

## **CHURCH, MISSION AND COVENANT**

**INTO:** Today I want to talk about the church, the mission of the church and how a church covenant and covenant membership ties into this.

In order for a church to have the best claim to immunity against an alleged injury that resulted from church discipline, the alleged victim must have been a church member when the discipline occurred.

- This is very difficult to determine if the church does not have a formal membership policy. The same would be true regarding church decisions based upon church beliefs and convictions. (who decides if all attendees are members.)
- Not every church has members in the traditional congregational approach to membership. Churches that do not have formal members must be aware that they could potentially have a greater legal exposure and risk when they exercise church discipline or privileges.
- Churches with a formal membership policy have a greater legal protection when they find it necessary to impose church discipline on their members. This policy should be added to their bylaws and explain the procedures for becoming a member, procedures for member discipline, and procedures for rescinding membership.

Today the Church is under attack and in America perhaps more than ever before.

The Church in America is at risk of being carried away from true biblical Christianity.

The church is become increasingly “the” target for godless thinking and demonical inspired attacks.

It always has been for Satan and the world is always in opposition to it.

- Satan hates the church, the Christian. Rev. 12
- 1 John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.
- 1 JN. 2:16: For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.
- 1. John 17:14-16 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.
- James 4:4 You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

## **1) What Is The Church?**

**CHURCH:** literally "called-out ones". The Greeks used the word "ekklesia" for assembly of citizens called out to transact city business.

- The Church is a living organism, called out of the world and unto God and composed of living members joined together; through which Christ works, carries out His purposes.

Charles Bridges, in his book on the Christian ministry, says, "The church is the mirror that reflects the whole effulgence (shining radiance) of the Divine character. It is the grand scene in which the perfections of Jehovah are displayed to the universe. The revelations made to the church, the successive grand events in her history, and above all the manifestation of the glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ, furnish even to the heavenly intelligences fresh subjects of adoring contemplation." (Eph. 3:10)

- The Church exists to display the glory of God because all things exist for His glory. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus are caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We have graciously been invited into God's redemptive purposes in the world.
- Though creation now suffers the curse of Genesis 3, people are broken and live in a broken world, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the means by which sense, reason, reality, healing, and purpose can be realized.
- The Church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Ephesians 2:19), the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2, 9), and the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
- First Corinthians 12:12-13 speaks of many members within the same body. Just as a human body relies upon mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the Body of Christ requires sacrificial and responsible service by its individual members.
- As the Scriptures say, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Corinthians 12:21).
- Likewise, a member of the Church cannot say to another member that he or she is unnecessary.
- We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other.
- The Church is God's great Building, of which Jesus is the Master Builder, and in the new birth we are not only placed into Christ, (Rom. 6:3) but also placed into His Church body, (1 Corinthians 12:13, 18).

## **2) THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

The mission of the church is the task given by God for the people of God to accomplish in the world.

- Jesus lays out the role of the church in fulfilling this vision when he commissions his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20:
- And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*"
- Another way to put it, "The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity, to the glory of God the Father."
- As followers of Christ, our mission is to be disciples who make disciples.
- The church is a way for followers of Jesus to act together as one body, with Jesus as the head, to fulfill this mission.
- The unity in Christ we experience in the church can even give us a taste of the glory to come. Rev. 7:
  - Hebrews 10:23-25 describes how: Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
  - Jesus told his disciples, Acts 1:8; But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses (Martyrs) to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

The mission of the church is to glorify Christ. Paul wrote, "In Christ we were also chosen ... in order that we ... might be for the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:11-12).

- A part of God's purpose for the church is to exalt Jesus Christ by the way that the church lives and by what it does.
- Christ designed His church to represent His supernatural, life-saving work to the world. In His church, Christ shows to the world what a freed and forgiven people can be—people who are satisfied with God as the result of Christ's joyful, triumphant self-sacrifice.
- He has planned the church's values to be His values. He expects its lifestyle to reflect His character
- As the moon reflects the sun, so the church is to reflect the glory of God to a dark world.

- The mission of the church is also to build up the saints. The church is to encourage and comfort its individual members (1 Thessalonians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 13:11).
- "There should be no division in the body, but . . . its parts should have equal concern for each other" (1 Corinthians 12:25).
- Jesus is the chief cornerstone, and the church is likened to a building "joined together and [rising] to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).
- Jesus Christ designed His Church to showcase God's family on earth, so that the pagan world can see how God builds His family around Jesus Christ and how that family cares for one another
- God originally made man for His own pleasure, to enjoy his fellowship and worship (Rev. 4:11, John 4:23).
- Thus, a part of the Lord's purpose of the church, besides bringing people to God, is to gather His people together and facilitate a corporate environment of worship, to express our love toward Him and one another.
- Jesus described these as the two highest ideals of Christianity. "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).
- The Lord is greatly pleased to receive the corporate love and worship of His children who are joined together in unity and love toward one another (Eph. 4:1-4, 1 John 1:7).
- His presence is manifested in such an environment, and authenticates our Christian witness in the eyes of the world. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).
- The Church universal is being used to write God's beautiful and dramatic story of redemption and reconciliation.
- In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body (i.e., a particular group of believers in a particular locale) is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community.
- It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God to repel and push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus Christ. (Acts 26:17, 18)