

C. It is a memorial service.

1. Those who partake of the Lord's Supper remember, the cruel death of Jesus; the nails that pierced His hands and feet; the spear that pierced His side, and the blood that was shed for sins.

2. Luke 22:19

D. It is a proclamation.

1. Every man and woman, boy or girl preaches a sermon in the act of partaking of the Lord's Supper. By partaking of the Lord's Supper, we proclaim His death for us until He comes again.

2. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

E. It is a means of worship.

1. True worship is designed to recognize and set forth the worthiness and honor of the object, or person, to who it is addressed.
2. We give honor to Christ in remembering His death thus the Lord's Supper is worship.

F. Ultimately the Lord's Supper is an act of worship wherein Christians share in remembering and proclaiming that Jesus died for their sins.

1. In some ways it is similar to the Jewish Passover.
2. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on night of the Passover Supper
Matt. 26:21
3. The Passover was instituted to remind the children of Israel of their deliverance from bondage, **Deut. 16:1-3**
4. When we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of the deliverance we have from the bondage of sin because of Jesus' death,
Matt. 26:28

Illust: Rom. 6:16, Rom. 5:9,10

Appl: When it comes to our worshiping God it is important to understand why we are doing what we are doing. In this way we are worshiping in spirit and truth, John 4:24.

Paul expressed this when he wrote to the brethren in Corinth, **1Cor. 11:28-29**

The Lord's Supper is an act of Worship that God has authorized, and we must observe it accordingly. We must understand the purpose for partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Con: From what we have seen today the Lord's Supper is an authorized act of worship.

It is something that should be cherished by each and every Christian.

1. On the first day of every week we have the privilege of coming together to worship our God and proclaim the death of Jesus our Savior.
2. We commemorate His death of by partaking of "The Lord's Supper."
3. We remember that Jesus died for the forgiveness of my sins.

The Lord's Supper is an act of Worship that God has authorized, and we observe it accordingly.

The Lord's Supper - Part 2

(Lesson 36)

I. On the first day of every week as we come together we do so to worship our Holy and mighty God.

II. As we come together we participate in specific, distinctive acts of worship authorized by God. One of those acts of worship is the partaking of the Lord's Supper.

III. As noted last week there is great significance in the Lords Supper. As Christians we must recognize the true purpose of what we are doing.

- 1. It is a communion or sharing in the effects of Jesus' death.**
- 2. It is a commemoration or reminder of what Jesus did in delivering us from sin**
- 3. It is a proclamation of our belief that Jesus is our Passover lamb through His death.**
- 4. It is a time of self-examination, being sure we are united in spirit with the body.**

IV. There is something else about the Lord's Supper that is as important as why we partake and that is what we partake of. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper he used two emblems, Mark 14:22-25

V. In our lesson today I want to consider the significance of these two emblems.

- 1. The Significance of the Unleavened Bread**
- 2. The significance of the Fruit of the Vine**

VI. The emblems Jesus used in the Lord's Supper emphasis what His sacrifice was about.

Trans: With this in mind Let's consider the way we are to participate in the Lord's Supper beginning with what we are to be partaking of.

1. The Significance of the Unleavened Bread

A. We know Jesus used unleavened bread because of what was taking place when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

1. It was during the feast of Unleavened Bread, **Mark 14:12**
2. This feast was instituted by God while the Hebrew people were still in Egypt, and during this time they could not have any leaven, Ex. 12:17-20.
3. In keeping with the Law this is the type of bread Jesus would have used.

- B. When Jesus had His apostles partake of this emblem it was for a reason.
1. Bread itself represents life because it is the principal means of preserving life. Unleavened bread is symbolical of the new life, as cleansed from the leaven of a sin.
 2. For Israel in **Ex. 12:17** the partaking of the unleavened represented an exodus of the old life into a new.
 3. For the Israelites putting away all the leaven was symbolic of putting away the leaven of their Egyptian nature. By eating pure and holy bread and meeting for the worship of God they showed that they were walking in newness of life, **Ex. 12:18-20**
 4. For the followers of Christ, the unleavened bread was to represent the body of Christ given on the cross which gave us life free from sin, **Mark 14:22**
 5. As with Israel, it is a symbol of us putting away that old self that was a slave to sin, 1 Cor 5:1-8

2. The significance of the Fruit of the Vine

- A. Most understand that the fruit of the vine represents the blood Jesus shed
- B. There is also another reason for using fruit of the vine.
1. In Ex 12:1-13, the Israelites were instructed to offer a sacrificial lamb. The blood of the animal was to be applied to their doorpost and lintel so death would pass them over. *This was a death that came because of disobedience to God's will.*
 2. When Jesus instituted the Lords supper he instructed His apostles to drink of the cup, which contained "fruit of the vine." This fruit symbolized the blood he would shed for the forgiveness of sins, thus allowing the death that came because of disobedience to pass over, **Matt. 26:27,28**
 3. In this way Jesus is our Passover lamb, **1Peter 1:18,19**
 4. But it is not enough that the blood of the lamb was shed, it must be applied, denoting the application of the merits of Christ's death to our souls; we must receive the atonement, **Rom 5:11.**
 5. It was to be applied to the door-posts, denoting the open profession we are to make of faith in Christ, and obedience to him, as those that are not ashamed of own our dependence upon him, Ex. 12:13

6. It was to be sprinkled upon the lintel and the side posts, but not upon the threshold (v. 7), which cautions us to take heed of trampling under foot the blood of the covenant, **Heb 10:29**. It is precious blood, and must be precious to us.

7. The blood, thus sprinkled, was a means of the preservation of the Israelites from the destroying angel, who had nothing to do where the blood was. If the blood of Christ is sprinkled upon our consciences, it will be our protection from the wrath of God, the curse of disobedience, and the damnation of hell.

2Pet. 2:20

Rom 8:1.

Con: When we come together we partake of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine in following the example of Jesus.

Both of these serve as a simple and clear reminder of what Jesus did for us when He went to the cross.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus and was passed on to us. It is important that we partake of the Lord's Supper because it is commanded.

The Lord's Supper should remind us of the old life we have given up to walk in the new life offered through Jesus' death.

The emblems Jesus used in the Lord's Supper emphasis what His sacrifice was about.

Old Testament Musical Worship - Part 1 (Lesson 37)

I. *A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequences from their statements, is forbidden. (pg. 1)*

*This principle of the necessity of a divine warrant for everything in the faith and practice of the church is proved by didactic statements of Scripture: **Prov. 30:5,6***

These solemn statements and awful warnings teach us the lesson, that to introduce any devices and inventions of our own into the doctrine, government or worship of the church, is to add to the words of God, and to fail in maintaining the principles and truths, or in complying with the institutions and ordinances, delivered to us in the Scriptures, is to take away from the words of God. ...those who import instrumental music into the ordained worship of the New Testament church transcend the warrant of Scripture, and add to the words which Christ our Lord has commanded. (pg. 3)

God is to be worshipped only in the ways appointed in His word. Every act of public cultus not positively enjoined by Him is thereby forbidden. Christ and his apostles ordained the musical worship of the New Dispensation without any sort of musical instrument, enjoining only singing with the voice of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Hence such instruments are excluded from Christian Worship. Such has been the creed of all churches, in all ages, except of the Popish communion. (Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church, Apologia Press, 2000, pgs. viii,xi)

II. These comments were made by **Dr. John Lafayette Girardeau, in 1888.** Dr. Girardeau was a **Presbyterian professor at the Columbia Theological Seminary in South Carolina.**

III. The reason I bring this up is because there was a time when people understood the need to have a divine warrant in religious matters. God's approval was always foremost when it came to His worship.

IV. Today, the need for a divine warrant is virtually nonexistent when it comes to worshipping God.

V. A good example of this and the focus of our lesson today is musical worship. Most churches today use the mechanical instrument in their worship. But when we look back through history we find the opposite is actually the case. In times past it was strange to find a group using the mechanical instrument in worship.

VI. Often those who use the mechanical instrument appeal to the Old Testament as proof that God allows us to worship Him in this manner.

VII. Generally we respond by-passing the OT and state that we no longer live under that old law, **Eph. 2:14-16**. So how they worshipped God then, does not apply to us now.

VIII. But, if we do that I believe we miss seeing a principle of worship that pertains to both then and now.

IX. As we are going to see in our lesson, *the principle of a divine warrant has always been the way God instructs us in His worship.*

Old Testament Musical Worship.

A. In looking back to the time of King Hezekiah we find both instrumental and vocal music in worship, **2Chrn. 29:26-28**

B. But, to truly understand why God accepted this type musical worship we need to examine some facts before this time period.

1. Prior to Moses, during the patriarchal age, we do not have mention of the use of the musical instrument in worshipping God, and it's not because they didn't have them, Gen. 4:21; 31:27

2. Following the patriarchal age we move into the Mosaic age. This closes out the book of Genesis and begins the book of Exodus.

a. The first time we see the use of the musical instrument in relation to God and his people is, **Ex. 15:1,20.**

b. But, this is a time of celebration and cannot be supported as an act of worship authorized by God.

c. As we move through Exodus God eventually instructs Moses to prepare the tabernacle, a place of worship. When He does He goes into great detail of what he desires. Not just the physical make up but also that which pertains to the worship that was to take place, Ex. 25:9ff

d. In this description He never instructs Moses to build a musical instrument for worship. When giving Moses these instructions, He warns him to build it the way he is instructed, **Ex 25:9**

e. The only instruments of sound God instructed Moses to build were not musical instruments,

1. **Num. 10:1-2, 9-10**

2. The horns were not for musical purposes but rather for summoning God's people and reminder before God.

3. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, states: **Apart from the use of the trumpet as a signaling instrument, music seems to have**

played a rather minor role in the national religion of the nomadic period and during the Conquest.

4. It's not until the reign of King David that we see the first musical instrument being introduced into tabernacle worship.

a. When King David returns with the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obed-edom, to Jerusalem, he introduces the use of the mechanical instrument in tabernacle worship, **1Chrn. 16:39-42**

b. David also establishes the use of the musical instrument for Temple worship, **1Chrn. 23:1,2; 25:1,6**

c. When the temple is built by King Solomon, it is dedicated with the use of musical instruments, 2Chrn. 5:11-13

d. When King Hezekiah restores Temple worship the instrument is re-introduced. It is here that we find the reason for it being included, **2Chrn. 29:25,26**

5. According to the ISBE: **“The music of the temple probably consisted essentially of the singing of religious lyrics to the accompaniment of primarily stringed instruments, following the offering of the sacrifices.”**

6. In considering a time line of these events what do we see? **From the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, in 1461 b.c., through 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, into the conquest of Canaan, to the appointment of Judges to the time of King David, we never see the musical instrument being used in tabernacle worship. This is a time period of approximately 470 years.**

C. One other thing to consider is the worship that took place in the synagogues on the Sabbath.

1. Synagogues were the gathering places for the Jews to worship on the Sabbath.

a. Psalm 74:8 (KJV Synagogue)

b. Acts 15:21

2. In studying the worship practices of the synagogue we find the musical instrument was never used.

Con: Here is what we learn,

1. Although the patriarchs had the musical instrument they never used it in their public worship to God.

2. During the reign of Moses when the tabernacle is built God never instructs Moses to design and use a mechanical instrument in worship.
3. The instrument is not introduced until the reign of King David and then it is only introduced upon a divine warrant being given.
4. We never see the musical instrument being used outside of the Temple to worship God in a congregational way ie. the synagogues.
5. Often when we see the use of the musical instrument in the Old Testament, it is associated with celebrations and not public worship to God.

But the real message we find in this study is the Biblical principle of divine warrant.

The musical instrument was not introduced until, a divine warrant was given for them to do so and then they never went beyond that warrant to use the instrument in public worship outside the Temple.

1. The patriarchs never did, although they had them.
2. Moses never did, although he had them
3. King David never did, even though he was a musician

They all followed the principle of divine warrant and so should we.

The principle of a divine warrant has always been the way God instructs us in His worship.

Remember: 2Chron. 29:25

New Testament Musical Worship - Part 2 (Lesson 38)

I. Last week, as we considered the topic of Musical worship to God, our lesson focused on the musical worship in the Old Testament.

II. From our lesson we learned that the use of the instrument in worship was very negligible.

1. **In fact there is no Scriptural support for it in the patriarchal age.**
2. **During the period of tabernacle worship God never instructed His people to use the mechanical instrument in worship.**
3. **It was not introduced into God's worship until the later end of King David's life.**
4. **It was also noted that the instrument was never used in the synagogues, when the Jews would gather on the Sabbath to worship God.**
5. **It appears that the mechanical instrument was only used during the time of sacrifices.**

III. The reason we first investigated OT musical worship was to find the principle behind the introduction of the instrument.

IV. We found, that although the mechanical instrument was introduced by King David; it was not introduced until God authorized it, **2Chron. 29:25**.

V. This same principle applies to all of God's people throughout all ages. **The Worship we offer to God is His worship. It has been designated and designed by Him and as such we can only do as God has instructed.** We simply cannot introduce into God's worship, that which he has not authorized.

VI. Having already looked at the OT we need to ask the question, what kind of music has God authorized in NT worship?

VII. New Testament Musical Worship as authorized by God has always excluded the mechanical instrument being purely vocal.

1. New Testament musical worship.

- A. As one reads through the NT they will find that musical worship is mentioned.
- B. What you will not find is instrumental musical worship ever being mentioned.
- C. The passages that speak of musical worship only mention singing.
 1. **Matt. 26:30**
 2. **Acts 16:25**
 3. **Romans 15:8,9** (Psalm 18:49)
 4. **1 Cor. 14:15**
 5. **Eph. 5:18,19**

6. Col. 3:16
7. Heb. 2:11,12 (Psalm 22:22)
8. James 5:13

D. From a strictly Scriptural stand point, one cannot provide a single passage that ever instructs or shows Christians worshiping God with a mechanical instrument in the NT Church.

Appl: This might sound simple, but the lack of Scriptural evidence supporting the use of the mechanical instrument in worship, in fact supports not using it.

If we do not have a divine warrant (authority) to use the musical instrument, then we have no right to use it.

Think about it, *if you were going through the NT Scriptures and you were teaching someone how they are to live as a Christian, including how they are to worship, what passage would you use to show them they are to worship God with a mechanical instrument?*

There isn't one. You couldn't show them. But you could show them where they are instructed to sing and that is it.

Trans: There are some other things we might consider to help understand how God desires us to worship Him in Song.

2. External and Evidences

A. External evidences do not carry the weight of internal evidences, nevertheless they cannot simply be discounted. Due consideration should be given to them.

B. Music historians overwhelming support that music in the early church was always without the accompaniment of the mechanical instrument.

1. Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization, pp.53,54: **"All our sources deal amply with vocal music of the church, but they are chary with mention of any other manifestations of musical art...The development of Western music was decisively influenced by the exclusion of musical instruments from the early Christian church."**

2. Hugo Leichtentritt, Music, History and Ideas, p.34; **"Only singing, however, and no playing of instruments was permitted in the early Christian Church."**

3. Dr. Frederic Louis Ritter, History of Music from the Christian Era to the Present Time, p.28: **"We have no real knowledge of the exact character of the music which formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregations. It was, however, purely vocal."**

4. Joseph Bingham, Works, London Edition, Vol. II, pp.482-484:
"Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so... The use of the instrument, indeed, is much more ancient, but not in church service... In Western parts, the instrument was not so much as known till the eighth century; for the first organ that was ever seen in France was one sent as a present to King Pepin by Constantinus Copronymus, the Greek emperor. ...But, now, it was only used in princes' courts, and not yet received in the Greek churches, there being no mention of an organ in all their Liturgies, ancient or modern."

C. Denominations which use the instrument today, at one time opposed it or at least many of their prominent leaders did.

1. Martin Luther - **"The organ is the worship is an ensign to Baal."**
2. John Calvin - presbyterian - **"It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of tapers or revival of the other shadows of the Law."** Commentary on Twenty-third Psalm
3. John Wesley - Methodist – **"I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither heard nor seen"**
4. Adam Clark - Methodist - **"I am an old man and an old minister, and i here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of that Infinite Spirit who requires His followers to worship Him in spirit and truth."** Clark's Commentary, Vol. IV. p.686.
5. Charles Spurgeon - Baptist - **"I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. (1Cor. 14:15) I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."**

D. The word Acappella,

1. Acappella is Latin and it means,
 - a. In chapel or church style
 - b. As in church

Appl: As I said these are external evidences, but they do provide some insights into the use of the mechanical musical instrument in worship.

These evidences attest to the fact that the mechanical musical instrument was not part of Christian worship.

Con: So where do we stand in regards to ?

- 1. The Scriptures show that the use of the mechanical instruments was never authorized in New Testament Christian Worship**
- 2. Music history shows that the early church never used the instrument in Christian Worship.**
- 3. Denominational preachers of old, many being founders of those particular denominations have made it clear the instrument is not part of God's worship**
- 4. The word A'Cappella (As in church) clarifies that mechanical instrumental music was not used in church.**

Given these facts there just isn't any evidence that would support the use of the mechanical musical instrument in God's worship.

New Testament Musical Worship as authorized by God has always excluded the mechanical instrument being purely vocal.

The Church and it's Singing - Part 3

(Lesson 39)

I. One of the interesting things I have found out being a baseball coach is that often the kids will do something without knowing why they did it.

1. I believe this same problem exist' within the church.
2. Many people will perform an act of worship without knowing why they are doing it.
3. But this is in contradiction with the scriptures.
 - a. John 4:23,24 we must worship in truth we can't if we don't understand.
 - b. 1Cor.14:15, Paul gave an example of this in his singing.

II. As we continue our study on musical worship I would like to now turn to our attention to the reasons for our singing in worship to help us have a fuller understanding of this.

III. I am going to address what the New Testament has to say concerning why we sing and then why we sing in the manner of Acapella.

IV. What we will find is.... **Only through vocal music do we accomplish what God desires in musical worship.**

V. This will be seen by examining three points

- 1. The New Testament states the purpose of singing.**
- 2. The New Testament points to the content of our singing.**
- 3. The NT instructs on the manner of singing.**

Trans: Let's consider our first point.

1. The New Testament states the purpose of singing.

A. The NT states the purpose as it relates to God

1. Christians praise God in their singing
 - a. **Hebrews 13:15**
 - b. Each Christian is a priest of the Most High God, 1Peter 2:5
 - (1). By the fruit of our lips we offer praise to God
 - (2). By singing we express our gratitude to Jehovah.
2. Christians show thankfulness to God through singing, **Col. 3:16**
3. Christians also sing to petition God
 - a. There are times when our singing should be and is as solemn as a prayer.
 - b. We make requests through our singing, (ie. blessings, holiness)
4. Singing is an act of obedience to God's will, **Col. 3:16**

- B. The NT also states the purpose as it relates to fellow-Christians.
1. Christians teach and admonish one another in singing.
 - a. Christians "speak" to one another in song, Eph 5:18,19
 - b. Singing is part of edifying one another in the church.
 2. Christians inspire and encourage each other in their singing.
 - a. **James 5:13**
 - b. Are you not encouraged when you here others sing of heaven?
 3. Singing is an expresses unity.
 - a. Phil 1:27
 - b. We are doing something together when we sing
 - c. When we join in the singing we identify ourselves with the cause of Christ.
- C. The NT states the purpose as it relates to the individual Christian.
1. The Christian is to make Melody in His heart, **Eph 5:19**
 - a. It is not the art that we put into it but the heart.
 - b. We are bringing the sentiments of our hearts in line with the statements of the songs.
 2. The Christian can take pleasure in knowing he is following the will of the Lord when he sings.

Appl: The Bible is not silent when it comes to musical worship. As we have seen the purpose of our singing is revealed within the pages of the NT.

Our singing has a purpose in relation to God

Our singing has a purpose in relation to fellow-Christians

Our singing has a purpose in relation to ourselves.

There are reasons for our singing in worship and each one needs to have a fuller understanding of this, if we are to sing with the understanding. We must understand the purpose of our singing.

Trans: Lets consider our second point.

2. The New Testament points to the content of our singing.

A. The Christian life seeks to be in harmony with the Scriptures.

Col. 3:17

2John 9

B. Ephesians 5:19 and Col. 3:16 mention that Christians are to sing "**Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.**"

C. To know what we are to sing we must understand the meaning of these three words.

1. What is a Psalm?

- a. These would be sacred odes.
- b. Refers to the OT psalms.

2. What is a Hymn?

- a. These were musical settings of either inspired or uninspired words of praise to God or Christ.
- b. Augustine said a hymn should have three characteristics.
 - (1). It must be sung
 - (2). It must be praise
 - (3). It must be to God.

c. Examples

- (1) Inspired,
Luke 1:46-55
Luke 1:68-79
- (2) Uninspired,
"All Hail the Power of Jesus name"
"We praise thee O God"

3. What is a spiritual song? This is likely a general term including all songs which are spiritual in content which are appropriate for Christians to sing.

Appl: The Scriptures are clear concerning the content of our singing. First and foremost they must songs directed towards God. They can be either psalms as in the OT or in like manner. They can be hymns or they can be songs of a spiritual nature. Again all three of these point to God.

There are reasons for our singing in worship and each one needs to have a fuller understanding of this, if we are to sing with the understanding. We must understand what the content of our singing is to be.

Trans: Let's now note out final pint in understanding musical worship.

3. The NT instructs on the manner of singing.

- A. Christians should sing with the understanding.
 1. **1 Cor. 14:15**
 2. **Eph. 5:19**, You cannot "MAKE" melody without understanding.
- B. Christians should sing in the spirit.
 1. Jesus said to worship in spirit and truth, **John 4:24**
 2. Singing in the spirit refers to the right and proper attitude.
- C. Christians are to sing with "thankfulness in their hearts" **Col. 3:16**
 1. We do this because of understanding what God's grace has done for us.

2. We do this knowing we can depend on God.

Appl: There are reasons for our singing in worship and each Christian needs to have a fuller understanding of this, if we are to sing with the understanding. We must understand what the manner of our singing is to be.

Con: Singing has always had an important place in the worship of God.

And although the kind of music is important, ie.. instrumental or non-instrumental there are other aspects that are important as well.

There are reasons for our singing in worship and each one needs to have a fuller understanding of this, if we are to sing with the understanding.

We must understand the purpose of our singing.

We must understand the content of our singing.

We must understand the manner of our singing.

Illus: Does this Guitar accomplish what God desires in musical worship?

Does it teach or admonish?

Is it the fruit of my lips?

Does it praise God?

Does it convey thankfulness to God?

Is it a Psalm, Hymn or spiritual song?

Does it make melody in the heart?

Does it create understanding?

Is it in obedience to His will?

The answer is no to all of these...

Only through vocal music do we accomplish what God desires in musical worship.

Arguments for - using the instrument

A. Some have said, "But God didn't say I couldn't use the mechanical instrument in worship to him"

1. This is easily answered through the principle of the divine warrant.
2. **Lev 10:1-3**

B. Some have attempted to use the OT as an argument for the use of Instrumental music in worship,

1. **Psalm 150:1ff**
2. But we understand that we do not live under that Old Law,
 - a. **Heb. 8:7,9**
 - b. **Eph. 2:13-16**
 - c. Along these lines consider these words of John Calvin - Presbyterian,
"A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the Gospel, should we introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation. From this, it appears that Papists, as I shall have occasion to show elsewhere, in employing instrumental music, cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people, as to ape it in a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament which was figurative, and terminated with the Gospel.

3. But again, the musical instrument was not used under the OT until a divine warrant was given.

C. Another argument is the word Psallo.

1. The word Psallo occurs five times in the NT
 - a. **Rom. 15:9**
 - b. **1Cor. 14:15 - 2x's**
 - c. **Eph. 5:19**
 - d. **James 5:13**

2. Some have stated that Psallo means "to pluck an instrument."

3. But without exception, all the standard translations render Psallo as "sing, sing psalms, sing praise, make melody."

4. It is strange that if this word does mean to pluck an instrument none of the Bible translators translated it as such.

5. One of the difficulties encountered with translating Psallo "to pluck an instrument" is the context in which this word is used.

- a. The context of **James 5:13**, According to this definition everybody who is cheerful would pluck an instrument

b. The context of **Eph. 5:19** everyone would be plucking an instrument.

6. The word Psallo simply means to pluck. What is to be plucked is determined by the context where the word is found. According to Eph. 5:19 it is the heart that is to be plucked.

Appl: As one considers the arguments for the use of the mechanical instrument in God's worship the question arises, why?

If we have no command or example in the Scriptures of the church using or being authorized to use the instrument in worship, why would people today seek to use them?

The arguments for the use of the instrument are easily answered, but the bottom line is still authority. There is no divine warrant from God to use the mechanical musical instrument in worship.

The Work of the Church - Part 1

(Lesson 40);

- I. Has anyone ever asked you, what do you do at your church?
- II. The question can be answered in two ways.
 1. We speak about our worship, as to what we do
 2. We speak about our programs, as to what we do.
- III. The question, "what do you do?" is a good one because it implies that we are doing something, and it is good for us to think about what we are doing in our local congregation.
- IV. For the past year we have been going through a series of lessons on the distinctive nature of the Lord's church.
- V. The purpose of these lessons has been to help us identify the Lord's church and then be sure we are following the pattern for that church as revealed in God's written word.
- VI. Today I will be presenting the first in the final two lessons in this series. But before I do, I would like to give a quick overview of what we have studied so far.
 1. **The Distinctive Pattern of New Testament Christianity.**
 2. **The Distinctive Nature of the New Covenant**
 - a. **It was not like the old, provides forgiveness.**
 - b. **The covenant relationship would come through knowledge and choice.**
 3. **The Distinctive Identity of the New Testament Church.**
 - a. **How we identify the church**
 - b. **How we are saved and become part of the church**
 - c. **The non-denominational nature of the church**
 4. **The Establishment of the church.**
 - a. **The church and the Kingdom are interrelated**
 - b. **The time of it's coming**
 5. **The organizational structure of the church**
 - a. **Christ as the Head and foundation**
 - b. **Elders as the shepherds and spiritual leaders**
 - c. **The evangelist as a teacher and gospelizer**
 - d. **The deacons as the servants**
 6. **The Worship of the church**
 - a. **Identifying true worship and true worshippers**
 - b. **Lord's Supper**
 - c. **Preaching**
 - d. **Praying**
 - e. **Singing**
 - f. **Giving**

VII. What the lessons help us do is identify the Lord's church. Once we have identified the church and have become a part of the church, the question is, "what now?" What do we do with the rest of our lives?

VIII. Someone has observed that Christ did not take us straight from the baptistry to heaven because he has a work for us to do. That statement is supported in Scripture.
Eph. 2:10

IX. This is what I want to speak about today. The work of the church. The work of the church takes place on two levels.

1. The Congregational Level

2. The Personal Level

Trans: Today let's consider the work of the church on a congregational level.

The work of the church on a congregational level.

A. When I say on a congregational level, I am speaking of what we as a congregation are to be doing as a whole in working for our Lord.

B. Above all things the church is to glorify God, **Eph. 3:20-21**

C. One of the ways we accomplish this is through the work of the church.

D. The work of the church can be divided into four categories.

1. Evangelism

2. Edification

3. Relief

4. Discipline

E. **Evangelism** is the work of announcing the good tidings of the kingdom. It is to proclaim God's saving grace through faith in Christ Jesus. It is the work of preaching the gospel to the lost.

1. Matt. 28:18-20

2. Jesus tells us that preaching the gospel is the work of the church, what was foretold in the Old Testament, Lk. 24:44-48

3. Peter made it clear that this applies to the church as a whole.

a. 1Pet. 2:9

b. In this passage we have a statement of being and purpose

1) God made us to be a certain kind of people.

2) He did this so we could fulfill a special purpose.

4. This work is given specifically to Christians

a. Acts 4:23-31

- b. Some live it, but don't speak it
- c. Some speak it, but don't live
- d. Christians are those who speak it and live it. No one else meets the qualifications of **1Pet. 2:9**.

- 5. As a congregation we can accomplish this in several ways
 - 1. Individually
 - 2. Evangelist
 - 3. Supporting missionaries

F. **Edification** is another work of the church.

- 1. **Eph. 4:11-16**
- 2. An edifice is a structure or house and the word edification originally meant "building a house"
- 3. In Eph. 4 it refers to the building of a house from within. Building up the Christian's spiritual house, promoting spiritual growth.
- 4. The work of edification the church is to carry out is not the "pat on the back" sort. This work of edification is different in that it is accomplished through the teaching of God's word
- 5. Edification picks up where evangelism leaves off. It is the work of maturing babes in Christ through instruction.
 - a. **For the equipping of the saints for the work of service.**
 - b. **Until all come to the unity of the faith**
 - c. **No longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine."**
- 6. It is one of the major purposes for the church assembling regularly, **1Cor. 14:26**

G. **Relief** is a third work of the church.

- 1. **1Tim. 5:9,16**
- 2. Bringing relief to those in need is an important work of the church, in that it demonstrates compassion, **James 5:11**
- 3. This is displayed in the early days of the church
 - a. Hellenistic widows, Acts 6:1-6
 - b. Saints struck by famine, Acts 11:27-30
- 4. The weekly collection was tied to this work of the church, **1Cor. 16:1-3**
- 5. We have other examples of this relief work taking place.

- a. Acts 4:32-35
- b. Rom. 15:26-29
- c. **James 1:27**
 - 1) To visit literally means "to look in on" or "to go see"
 - 2) But religiously the word had a long history in the sense of "supplying the needs of" or "caring for."
 - 3) In James it is especially fixed because it is tied to the word "distress"

6. A congregation can carry out this task by being prepared to assist those in need.

H. **Discipline** are a fourth work of the church.

1. **Matt. 18:15-17**

2. Have heard some refer to discipline as "Shunning," which tends to give discipline a bad connotation.

3. Yet discipline is something that is necessary in restoring the souls of the erring.

a. Gal. 6:1-5

b. **James 5:19,20**

4. Discipline is also necessary if we wish to preserve the spiritual health of a congregation, **1Cor. 5:1-2, 5, 9-13**

Con: So we have identified the Lord's church.

We have done what we need to become part of that church.

We worship in the ways prescribed by God himself.

Yet if we do not work as a congregation we are failing at being the Lord's church.

The work we have been given is an important part of our spiritual walk with God. Every congregation should be seeking to accomplish these works.

- 1. **Evangelism**
- 2. **Edification**
- 3. **Relief**
- 4. **Discipline**

Work of The Church - Part 2 (Lesson 42)

I. In last weeks lesson I stated that, “the church which Christ founded has work to do.” This work exists on two levels

- 1. Congregational level (The work of the local congregation)**
- 2. Personal level (The work of each Christian)**

II. In Eph. 4:11-16 Paul shows how these two coexist and are co-dependent.

- 1. In vs. 11,12** he speaks of the spiritual leaders work in relation to the individual Christian, on a congregational level.
 - a. They are to equip the saints for the work of service.
 - b. They are to build up the body of Christ.
- 2. In vs. 13-15** he states the result of that work on an individual basis.
 - a. We are no longer to be children.
 - b. We are to grow up in all respects.
- 3. In v.16** Paul shows how the two are co-dependent.
 - a. The whole body is fitted and held together by every member according to the proper working of each individual part.
 - b. This causes the growth of the body, for the building up of itself.

III. What we see in this passage is the work of the church on a congregational level as well as a personal level.

IV. The point is, *The church is called to work for our Lord. We accomplish this work on both the congregational and personal level.*

V. This morning I will be addressing the work we are to be doing on a personal level as the Lord’s church.

Trans: The work of the church on a personal level can be divided into two categories. Let’s consider the first.

1. Working on Self

- A. Working on self may not seem like a work of the church, but it really is.
- B. Working on self is necessary to carry out works of the church on a personal level.
 1. Looking back at Eph. 4:14-16 we see this.
 2. As we are taught the word of God we are to spiritually improve on a personal level, v.14-15
 3. As a result we are to help cause the growth of the body, v.16

4. As I work on self I help carry out the work of the church on a personal level.

C. A good example of this is found in Eph 4:20-32

1. **Eph. 4:22-27**

- a. **Improving on a personal level**
 - 1. **Lay aside the old self**
 - 2. **Renewed in the spirit of your mind**
 - 3. **Put on the new self, in the likeness of God**
- b. **Leads to working on a personal level**
 - 1. **Lay aside all falsehood**
 - 2. **Speak the truth**
 - 3. **Be angry and do not sin**

2. **Eph. 4:28**

- a. **Improving on a personal level**
 - 1. **Let him who steals, steal no longer**
 - 2. **Labor with your hands performing what is good**
- b. **Leads to working on a personal level**
 - 1. **Share with him who has need**

3. **Eph. 4:29**

- a. **Improving on a personal level**
 - 1. **Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth.**
- b. **Leads to working on a personal level**
 - 1. **But only such a word as is good for edification**
 - 2. **That it may give grace to those who hear**

4. **Eph. 4:31,32**

- a. **Improving on a personal level**
 - 1. **Put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice**
- b. **Leads to working on a personal level**
 - 1. **Be kind to one another, tender-hearted**
 - 2. **Forgive one another**

Illust: Acts 10:9-48 (Peter and Cornelius' household) Peters view of the gentiles had to be changed before he would take the Gospel to them. Later Peter had to again work on himself or his work with the Gentiles would suffer, Gal. 2:11-21 (Paul opposes Peter to his face in Antioch)

Appl: Throughout the Scriptures we find numerous references to Christian growth.

Without question this growth is to help maintain our spirituality. But it is also necessary for the work of the church on a congregational and a personal level.

As we work on self, we better prepare ourselves to work in other areas on a personal level.

Trans: Lets no move on to the second category of working on a personal level.

2. Working for others

A. The Scriptures are clear that the Lord's church must be doing the Lord's work on a personal level, **1Peter 4:9,10**

B. As I stated last week some of the works we do on a congregational level can be applied to the work we do on a personal level.

D. The four congregational works I spoke of last week fall into this category.

1. Evangelism

a. Evangelism is a work done on a congregational level,
Acts 13:1-3

b. Evangelism is also a work I am to do on a personal level,
Mark 16:15,16

2. Edification

a. Edification is a work done on a congregational level,
Eph. 4:11,12

b. Edification is also a work done on a personal level,
2Tim 2:2

3. Relief

a. Relief is a work done on a congregational level, Acts 4:34,35

b. Relief is also a work I am to do on a personal level,
1Tim. 6:17,18
1John 3:17

4. Discipline

a. Discipline is a work done on a congregational level,
Matt. 18:17

b. Discipline is also a work done on a personal level,
Gal. 6:1,2
Matt. 18:15

D. Another work we should be doing on a personal level is the work of encouragement to remain faithful

1. **1Thess. 5:14**

2. Heb. 10:23-25

Appl: Every Christian must seek to do the work God has given them. That work takes place on a personal level and involves working for others.

In my daily life I should be ready and willing to do the Lords work in such a way that it affects others lives.

Until I do, I am not carrying out the work of the church, which makes me part of the church.

Con: Those who have found the Lord's church and have become members of it must see that there is a life beyond their own salvation.

It is our responsibility to carry on the work of the Lord and that work exists on a congregational level and a personal level.

Yet, it seems many dispel the work they are to do on a personal level to the congregational level.

But, the work of the congregation can never take the place of the work we are to be doing on a personal level. The two coexist and are co-dependent.

Sadly this is not always the case. Most often you will find the few doing the most on the congregational level and the number drops even further on at least one category of the personal level and that is working for others.

Can you imagine the things we could accomplish if every member were busy in the work of the Lord on a personal level as well as a congregational level?

We shouldn't have to imagine, because this is what we are commanded to do.

The church is called to work for our Lord. We accomplish this work on both the congregational level and the personal level.