

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Theology Bites—Christian Living

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

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SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. This is the final sermon in this series on theology.
 - 1. In many ways it might prove to be the most challenging so this is a good time for you to take careful notes and have your head in your bible.
 - 2. The doctrine of the Church is a much ignored subject and many have only a vague sense of it or why it matters.
 - 3. Yet this doctrine is where all of the other doctrine and theology we just learned over the last couple of months actually is worked out.
 - 4. In fact it is how you view the Church and your place in it that you actually reveal what is your real theology.
- B. Today there are only three slides we will look at, but each of them are controversial to many though they should not be, for they are built upon an explicit teaching out of the Word. (Show slides)
- C. We will take these in order and by way of asking a question and then answering it.

II. Why can't we just worship alone or with our family?

- A. First, understand that Jesus is the one who places you into the Church— 1 Corinthians 12:13.
 - 1. From that point on, note how Paul then assumes the interconnectedness of those in the Church.
 - 2. You are at the very best an amputated member. But more likely you are merely a fraud who seeks to make the claim but the reality is not bearing fruit in your heart as you are compelled to need the fellowship of those for whom Christ died.
- B. Second, Hebrews 10:25 is written for our well-being not to humor us.
 - 1. Note the broader context of vs 23-25 and how it then moves into a severe warning of apostasy in vs 26ff.

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2. Here is one key passage that describes the a key purpose of the gathering of the Church.
 - a. We gather to continue to hold on the Jesus as Lord and Savior.
 - b. The church bears the responsibility to press each individual to love and good deeds. That is not an individual responsibility first, but rather a corporate responsibility.
 - c. Which is why the author makes the obvious comment in vs 25 about the fact that if these things are true then each (now he looks at the individual) of us must make it our habit to gather with the Church.
 - (1) Not merely to gather, but to encourage one another.
 - (2) And not merely to encourage but in light of the coming of Jesus Christ and the day of judgment.
 - (3) Hebrews is a book that tells you that if you profess Jesus Christ as your Lord then it is assumed you are saved. But if with that confession you effectively deny it by going back to old ways and sinful, Christ-rejecting ways then you have no reason to claim Christ.
- C. Having said all of this I simply say to anyone listening to this now or on the web these questions:
 1. 1 Thessalonians 4:9 speaks of the fact that the Thessalonian church has no need to learn about the “love of the brethren” for their actions speak volumes on how serious they take this. **How can you take part in this simple expectation to have a love for the Church that you will not sit and be part of?**
 2. Romans 12:10 commands us to be devoted to one another in brotherly love and to give preference to one another in honor. **How can any person remotely begin to approach this when they sit in their house alone or out on some boat enjoying God in nature?** To be devoted means it is something you labor at.
 3. Jesus’ basic, foundational command for the Church is to love one another as He loved them as found in John 13:34. **How can anyone say that they love like Jesus loved His disciples yet they remain aloof and apart from any regular gathering of the Church?** The command is not just to love, but to love AS Jesus.

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- a. And this is not directed merely to the one who avoids the gathering of the Church in corporate worship.
- b. It is directed to the countless who sit on the edges of a church and refuse to join or to serve or to minister in any real way. They come, they hear and they leave.
 - (1) They feel it is their right to criticize but not to be the example of godly and right behavior.
 - (2) They sit with the Church but are not really with or of the Church.
4. When Paul tells us to be “subject to one another” in Ephesians 5:21, **please tell me how you are in subjection in any honest way with other believers?** How do you truly practice that?
5. When we are to be speaking to one another through song as stated in Ephesians 5:19, **how is this practiced by you?**
6. Hebrews 13:17 says by way of divine command, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.” **Who are your leaders, how do you submit to them and how are they watching over your soul?**
7. Finally, how can you honestly say that you are part of the Church and yet not in any real way fulfill the countless commands in the New Testament on how to live, talk and relate to everyone in the Church?
8. The bible simply does not recognize a person as a true Christian who willfully and regularly separates from the gathering and life of the Church. And neither should we.

III. What do you mean that these sermons are authoritative in my life?

- A. Hebrews 13:7.
 1. There is a question as to what “remember” means. There is good reason to see it as remembering those who taught you who have since died, though some see it assuming you sit under certain men for a long period of time.
 2. Your leaders are those who spoke the Word to you.
 3. Seeing how they lived out what they preached you are to imitate them.
 - a. Assumes that a true teacher manifests a life in submission to the Word of God that they are teaching you.

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- b. Assumes you are able to actually observe your leaders who teach you the Word so that you can imitate.
 - c. And it gives you no reason to think that when your leaders teach you that you get to take what you like and set aside what is distasteful.
- B. Hebrews 13:17.
- 1. You are to “obey” your leaders.
 - a. This word is interesting because it carries the sense of being “persuaded.”
 - b. It is a willingness to follow the direction of the leadership.
 - c. The verb is in the present tense and is a command.
 - 2. You are to “submit” to your leaders.
 - a. This also is a command and is in the present tense.
 - b. This word means, “yield, give in to, resist no longer, or do what someone says.”
 - 3. Unfortunately, too many rebel at these words, and that is exactly what it is, rebellion.
 - a. Notice the reason the writer of Hebrews gives for these commands.
 - (1) They are concerned about your spiritual well-being.
 - (2) They will have to give an account for you to the Lord.
 - (a) If you believe that they are wrong, but cannot put your finger on the exact reason, then submit and give it to the Lord.
 - (b) Too many times we look back on decisions to rebel and regret that decision, now seeing things more clearly.
 - (c) Remember that these men take their job seriously, since they have to answer to God. They can’t be winking at sin or foolish activities because whatever occurs within the local fellowship ultimately is their responsibility.
 - b. Notice also the warning if you do not.

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- (1) The men should be able to lead with joy, not sadness or frustration.
 - (a) Nothing sucks the joy and energy from a person than bitter, complaining, and obstinate people.
 - (b) Don't be guilty of that!
 - (c) Ask yourself if you are a joy for the elders to lead?
 - (d) Ask yourself if I were to be welcome to examine your life in light of the sermons I preach from the very Word of God if I would have joy.
- (2) The writer tells you that God will make it a point to discipline you.
 - (a) The word "unprofitable" means to have something detrimental happen, something bad.
 - (b) God will not tolerate or bless that type of activity.
 - (c) There are many within churches who have lost blessings, had difficulties in their lives, etc. all due to their refusal to submit to their leadership.
 - (d) I might add that leaving a church is almost never the answer.
 - i) With the exception of blatant evil on the elder's part.
 - ii) God will not let the issue go just because you leave. Rest assured that you will find the same situation occur in your new church and once again be confronted with the call to obey and submit.
4. There are two types of authority for every Christian in this room.
5. The bible. We are to obey all that is commanded and prohibited in the bible. No questions, no fiddling around...just simple obedience.
6. Established authority.
 - a. In Romans 13:1 Paul writes as plainly as is possible when he says, "There is no authority except from God, and all [authority] which exists is established by God."

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- (1) Therefore, he says to the Christian, “when you resist the government you are really resisting God.
- (2) But there are times when that is not true—when America says we cannot preach the gospel, they we must obey the commands of God not man.
 - b. In other words, the scripture always overrules established authority.
 - c. But when the scripture is silent, then established authority is God’s authority.
7. Every household eats meals together. But when and how that is done is different in every household. Every country has laws, but in every country there are differences in those laws.
8. Same in local churches.
 - a. Those who lead you and teach you do so from a position of authority.
 - b. When they teach with that authority the expectation is one that you will submit to it.
 - c. This is one of the reasons we have our Values and Vision class. We want no surprises about what is expected of you at Missio.
9. For anyone who seeks to make the argument that you only have to obey scripture, the answer for what you are to do is very simple.
 - a. Ask yourself what the elders of Missio are expecting of you and obey and submit to it.
 - b. Why? Because that is the will of God. That is the biblical teaching.

IV. How can a local church authoritatively declare me not to be a Christian?

- A. In America we have the foolish idea that our salvation is a “personal relationship with Jesus” and therefore it is private.
 1. It isn’t.
 2. You are saved into the very Body of Christ, the Church.
 3. The vast majority of the New Testament is concerned not merely on how you individually live out your faith in Jesus but how you do it alongside other believers as a Church.

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- B. The natural question that many will ask is, “Where in the bible does it say that the Church can say if I am a Christian?” And the answer is simple, in Matthew 18:17.
- C. In Matthew 18:15-20 I want to ask five crucial questions about church discipline to understand the incredible authority given by Jesus to the local church and the seriousness of unrepentant sin.
 - 1. Who Receives It (15a)?
 - a. A person who professes to be a believer, who is part of the local church and who has sinned.
 - b. All three points must be present or nothing is to happen.
 - c. This means that we are not out looking for those who are unsaved to be like those saved.
 - d. It is similar to 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, “I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler -- not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.”
 - e. It is not merely habitual sin but simply one who commits sin.
 - f. This simply shows us that the church is not a place to come and hide in your sin. It is to be a place where you are being encouraged and stimulated to grow in godliness in relation to your faith in Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Who Initiates It (15b)?
 - a. It is “your” brother who has sinned, therefore, it is your responsibility to go to him.
 - b. Any believer who becomes aware of another brother’s sin is now commanded to go to him and confront him.
 - c. This ought to be done as soon as possible so that the sin does not take root more than it has.
 - d. What is it that you are doing when you go to that brother?

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- (1) You are to literally “show him the sin for what it is.”
 - (2) This involves rebuking him and calling him to forsake the sin. It also involves trying to convince him.
 - e. But even though you are rebuking him, you are to do it in private.
 - (1) This is a time of one on one talking.
 - (2) If the brother repents then the discipline process has come to an end and nothing else is needed and no one needs to know about it.
3. What Is The Goal Of It (15)?
 - a. “If he listens to you, you have won your brother.”
 - (1) This is the goal. The winning of your brother.
 - (2) This is one of the simplest ways we express true love for one another.
 - b. But this is not always the case
4. What Is The Process?
 - a. We have seen the first step, one on one confrontation.
 - b. The second step is in verse 16.
 - (1) You take witnesses.
 - (2) The purpose of this is so that the witnesses can determine the factual nature of the claims.
 - (a) Is he really guilty?
 - (b) If he is, then, they are able to note if he properly repents.
 - c. The third and fourth steps and then given in verse 17.
 - (1) The first time is private, the second is semi-private, but now the sin is entrenched and the confrontation becomes public.
 - (a) The sinning brother is brought before the entire church to be rebuked and encouraged to repent.
 - (b) Note, therefore, that the entire congregation is responsible for this.

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- (c) Again how can a person refusing to be consistently away from a church obey Christ in this way?
 - d. If the person still holds to his sin, then he is sent out of the body of believers.
 - (1) Now understand that the people listening to Jesus were Jewish. Therefore He used terms that were familiar to them.
 - (2) The terms, “gentile,” and “tax-collector” are terms commonly used in the Bible to refer to non-Christians.
 - (a) They were not allowed to be part of the religious life of the Jews.
 - (b) In the same way, the sinning brother is not allowed to be part of the religious life of the church.
 - (3) Sadly, this person is viewed no longer as a brother in Christ, but as an unbeliever.
- 5. Vss 18-20 then explain this whole process from the perspective of heaven and God Himself.
 - a. Vss 19-20 are connected back with vs 16.
 - (1) Confronting a person with sin is not pleasant and it is potentially painful or discouraging.
 - (2) Often a person will even charge you with being unChristlike.
 - (3) But this passage gives us the absolute assurance that Jesus is, in fact, with you in that difficult moment.
 - b. Vs 18 is connected to vs 17.
 - (1) This is a very terrifying passage when you understand what is going on.
 - (2) Essentially what happens when a church says to a sinning, unrepentant person in the church that they are now sent out as an unbeliever, that sentence is merely ratifying what already has occurred in heaven by God.
 - (3) The loosing is describing the opposite when a disciplined member is brought back into fellowship through true repentance.

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6. And that beloved is why it is proper to say that a church has the authority to declare that a person is not a Christian.

V. Conclusion.

- A. Wrapping up this message there are many other issues that could be added.
 1. One key one is the wilful rejection of joining properly with a church in membership.
 2. Another is the need to not merely attend a service but to be actively joining in relational fellowship with the people of the church.
 3. I say these only to perhaps provoke conversation and scriptural study for you to pursue.
- B. But it is enough for us to understand that the glorious work of saving us out of this age and into the age to come by God our Father is not some vague individual reality.
 1. We are uniquely one with one another.
 2. Here now the Word of our Lord, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:1-6)
 3. You embrace all that is in those few words and you diligently seek to practice them faithfully and you will do well.