

Week 1: Church, Inside and Out

Tonight we begin our discussion of our mission together by talking about who we are. What is “The Church”? Are *we* “The Church”? What should the Church look like from the inside? We ought to bear in mind that in the first century of the Church’s existence it spread out over thousands of miles and grew from a handful of disciples to number in the tens of thousands. It did this without any elaborate programs, but simply by *being church*. Tonight we will discuss:

- 1) The Foundation of the Church
- 2) The Life of the Church, and
- 3) The Commission of the Church

The Foundation of the Church

A) Called to worship: Ge 4:25-26 "*Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.” Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.*"

- 1) People begin “Calling on the Name of the Lord”
- 2) The Church begins to “worship rightly”

The word “Orthodoxy” comes from two words:

“Ortho” means “right” (as in “ortho-dontist” meaning “right teeth”)

“Dox” means “glory” or “knowledge” (as in “doxology” meaning “right words”)

- 3) Worship arises because we, naturally, begin to “forget God”

Worship is a reminder of our original “intimate knowledge of God”

In the Old Testament the euphemism for ‘had marital relations’ was ‘to know’

B) Saved to Worship: Ex 19:3-6, 20:1-3 "*Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” And God spoke all these words: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. “You shall have no other gods before me.”*

- 1) Moses originally demanded that God allow his people three days to worship
- 2) Salvation always precedes right worship

C) Confessing in Worship: Mt 16:13-19 "*When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

- 1) Right knowledge of God and right worship of God go together
- 2) The Church in worship confesses what she believes

D) Saved by Blood I: Ex 24:3-11 *"When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do." Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank."*

E) Saved by Blood II: Mk 14:22-24 *"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them."*

- 1) Salvation from sin always comes through blood
- 2) The Old Covenant was sealed by the blood of animals
- 3) The New Covenant was sealed by the blood of God's Son
- 4) The common blood we share makes us a family: no blood, no family, no Father

The Life of the Church

A) A Life of Community: Ac 2:42-47 *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

The four signs of a true church are a people who are devoted to:

- 1) The apostles' teaching
- 2) Fellowship with each other
- 3) Communion with their Lord
- 4) Prayer for and with each other

B) A Life of Learning and Loving: Ep 4:13-17: *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.

- 1) Devotion to the Apostles' teaching makes us "spiritually mature"
- 2) Maturity of faith leads to maturity in service to each other
- 3) The job of looking after each other is everyone's job.

C) A Life Distinct from the World: 1 Co 5:9-13 "I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

- 1) Christians must associate with immoral people in the world
- 2) But immoral people ought not to be tolerated in the Church
- 3) God judges those outside; we must judge those inside
- 4) The basic standard for Christian behavior is the 10 Commandments
- 5) The commandment most frequently overlooked by the Church is the 3rd

D) A Life of Submission to the Lord: Heb 13:15-17 "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

- 1) God expects us both to worship and serve each other.
- 2) God holds pastors accountable for what they say and what they do
- 3) Missouri Synod pastors are bound to teach and admonition according to:
 - a) The Bible
 - b) The Book of Concord
 - c) The Constitution of the Missouri Synod
- 4) A pastor who does not breaks his vow to God

E) A Life Looking Forward to the Next: 2 Co 5:1-10 "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

The Commission of the Church

Mt 28:19-20 "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

- 1) The Church has been called to make disciples in a two-step process
 - a) by baptizing
 - b) by teaching
- 2) Teaching without baptism is Law without Gospel
- 3) Baptism without teaching is Gospel without Law

1 Co 9:19-23 "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings."

“That I Might Save Some”