

The Church Jesus Built

(Sermon Outlines on The Church)

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The Church Jesus Built

Text: Matthew 16:13-18

Introduction:

- A. Tell how the Tri-County Church of Christ selected its name.
- B. On sign we have “a nondenominational group of Christians.”
- C. What is the church Jesus built?

I. It is not a denomination?

- A. It has no human creed. - 1 Corinthians 1:10; Revelation 22:18-19; 1 Peter 1:22-23
- B. It has no sectarian name. - 1 Corinthians 1:11-13
 - 1. Most commonly it is simply called “the church.” - Ephesians 5:23
 - 2. It may also be called:
 - a. the church of God - Galatians 1:13
 - b. the church of Christ - Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16; cf. John 17:10
 - c. the church of the firstborn - Hebrews 12:22-24
 - 3. It’s members are called - 1 Corinthians 12:27
 - a. disciples - Acts 8:3; 9:1
 - b. saints - Acts 9:13
 - c. Christians - Acts 11:25-26
- C. It has no denominational organization. - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1-2

II. Is it composed of denominations?

- A. The Lord wants His people united. - John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:1-6
- B. The New Testament condemns sectarianism. - Galatians 5:19-21

III. The Lord has only one church. - Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:20

IV. It is the assembly of people called out of the world into fellowship with God. - Hebrews 12:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; 1 John 1:3

V. It must not be divided into sects. - 1 Corinthians 1:10

Conclusion:

- A. Avoid all denominations and just be a Christian.
- B. Have you been added to the body of the saved? - Acts 2:47,38; 22:16

Will the Good People of All Churches Be Saved?

Text : Acts 4: 10-12

Introduction:

- A. "I believe the good people of all churches will be saved." Many subscribe to this statement. Do you?
- B. Surely a statement that involves the salvation of your soul is worthy of careful consideration .- Matthew 16:26-27
- C. Will the good people of all churches be saved?

I. Upon what basis shall we answer this question? - 1 Thessalonians 5:21

- A. not feelings, parents, human wisdom, creeds, etc., nor a preacher - 2 Corinthians 5:7
- B. the word of God- Romans 10:17

II. What does the Bible say about this question? (The opinion that the good people of all churches will be saved is based on several assumptions. We will look at those assumptions and see if they are scriptural.)

- A. Will good morals alone save? - Acts 10:1,2,22; 11:14; Romans 3:23; 6:23
- B. Is religious zeal enough? - Romans 10:1-3
- C. Is one church as good as another? (the principle of walking by faith)
 - 1. Was one sacrifice as good as another? - Genesis 4:3-5; Hebrews 11: 4
 - 2. Was one ark as good as another? - Genesis 6:13-22; Hebrews 11:7
 - 3. Is one gospel as good as another? - Galatians 1:6-12; 2 Corinthians 4:13
 - 4. Is one church as good as another? - Ephesians 4:4; 1:22,23; Matthew 15:13
- D. Do all denominations belong to Christ? - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
- E. Does God have a choice in the matter? - Matthew 7:21; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23; Acts 4:10-12

Conclusion:

- A. The answer to the question is "No." The good people of all churches will not be saved. - Matthew 7:22-23
- B. One must be in Christ, in his body, the church, in order to be saved. - 2 Timothy 2:10
- C. If you will believe and obey the gospel, God will save you and add you to his church. - Acts 2:47
- D. Will you obey? - Acts 22:16

The Establishment Of The Church

Text: Isaiah 2:2-3

Introduction:

- A. Our missionary Baptist friends believe the church was established sometime between the beginning of John's ministry and the death of Christ.
- B. We need to know when the church was established to:
 - 1. help identify the church and
 - 2. identify its law. - Hebrews 9:15-17
- C. When was the Lord's church established?

I. The kingdom and the church are the same institution. - Matthew 16:18-19

II. When was the kingdom (the church) established?

- A. Purpose - Ephesians 3:8-12
- B. Promise - Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:29
- C. Prophecy- Isaiah 2:2-3
 - 1. last days - Hebrews 1:1-2
 - 2. mountain - Hebrews 12:22-23
 - 3. Lord's house - 1 Timothy 3:14-15
 - 4. out of Zion shall go forth the law - Luke 24:46-49
- D. Preparation
 - 1. ministry of John the Baptist - Matthew 3:1-2
 - 2. ministry of Jesus
 - a. Matthew 16:18
 - b. Mark 9:1
 - c. Acts 1:6-8
- E. Perfection
 - 1. law from Zion - Act 2:38
 - 2. power from on high - Acts 2:1-4
 - 3. beginning- Acts 11:15
 - 4. Before Pentecost the church was in the future. - Matthew 16:18
 - 5. After Pentecost the church is an existing reality. - Acts 5:11

Conclusion:

- A. The church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, AD 33 (traditional reckoning of time), the first Pentecost after the Lord's resurrection.
- B. It's law is the New Testament. - Hebrews 9:15-17
- C. No religious body begun before or after the day of Pentecost, A.D. 33, was begun by or belongs to Christ. - Matthew 15:13
- D. Will you allow God to add you to it? - Acts 2:47

The Universal Church

Introduction:

- A. Those who espouse a “new hermeneutic” deny there is a New Testament pattern to which the church is to conform.
For the individual believer, Christ's perfect example remains the benchmark for his or her life. For the corporate body of Christ, there is no historical prototype of the church for duplication. The kingdom of God is yet to come in its ultimate form (Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris, **The Second Incarnation**. 6).
- B. Every major apostasy began with a corruption of the organization of the church. - Catholic Church, Christian Church, institutional Church of Christ
- C. There is a New Testament pattern for the organization of the church. - Hebrews 8:1-5
- D. What is the organization of the universal church?

I. What is the universal church?

- A. It is the entity Jesus promised to build. - Matthew 16:18
- B. It is composed of all those people saved by Christ. - Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47
- C. Christ has only one such church. - Ephesians 4:4

II. What is “organization”?

- A. definition: “organize”: “to set up an administrative and functional structure for” (**Webster's Third New World Dictionary** [unabridged]. 1590)
- B. three characteristics:
 - 1. pooled resources - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
 - 2. oversight - 1 Peter 5:1-2
 - 3. work common to all - 1 Timothy 5:16
- C. not: arrangement, method, work - e.g., Bible classes vs. Sunday School

III. The universal church has no earthly organization.

- A. The church is composed of individuals, not congregations. (Every metaphor used in the New Testament that describes the composition of the church applies to individuals.)
 - 1. kingdom: citizens - Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 2:19
 - 2. fold: sheep - John 10:16
 - 3. vine: branches - John 15:5-6
 - 4. body: members - 1 Corinthians 12:27
 - 5. temple: stones - Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5
 - 6. family: children - Ephesians 3:14-15; Galatians 3:26
- B. Individual members of this universal body function under a spiritual Head. - Colossians 1:18; 3:17
- C. Christians universally have fellowship by each following Christ through submission to the words of His apostles. - 1 John 1:3,7

Conclusion:

- A. Jimmy Lovell, founder of World Bible School, called for “universal action for the universal church.” This is the basis of both Roman Catholicism and the American Christian Missionary Society of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- B. The universal church is a spiritual relationship.
 - 1. Its only Head is Christ.
 - 2. Its only tie is spiritual fellowship of individual Christians in Christ by submission to the word of His apostles.
 - 3. It has no earthly organization.
- C. We must maintain this pattern. - Hebrews 8:5

The Local Church

Introduction :

A. Those who espouse a “new hermeneutic” deny that local churches of Christ must conform to the New Testament pattern for the local church; in fact, they deny there is such a pattern.

“There is an exemplar and paradigm, but it is not a particular institutional form of the church in history. It is Jesus Christ himself” (Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris, **The Second Incarnation**. 78-79).

B. The church of the New Testament, correctly studied, is indeed the perfect pattern for local churches today. - Philippians 3:17

C. What are the scriptural characteristics of a local church of Christ?

I. It is composed of saints who agree to work together. - Acts 9:26-28

II. It is local. - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:5

III. It assembles regularly. - Acts 11:25-26; 20:7; Hebrews 10:24-25

IV. It functions collectively. - 1 Timothy 5:16; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

V. It is organized. - Philippians 1:1

A. bishops - Acts 20:17,28; 14:23

B. deacons - Acts 6:1-4

C. saints - Romans 12:4-8

D. supports evangelists - Philippians 4:15-16

VI. It is independent, autonomous (local control). - 1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 13:1-3

Conclusion:

A. The local church, as revealed in the New Testament, is a group of Christians in a given locality who agree to worship together regularly and to do the Lord’s work collectively through the use of pooled resources as an organized, functional body independent of all other organizations, human or divine.

B. This simple pattern for the local church is to the glory of God. - Ephesians 3:8-12, 20-21

C. We dare not violate this pattern. - 2 John 9

The Universal Church and the Local Church

Texts: Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2

Introduction:

- A. Steve Reed refused to join the local church, contending, "I am a member of the church."
- B. He failed to recognize the different New Testament uses of the word "church."
- C. What is the difference between the universal church and the local church?

I. New Testament Uses of the Greek Word "*Ekklesia*" (114 occurrences in **NASB**, 115 in **NKJV**)

- A. Literal assembly of citizens - Acts 19:32,39,41
- B. Universal Church - Matthew 16:18
- C. Local Church - 1 Corinthians 1:2
- D. Assembly of Local Church- 1 Corinthians 14:23

II. Contrast Between Universal Church and Local Church

Universal Church	Trait	Local Church
One - Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4	Number	Many - Gal. 1:22; Romans 16:16; Rev. 1:4
The Saved - Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:13	Membership	Some Saved/ Some Lost - 1 Cor. 1:2; 5:1-2
Heaven and Earth - Eph. 3:14-15; Heb. 12:22-23	Location	Earth - 1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 2:1
Lord Adds - Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13; Luke 10:20; 2 Tim. 2:19	How Entered	Join - Acts 9:26-28
Lord Removes - Matthew 13:41-42; Revelation 3:5	How Removed	(1) Death - 1 Thess. 4:13-14 (2) Disfellowship - 1 Cor. 5 (3) Cast Out - 3 John 9-10 (4) Disassociate Oneself - 1 John 2:19
Head - Colossians 1:18 (Chief Shepherd - 1 Peter 5:4; King - 1 Tim. 6:13-15) Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists - Ephesians 4:11; Luke 22:14,29-30	Offices	Bishops, Deacons, Saints - Philippians 1:1

No Collective Function/ a Relationship - 1 John 1:3,7 Does Not Assemble No Treasury	Function/Work	Collective - 1 Timothy 5:16 Distributive - Acts 12:5 Assembles - 1 Cor. 11:18 Treasury - 1 Cor. 16:1-2
Devil Cannot Destroy - Dan. 2:44; Hebrews 12:28	Destiny	Devil Can Destroy - Revelation 2:1,5

Conclusion:

- A. Do not join any denomination or sect.
- B. Believe and obey the gospel, and the Lord will save you and add you to the body of the saved, the church. - Acts 2:38,47
- C. Join a local church. - Acts 9:26-28

The Autonomy of the Local Church

Introduction

- A. Many religious leaders claim to believe in local church autonomy.
 - 1. Baptists: “Each church is an autonomous, spiritual democracy” (**Broadman Church Manual**. 147).
 - 2. Institutional Brethren:
We are all in agreement that each local church is separate and independent in organization from all other local churches. All of us are opposed to the destruction of autonomy. (Lewis G. Hale, **How Churches Can Cooperate**. 77)
- B. But these same leaders espouse practices that destroy local church autonomy.
 - 1. Baptists: “Churches furnish the financial and leadership resources by which extensive work can be carried out by denominational bodies” (**Broadman Church Manual**. 148).
 - 2. Institutional Brethren:
There are hundreds of churches which send financial aid to help keep the program on the air (Herald of Truth - KS). They have no part in the management of the program. They have no part in the selection of the preacher, singers, nor sermon topics. Their part is solely that of financial assistance. (Hale. 2)
- C. How can each local church of Christ maintain its autonomy?

I. What is “autonomy”?

- A. definition: “autonomy” - “the quality or state of being independent, free, and self-directing: individual or group freedom” (**Webster’s Third New International Dictionary**, unabridged. 148).
- B. How does this principle apply to local churches of Christ?
 - 1. NOT in legislative power (law making ability), for Christ is the sole head of the church and its only law giver. - Ephesians 1:22-23; James 4:12
 - 2. Rather, it means the oversight of the execution of the will of Christ belongs within the local congregation and is not to be surrendered to outside control.
 - a. Elders are to be appointed in every church. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
 - b. The elders have the oversight of and only of the work of the church of which they are members. - Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4

II. Why is autonomy important?

- A. It is part of the New Testament pattern. - Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:13; Hebrews 8:4-5; 2 John 9-11
- B. It protects the church from general apostasy. - Revelation 2:1-3,12-16; e.g., kinds of windows
- C. Local people understand local problems and needs - e.g., selection of subject matter for radio program

III. How is the autonomy of the local church maintained?

- A. Each church is to independently do its own work.
 - 1. preaching the gospel - Philippians 4:15-16
 - 2. edifying its members - Acts 11:25-26

3. relieving its own needy - Acts 2:44-45
- B. Local churches of Christ may engage in concurrent cooperation.
 1. Benevolence
 - a. The Judean Relief - Acts 11:27-30
 - (1) condition: poverty in receiving churches - Acts 11:27-29
 - (2) purpose: relief of needy brethren - Ibid
 - (3) arrangement: contributing church sent directly to needy churches (no human organization or sponsoring congregation between) - Acts 11:29-30
 - b. The Great Collection for Jerusalem - Galatians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9; Romans 15:25-28; Acts 24:17
 - (1) condition: deep poverty in receiving church - Galatians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2,13-14
 - (2) purposes:
 - (a) relief of needy brethren - Romans 15:26
 - (b) equality between churches (each church to have the resources to meet its own benevolent needs) - 2 Corinthians 8:13-14
 - (3) arrangement: Each contributing church sent directly to the needy church (no human organization or sponsoring congregation between) - 1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:23
 2. Evangelism
 - a. A congregation may send teaching to another congregation. - Acts 11:22-23
 - b. A church may act alone in supporting a preacher working with another congregation. - Philippians 4:15-16
 - c. Several churches may independently and directly send wages to a preacher working with another congregation. - 2 Corinthians 11:8
 3. The New Testament pattern of congregational cooperation is concurrence (no pooling of resources by various congregations with common oversight).
 - a. No congregation acted as an agent for another congregation (Agency necessitates subordination).
 - b. No congregation assumed the oversight of any part of the work of another congregation or congregations.
 - c. Congregations did not pool resources under common oversight of either a board or an eldership.
 - d. The only reason one church sent funds to another church was for the relief of needy brethren in the receiving congregation.
 - e. The equality of each congregation relative to oversight was maintained.
- IV. How can this autonomy be violated or destroyed?
 - A. Autonomy can be surrendered:
 1. by force - e.g., Iraq invading Kuwait
 2. voluntarily - e.g., various states forming United States of America
 - B. Many churches today have voluntarily sacrificed autonomy by:
 1. setting up synods, conferences, conventions, or associations of churches
 2. contributing to human organizations
 3. contributing to sponsoring church arrangements such as "One Nation Under God"

Conclusion:

- A. The principle of congregational autonomy is a vital part of the New Testament pattern for the church of Christ which we must carefully maintain.
A congregation has no right to build anything larger than it is able to support. It has no right whatever to bind any other congregation to any program of work of its own selection. Each congregation must maintain its autonomy. Any effort that destroys the independence of the local congregation runs straight toward sectarianism, if not Romanism (E.R. Harper, "The Sponsoring Church," 1939).
- B. The Lord in His great, divine wisdom made each local congregation of His people independent of every other congregation.
- C. Congregational support of human organizations and the sponsoring church arrangement:
 - 1. destroy the autonomy of local congregations,
 - 2. are the same in principle as denominational synods, conferences, conventions, and associations, and
 - 3. thus are the first giant steps in creating a "Church of Christ" denomination.
- D. Let us determine to follow the divine pattern of congregational autonomy.

The Work of the Church

Introduction:

- A. At a “Gymnastics for Christ Youth Rally” in Beebe, Arkansas the “evangelist/gymnast” tumbled down the aisle as a part of his sermon.
- B. The church must be diligently at work. - 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3
- C. But it must be diligently doing God's work, not man's. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- D. What is the scriptural work of the local church?

I. Background Principles:

- A. There is a New Testament pattern for the church which we must not violate. - 2 Timothy 1:13
- B. Individual Christians may do many things the local church cannot. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- C. The work of the local church reflects the nature of the relationship. - Ephesians 1:3,22-23

II. What activities is the local church authorized to engage in?

- A. evangelism - 1 Timothy 3:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8
- B. edification - Ephesians 4:11-16
- C. relief of needy saints - Acts 4:34-35

III. The church must not engage in work unauthorized by the New Testament. - 2 John 9; 2 Samuel 6:1-7

- A. general benevolence (glorified Salvation Army) - Romans 14:17; John 6:26-27
- B. social and recreational activities (glorified YMCA) - Romans 8:5-8
- C. politics (glorified political party) - John 18:36
- D. secular education (glorified school) - 1 Timothy 3:14-15; John 17:17

Conclusion:

- A. What kind of congregation do you want to be a member of:
 - 1. a nice, comfortable church that does little and expects little of you?
 - 2. a “live-wire” church that engages in all sorts of fun activities?
 - 3. a faithful church that diligently does the Lord's work and expects you to pull your share of the load?
- B. Your choice reflects what you want to be. - 1 Corinthians 15:58
- C. Be zealous in the Lord's work and be a member of a local church that diligently does what He directs and nothing more.

The Church's Work of Ministering to the Needy

Introduction:

- A. Quite often we are called “anti” and “orphan-haters.”
- B. We must avoid two extremes.
 - 1. acting without scriptural authority - 2 John 9
 - 2. failing to do what we ought - James 4:17
- C. What is the scriptural work of the local church in ministering to the needy?

I. Background Principles

- A. We as individuals are obligated to help the worthy poor, whether they are Christians or not, to the extent of our ability and opportunity. - Matthew 5:43-48; Acts 20:35; James 1:27
- B. Even as individuals, we have special obligations:
 - 1. to our own families (1 Timothy 5:8) and
 - 2. to our brethren (Matthew 25:40).
- C. The local church is neither required nor allowed to do everything the individual is. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- D. When a local church uses its funds, it is an expression of fellowship in Christ. - 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
- E. To find the pattern for the work of the local church in ministering to the needy, we must examine every scripture dealing with the subject, obey them, but not go beyond them. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2; 2 John 9
- F. Our appeal must be to a “thus saith the Lord,” not to emotionalism. - Colossians 3:17; 2 Samuel 6:1-7

II. The Pattern Revealed

- A. Acts 2:44-45
- B. Acts 4:32-35
- C. Acts 6:1-4
- D. Acts 11:27-30
- E. Romans 15:25-26
- F. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
- G. 2 Corinthians 8:4,13-15
- H. 2 Corinthians 9:1,12-13
- I. 1 Timothy 5:3,10,16

III. The Pattern Applied

- A. The widow indeed was the only permanent charge of the church. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- B. The local church is limited in its work of ministering to the needy to the relief of needy saints.
 - 1. Its first obligation is to its own needy members. - Acts 4:34-35
 - 2. A local church with abundance may assist another local church which is unable to meet its local relief needs. - 2 Corinthians 8:13-15
- C. Relief of the needy is not “a means of evangelism.” - John 6:26-27
- D. It is not the work of the church to eliminate poverty, provide the world's medical needs, or eliminate the world's social ills. - John 12:8; Romans 14:17; 1 Timothy 3:14-15

Conclusion:

- A. This pattern establishes a responsibility which the local church must not shirk. - 2 Corinthians 8:24.
- B. But it is also an exclusive pattern we must neither change nor violate. - 2 John 9
- C. Let us abound in the work of the Lord. - 1 Corinthians 15:58

Responsibilities to the Local Church

Introduction:

- A. A couple in Northwest Arkansas who floated from congregation to congregation, never becoming members of a local church and never recognizing any responsibility to a local church.
- B. Many Christians, although hopefully not this unfaithful, fail to realize their responsibilities to the local church.
- C. What are the responsibilities of a Christian to the congregation of which he is a member?

I. The Importance of Membership in a Local Congregation

- A. The only functioning unit of the church is the local congregation. - 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Timothy 5:16
- B. All Christians are to join a local congregation (idea of “free-floating” members is unknown to the New Testament). - Acts 2:44-46
- C. All the members of a local congregation have a peculiar responsibility to it to fully support its work (not to be discharged in any other way).
 - 1. based on **MUTUAL AGREEMENT** to work together - Acts 9:26-28
 - 2. based on **MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES** to one another - Romans 12:4-8 (Each of us has the same amount of responsibility to do his own part.)
 - 3. based on **MUTUAL LOVE** for one another. - Romans 12:9-10
 - 4. based on **MUTUAL NEED** for one another - Ephesians 4:16

II. The Importance of Each Member

- A. Each member of the congregation has his own function to perform. - 1 Corinthians 12:14-19
- B. Each member is important. - 1 Corinthians 12:20-24
- C. Each member should have the same care for one another. - 1 Corinthians 12:25-27

III. The Responsibilities of Each Member

- A. **ASSEMBLE** faithfully with the saints - Hebrews 10:24-25
- B. **GIVE** liberally to help the church discharge its work - 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
- C. **FULLY SUPPORT** all scriptural functions of the church - James 4:17
- D. Diligently do whatever **WORK** he can do - Romans 12:4-8
- E. Demonstrate **LOVE** and concern for each other - Romans 12:9-10
- F. **PRAY** for one another. - James 5:16

Conclusion:

- A. Each member of the congregation must fulfill his obligations for the local congregation to be successful in doing its work. - 1 Corinthians 12:14
- B. Are you doing your share? - Romans 12:11

Church Discipline

Introduction:

- A. When I visited Jim Patrick in the hospital just before his leg was amputated, he was cheerful and joking. He knew it was better to lose his leg than to lose his life.
- B. “discipline”: whole training and education of children; e.g., for the body to be healthy, all members need to be healthy
- C. There is a pattern; will we obey it? - 2 Corinthians 2:9
- D. How should we exercise discipline in the local church?

I. Right Attitudes - Proverbs 4:23

- A. purposes - 1 Corinthians 5:5-6
- B. attitudes - Galatians 6:1-2
- C. without favoritism - 1 Timothy 5:20-21
- D. long-suffering - 1 Thessalonians 5:14

II. Prevention (Vaccination): Teaching - Acts 20:26-27

III. Correction (Inoculation)

- A. private - 1 Thessalonians 5:14
- B. public - 1 Timothy 5:19-20

IV. Withdrawal (Amputation) - 2 Thessalonians 3:6

- A. what it is - Matthew 18:17; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:2,5,7,9,11,13
- B. where it is to take place - 1 Corinthians 5:4

V. Continued Admonition - 2 Thessalonians 3:15

VI. Forgiveness - 2 Corinthians 2:6-8

Conclusion:

- A. We cannot afford to overlook sin. - 1 Corinthians 5:6
- B. Will we obey? - 2 Corinthians 2:9

Decision-Making in the Local Church

Introduction:

- A. Recently the method of making decisions for the local church has become an issue among brethren:
God has not placed the matter of congregational decision-making into the realm of situation ethics, where we're free to change the method whenever it suits us. He has revealed exactly how to do it: the (male) leaders call the multitude together, discuss the problems, propose solutions, ask the multitude to make choices, get congregational consensus, and apply the resolution. That's the pattern (Vance E. Trefethen, *Confusion or Consensus?* 24).
- B. Let us examine the New Testament pattern to see what the pattern is for congregational decision-making. - I Peter 5:1-4

I. The divine arrangement for congregational decision-making is elders in every church.

- A. There are to be elders in every church. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
- B. Elders are to rule the local church. - Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4; I Timothy 5:17
- C. To rule is to make decisions that those who are ruled are obligated to follow. - Exodus 18:21-26; cf. I Kings 20:40
- D. To refuse to follow the scriptural rule of God-ordained rulers is to rebel against God.
 - 1. the rebellion of Aaron and Miriam - Numbers chapter 12
 - 2. the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram - Numbers 16:1-40; esp. vv. 1-3, 7, 11
 - 3. Israel's demand for a king - I Samuel 8:1-8

II. The New Testament Pattern of Congregational Decision-Making

- A. In matters of opinion:
 - 1. The elders should learn and consider the needs and opinions of the congregation. - Acts 6:1
 - 2. The elders make decisions for the church. - Acts 21:8, 23-24
 - 3. The elders should inform the whole church of decisions that affect the whole church. - Acts 6:3; 15:19-20
- B. in matters of faith:
 - 1. Elders decide privately what they believe is scriptural in order to have a united eldership. - Acts 15:5-6; Galatians 2:2
 - 2. The elders should inform the church of their position and the reasons for it, give the entire church opportunity to discuss the issue and to express approval or disapproval. - Acts 15:7, 12, 22
- C. The whole church is to:
 - 1. select its own officers (method a matter of liberty). - Acts 6:3
 - 2. withdraw from impenitent sinners (in the assembly). - 1 Corinthians 5:4-5

IV. How are decisions to be made in a congregation which has no elders?

- A. A church may not have men qualified to be elders. - 1 Timothy 3:2, 11; Titus 1:7
- B. In such a situation:
 - 1. Men still make decisions for the church. - Acts 13:1-3
 - 2. Women may not rule over (help make decisions for) men. - 1 Timothy 2:12
 - 3. The younger should submit to the elder. - 1 Peter 5:5
 - 4. No one should seek or be allowed to have preeminence. - 3 John 9-10

5. All members of the church (including women) have the rights to:
 - a. have their opinions and needs considered. - Acts 6:1
 - b. be kept informed. - Acts 6:2-4
 - c. have their approval sought. - Acts 6:2-5
6. All should strive for unity and peace. - Ephesians 4:-3
7. We should all strive to please others and not to cause anyone to stumble. - 1 Corinthians 10:31-33

Conclusion:

- A. The New Testament pattern for congregational decision-making is for elders to rule the local church.
- B. Even in the absence of elders, mature men are to make decisions for the local church.
- C. This leaves no place for:
 1. a popular vote to make local church decisions.
 2. women or immature Christians (male or female) participating on an equality with mature men in making decisions for the church.
- D. To rebel against the God-ordained leadership of the local church is to rebel against God.

How to Settle Issues of Faith in The Local Church

Introduction:

- A. God wants members of the local church to be one in faith. - Philippians 1:27
- B. How should doctrinal issues in the local church be scripturally settled?

I. Background Principles

- A. The Lord wants peace and unity in the local church. - Ephesians 4:3
- B. It is sinful to cause division. - Proverbs 6:16-19; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Romans 8:6
- C. Causes of division will arise. - 1 Corinthians 11:18-19
- D. But we must seek to lead erring brethren from their error. - James 5:19-20
- E. To have peace, we must have peaceable attitudes. - Ephesians 4:1-3; James 3:13-18

II. When church problems arise, we have an apostolic approved example to follow. - Acts 15

- A. Because this was a matter of faith, Paul and Barnabas did not yield. - Acts 15:1-2; Galatians 2:3-5
- B. The leaders of the church met privately to insure their unity. - Acts 15:4-6; Galatians 2:2,6-10
- C. The whole church came together to study the matter. - Acts 15:6-7,12
- D. The false teachers were given the opportunity to speak (though they were insincere). - Acts 15:7; Galatians 2:4
- E. The appeal was to divine revelation. - Acts 15:7-18; cf. Amos 9:11-12
- F. The leaders of the church stated the position of the church. - Acts 15:19-21
- G. The whole church concurred. - Acts 15:22-29

Conclusion:

- A. When divisive issues arise in the church we have an approved example to follow to settle them.
- B. By following this example we will:
 - 1. show our faith in divine wisdom
 - 2. and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Unity in the Local Church

Text: Ephesians 4:1-6

Introduction:

- A. Latest figures indicate there are over 3,000 separate, recognizable religious bodies in America.
- B. This same study reported the fact of division in the church of Christ.
- C. We will answer four questions about the unity of the Spirit.
 - 1. What is it?
 - 2. Is it desirable?
 - 3. Is it possible?
 - 4. How can we attain it?

I. **A Prayer** - John 17:20-21

II. **A Plea** - 1 Corinthians 1:10

III. **A Plan:** The Divine Platform - Ephesians 4:4-6

- A. One Body (unity of relationship) - Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 1:11-13
- B. One Spirit (unity of revelation) - John 16:13; Galatians 1:6-9
- C. One Hope (unity of aim or goal) - 1 Peter 1:3-5
- D. One Lord (unity of authority) - Acts 10:36; Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17
- E. One Faith (unity of doctrine) - Jude 3
- F. One Baptism (unity of entrance requirements) - Romans 6:3-4
- G. One God (unity of worship) - John 4:23-24; Matthew 15:9

Conclusion:

- A. Indeed, the unity of the Spirit is a desirable and achievable goal. - Psalm 133
- B. If we will follow the divine plan, we will attain and maintain it. - Ephesians 4:4-6

Peace in the Local Church

Introduction:

- A. Tell the story of “two coal piles.”
- B. God wants His people to have peace. - Ephesians 4:1-3
- C. What attitudes can we manifest that will help achieve peace?

I. We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. - Ephesians 4:3

- A. We can have peace without unity. - Romans 12:18
- B. But we cannot have unity without peace.
 - 1. “peace”: “harmony, concord”
 - 2. “bond”: “that which binds together”

II. To do this, we must walk “a worthy walk.” - Ephesians 4:1-2

- A. “calling” - 2 Timothy 1:9
- B. What are the characteristics of a worthy walk?
 - 1. lowliness - Philippians 2:3-8
 - 2. gentleness: “Gentleness” is “regularly used of animals which have been tamed, and which have learned to accept discipline and control.” (William Barclay, **Flesh And Spirit**. 113-14)
 - a. obedience to God - Philippians 2:8
 - b. gentleness to fellows -Colossians 4:6
 - 3. longsuffering: “long-tempered” - James 1:19-20
 - 4. bearing with one another: “to hold up from retaliation” - 1 Peter 2:21-23
 - 5. love: active good will - 1 John 3:16-18

Conclusion:

- A. Peace among brethren is a wonderful thing. - “How Sweet, How Heavenly, Is the Sight”
- B. Are you doing your part to maintain peace among brethren? - Ephesians 4:1-3

The Holy Spirit Has Made You Overseers

Introduction:

- A. It is noble for a man to want to be an elder (for the right reason). - 1 Timothy 3:1
- B. Every local church of Christ should strive to have qualified elders. - Acts 14:23
- C. But divinely approved elders are made by the Holy Spirit. - Acts 20:28
- D. How does the Holy Spirit make elders?

I. Illustration: By the Holy Spirit we are baptized into Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13

- A. by following the precepts of the Spirit-revealed Word - Romans 8:14; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 10:17
- B. by human agency - Acts 8:38

II. By the Holy Spirit men are made elders. - Acts 20:28

- A. by following the precepts of the Spirit-revealed Word (meeting the scriptural qualifications) - 1 Timothy 3:1-2
- B. by human agency
 - 1. selection by the congregation - Acts 6:3-5
 - a. from the local church - Acts 6:3
 - b. in a decent and orderly fashion - 1 Corinthians 14:40
 - c. not by politics - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
 - d. by a method prescribed by the existing elders - 1 Peter 5:1-2
 - e. If a man's selection threatens the unity of the congregation or if he is unqualified, his name should be withdrawn. - Ephesians 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:2
 - 2. appointed by an evangelist - e.g., President of U.S.: people (electors) elect; Chief Justice appoints
 - a. authority and meaning
 - (1) Acts 14:23: "*cheirotoneo*" - "extending the hand ... with the loss of the notion of extending the hand, to elect, appoint, create" (Thayer. 668)
 - (2) Titus 1:5: "*kathistemi*" - "to appoint one to administer an office" (Thayer. 314)
 - b. What should be done? - Acts 6:6; 14:23
 - (1) Certainly prayer should be used.
 - (2) The appointment should be done decently and orderly. - 1 Corinthians 14:40

Conclusion:

- A. If we follow these divine instructions faithfully, we can be assured that the Holy Spirit Himself has made the men so selected elders. - Acts 20:28
- B. Let us follow the Spirit-revealed path. - Colossians 3:17

Qualifications of Elders

Introduction:

- A. Arnold Schwarzenagger, the popular Governor of California, can never be President of the United States. Since he is not a natural born citizen, it would violate the Constitution.
- B. “God has probably required more of a man in order to serve as an elder than any country in the world requires of its highest leader.” (Lowell Williams)
- C. What are the scriptural qualifications a man must meet to become an elder?

I. Kinds of Qualifications: There are five types of qualifications for elders and a reason for each.

Kind of Qualification	Reason	Proof
A. character	the steward of God	Titus 1:7; cf. Hebrews 13:17
B. reputation	lest he fall into reproach	1 Timothy 3:7
C. ability	may be able to exhort and convince	Titus 1:9
D. family	prove his ability to rule	1 Timothy 3:5
E. experience	prevent pride	1 Timothy 3:6

II. 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- A. blameless: He must have no deficiencies of character or uncorrected sins that would keep him from being an example to Christians. - Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3
- B. the husband of one wife
- C. vigilant: “sober, temperate, abstaining from wine” (Thayer. 613)
- D. sober: “of sound mind ...; hence, self-controlled, sober-minded” (Vine 4:45); “prudent, thoughtful” .Arndt & Gingrich. 810)
- E. of good behavior: “a well-ordered life” (Thayer. 356)
- F. given to hospitality: “not what is now meant by that word; namely, the keeping of a good table and an open house for one’s friends... who are able to make him a return in kind; but it consisted in entertaining strangers...; the poor also, and the persecuted...”(MacKnight 451)
- G. apt to teach: “not merely the ability, but also the willingness, to teach” (**Expositor's Greek Testament**. 4:112).
- H. not given to wine: not one who actually drinks or one who behaves like a drinker, i.e., is quarrelsome and brawling
- I. no striker: “a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person” (Vine. 4:83).
- J. not greedy of filthy lucre: “greedy of base gains” (Vine. 3:24); either by gaining money or material possessions through dishonest, illegal, or immoral avenues, or by being more concerned with money than with the Lord
- K. patient: “reasonable and gentle” (Alford. 3:323)
- L. not a brawler: “not contentious” (Vine: 1:146; so Thayer. 31)
- M. not covetous: “not loving money, not greedy” (Arndt & Gingrich. 126)
- N. rules well his own house
 - 1. subjection: “obedience” (Arndt & Gingrich. 855; Thayer. 645)
 - 2. gravity: “that characteristic of a pers, ... which entitles to reverence or respect” (Thayer. 573)
- O. not a novice: “not a new convert” (**NASB**)
- P. a good report of them which are without: “a good reputation with those outside the church” (**NASB**)

III. Titus 1:5-9

- A. faithful children: “[Believing.] How shall he bring others to the faith, who could not bring his children?” (Bengel. 2:559)
 - 1. not accused of riot: “of a dissolute, debauched, profligate manner of living” (Trench. 55)
 - 2. or unruly
 - a. “that cannot be subjected to control, disobedient, unruly” (Thayer. 52)
 - b. “rebellious” (Arndt & Gingrich. 76)
- B. not self-willed: “denotes one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will” (Vine. 3:342)
- C. not soon angry: “not quick-tempered” (**NKJV, NASB**)
- D. a lover of good men: “a lover of what is good” (**ASV, NKJV**, other translations and lexicons agree); cf. Philippians 4:8
- E. just: *righteous, observing divine and human laws; one who is such as he ought to be....2. In a narrower sense, rendering to each his due; and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others* (Thayer. 148-49)
- F. holy: “pure from evil conduct, and observant of God's will” (Vine. 2:227)
- G. temperate: “self-controlled” (**ASV, NKJV, NASB**, and lexicons)
- H. holding fast the faithful word : “cling to the trustworthy message” (Arndt & Gingrich. 215); verse 9

Conclusion:

- A. To perform the important task of a bishop, a man **MUST** have these qualifications. - 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7
- B. “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you” men possessing these qualities, “whom we may appoint over: this church. - Acts 6:3

Duties of Elders

Introduction:

- A. Leaders are remembered as great because in times of trial they rose to the occasion. - e.g., Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt
- B. In a time of sweeping apostasy, the church sorely needs such leaders. - Acts 20:28-31
- C. The success or failure of elders in the discharge of their duties will determine the eternal destiny of both the shepherds and the flock. - Titus 1:7; Hebrews 13:17
- D. What are the duties of elders?

I. "Take heed to yourselves" - Acts 20:28; cf. Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:3; 1 Timothy 3:7

II. "Take heed ... to all the flock." - Acts 20:28

- A. oversee - Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12
- B. shepherd (feed) - Acts 20:28
 - 1. feed - Psalm 23:2
 - a. teach personally - 1 Timothy 3:2; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17
 - b. select competent, faithful teachers and evangelists - 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 1:3
 - 2. guide - John 10:3-5; 1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7
 - 3. watch - Hebrews 13:17
 - a. care for the lambs - Romans 15:1; James 5:14-16
 - b. prevent the sheep from straying - Ezekiel 3:16-21
 - c. recover the lost - Luke 15:3-7
 - d. guard against predators - John 10:11-13; Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9-11

Conclusion:

- A. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of good elders to the local church. - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- B. Elders, perform your duties with zeal and care. - 1 Peter 5:2

The Rule of Elders

Introduction:

- A. Extremes beget extremes.
 - 1. In the fifties and sixties institutional brethren broadened the rule of elders beyond scriptural limits.
 - a. sponsoring church
 - b. “The elders decide; it’s not my business.”
 - 2. For the last thirty years Charles Holt has led a charge to the opposite extreme, denying elders any rule in the local church.
 - 3. Some are now arguing for popular, democratic rule in the local church.
 - 4. With the Scriptures as our compass, we must chart a course away from all false positions and to the truth.
- B. The Father wills that each local church develop and appoint elders. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
- C. What authority do the Scriptures assign to elders?

I. God has assigned leadership in every divinely ordained relationship.

- A. the home - Ephesians 5:22-24
- B. civil government - Romans 13:1-2
- C. the church - Ephesians 1:22-23; Luke 22:14,29-30

II. Rule in the local church is the function of elders.

- A. They are called “overseers.” - Acts 20:17,28
 - 1. This is the Greek word “*episkopos*,” translated “bishop” in Titus 1:7.
 - 2. It means “*an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent*” (Thayer. 243).
- B. They are to rule. - 1 Timothy 5:17 (“rule”: “*to be over, to superintend, preside over*” [Thayer. 539])

III. What are the duties of members to the elders?

- A. know and esteem - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- B. honor - 1 Timothy 5:17; cf. vv. 3,18
- C. follow - Hebrews 13:17
- D. obey - Hebrews 13:17
 - 1. They were selected as elders for their wisdom. - 1 Timothy 3:2
 - 2. They are the divinely constituted overseers of the local church. - Acts 20:28

IV. How is their rule limited?

- A. All human rule is subordinate to and limited by divine authority. - Acts 17:24; 5:29
 - 1. civil rulers - Acts 5:29
 - 2. employers - Colossians 4:1
 - 3. parents - Ephesians 6:1
 - 4. husbands - Colossians 3:18

B. How is the rule of elders limited?

1. They rule only the local church where they are members. - 1 Peter 5:1-4
2. They are not “lords over God’s heritage.” - 1 Peter 5:3
 - a. This is the principle behind all service in the kingdom of Christ. - Matthew 20:25-28
 - b. This does not eliminate rule but qualifies that rule. - Luke 22:24,29-30
 - c. Jesus is the perfect example of this rule.
 - (1) He has all authority. - Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17
 - (2) But He served. - John 13:13-15
 - (3) In love He seeks what is best for His bride. - Ephesians 5:25; 1 John 5:3
 - (4) He does not simply issue orders but has set an example how to live. - 1 Peter 2:21-22
3. Elders do not have the right to:
 - a. legislate laws or to lead the church in unauthorized paths. - James 4:12; 2 John 9; Acts 20:28-30
 - b. forbid a preacher to preach any Bible truth. - Acts 20:26-27; Titus 1:10-13
 - c. tell members what they may study. - 2 Corinthians 1:24
 - d. tell Christians how to run their private lives in matters of opinion. - Acts 5:3-4
4. Elders should not enforce their own will in matters of liberty against the will and/or good of the congregation. - Titus 1:7
5. No elder should seek preeminence in the church. - 3 John 9-10

V. In making decisions for the church, elders should:

- A. learn and consider the needs and opinions of the congregation. - Acts 6:1
- B. inform the whole church of decisions that affect the whole church. - Acts 6:3; 15:19-20

Conclusion:

- A. For years I have heard brethren talk about the shortage of preachers.
- B. The real shortage in the Lord’s church is of qualified, dedicated elders.
- C. Elders should go about their work with serious dedication. - Hebrews 13:17
- D. The members should so behave toward the elders that we would deserve to have good elders.

Qualifications of Deacons

Text: 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Introduction:

- B. The office of deacon is an important office.- 1 Timothy 3:13
- C. But to fill the office, men must meet divinely ordained qualifications, be selected and be appointed.- 1 Timothy 3:8; Acts 6:3
- D. What are the qualifications of deacons? How should they be selected and appointed?

I. Qualifications:

A. 1 Timothy 3:8-13

- 1. grave: seriousness of mind reflected in character and conduct that demand respect
- 2. not double-tongued: "saying one thing with one person, another with another, with intent to deceive." (Thayer. 152)
- 3. not given to much wine: "must not be a drunkard"(Dewelt)- cf. 1 Peter 4:4; 1 Timothy 5:23
- 4. not greedy of filthy lucre: "eager for base gain" (Thayer . 17) - 1 Timothy 6:10; John 12:1-6
- 5. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience: a knowledge of the word of God, steadfast loyalty to it and diligent application of it to one's own life- cf. Hebrews 5:14
- 6. the husbands of one wife
- 7. ruling their children and their own houses well- Ephesians 5:23-25; 6:4

B. Acts 6:3

- 1. honest report: "of good reputation" (**NASB**) - cf. Acts 10:22; Hebrews 11:2,39
- 2. full of the Holy Ghost- Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16; Galatians 5:22-23
- 3. wisdom- James 3:17

II. Selection & Appointment

A. selected by congregation - Acts 6:3,5

B. proved ... found blameless - 1 Timothy 3:10

- 1. proved: "to test, examine, prove, scrutinize to see whether a thing be genuine or not, as metals" (Thayer. 154)
- 2. blameless: "signifies that which cannot be called to account..., i.e., with nothing laid to one's charge as the result of public investigation..... It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person" (Vine. 1:131)

C. appointment- Acts 6:3,6; cf. Titus 1:5

Conclusion:

- A. The office of a deacon is a work which any godly man could desire.- 1 Timothy 3:13
- B. But men must first be qualified.- 1 Timothy 3:8
- C. "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you...."

The Work of Deacons

Introduction:

- A. Could you show from the Bible what the work of a deacon is?
- B. This is an important office in the Lord's church.- 1 Timothy 3:13
- C. What is the work of a deacon?

I. All the New Testament terms used to describe the deacon and his work pertain to serving.

- A. *diakonos*: servant, minister, deacon - Matthew 23:11; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8
- B. *diakoneo*: serve- Matthew 25:44; 1 Timothy 3:10
- C. *diakonia*: service- Luke 10:40; Acts 6:1

II. Were the seven men of Acts 6:1-6 deacons?

- A. Of what does the “office of a deacon” consist?
 - 1. “office of a deacon” (1 Timothy 3:10,13) = “serve” (.Acts 6:2)
 - 2. There were also qualifications to be met.- 1 Timothy 3:8-13
- B. Do the men of Acts 6:1-6 meet these requirements?
 - 1. work - Acts 6:1-2
 - 2. qualifications- Acts 6:3
 - 3. selection- Acts 6:3
 - 4. appointment- Acts 6:3
- C. Either the seven men of Acts 6:1-6 were deacons, or they were appointed to some other, unknown office in the local church which did the work implied in the phrase “office of a deacon.”

III. What, then, is the work of deacons?

- A. The primary task of the seven was to discharge the “daily ministration” by serving tables.- Acts 6:1-3
- B. But by leaving the apostles free to accomplish “the ministry of the word” it is necessarily implied they were charged with the discharge of the physical duties of the church under the oversight of the apostles.- Acts 6:4
- C. The elders of the church should devote themselves to shepherding and overseeing and assign the physical details to the deacons.- Acts 20:28
- D. The preacher should not be used as if he were a deacon.- Acts 20:20

Conclusion:

- A. The deacons have the valuable task of discharging the details of physical duties of the church thus leaving the elders free to oversee and shepherd the church and the preacher to preach and teach.
- B. This is a good work that good men should desire.- 1 Timothy 3:13

Mark Well Her Bulwarks

Text: Psalm 48

Introduction

- A. Because the Lord dwelt in her, Jerusalem was to Israel an impregnable defense against their foes.- Psalm 48:1-8
- B. Thus, they loved Zion, kept her true strength, and wanted to tell of her to their children. - Psalm 48:9-14; cf. 2 Kings 2:11-12
- C. The church is the true Zion. - Hebrews 12:22-23
- D. How can we keep the church strong as the bulwark against the world?

I. Background:

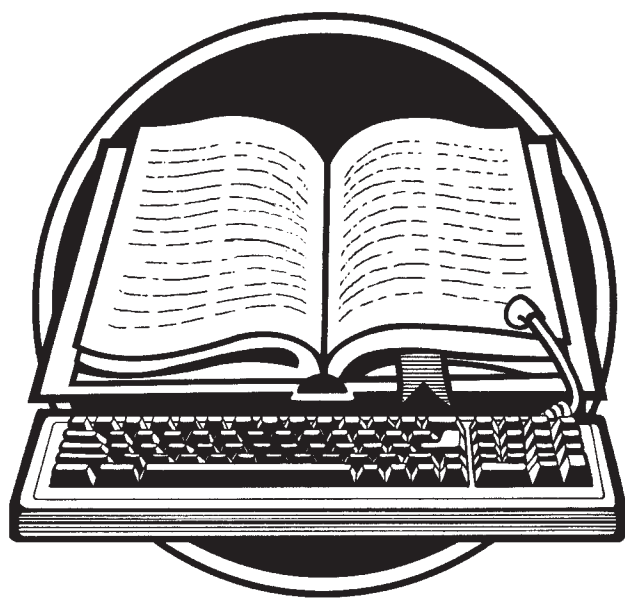
- A. The real strength of this church is God's presence in us. - Romans 8:31,35-39
- B. God will only dwell in us if we maintain the divine pattern for the church. - Exodus 25:8-9,40; Hebrews 8:4-5; 1 Peter 2:4-5
- C. With God as her refuge, Zion will stand forever. - Psalm 48:8; Hebrews 12:28
- D. The bulwarks of the church are the elements of the divine pattern which we must "Mark well" and "tell ... to the generation following."

II. The bulwarks of the church are:

- A. Its Authority: The Lord Jesus Christ - Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 3:17
- B. Its Creed: The Scriptures - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- C. Mutual Love: as Christ Loves Us - John 13:34-35
- D. Names: Divine - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
 - 1. Individually - Acts 8:3; 9:1,13; 11:25-26
 - 2. Collectively - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16
- E. Message: the Gospel - Mark 16:15-16; Galatians 1:6-9
- F. Membership: the Saved - Acts 2:47; 9:26-28
- G. Doctrine: Doctrine of Christ - 2 John 9-11
- H. Life: Holy - 1 Peter 1:15-16
- I. Worship: In Spirit & Truth - John 4:23-24
- J. Organization: Congregational - Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1-2
- K. Work: Spiritual - Romans 14:17; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
- L. Unity: Nonsectarian - John 17:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
- M. Hope: Heaven - 1 Peter 1:3-5

Conclusion:

- A. The real strength of the church is the presence of God in us.
- B. As we faithfully, diligently maintain and apply these bulwarks, God will dwell in us, His people.
- C. "Mark well her bulwarks."



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