

## VII. Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

### A. Meaning and use of the word "Church"

#### 1. Origin of the term "church" (ekklesia)

- \* Ekklesia is a compound of two words: εκ (out) and καλεω (to call, summon)
- \* It refers to those who have been called out of, summoned, or set apart.
- \* The main focus is on people, not building.

#### 2. Development of the term "ekklesia"

- \* Originally, "ekklesia" only had a secular use.
- \* It referred to the assembly of citizens, summoned by the town crier to a meeting to make legislative decisions, but was also used of any kind of gathering or assemblies (Examples: gathered for war, civic affairs, gathering of angels etc.)
- \* The NT usage of the word moves toward a more specialized use of the phrase of "called out ones".
- \* It begins to mean the Christian connotation of "Christian Community".
- \* It is used to identify the local assembly of those who profess faith in Jesus as well as to identify the universal church.
- \* The definition seems to move from a limited local/physical church to a spiritual church (Acts 8:1; Eph; Col.)
- \* So we can see that there has been an evolution of the term: first it referred to any assembly, then to the local assembly/church, and finally to the universal church.
- \* It is never used in the NT to describe a building, denomination or state church.

### B. Nature of the Church

- \* The church is a multi-faceted, organism.
- \* The NT gives many pictures/images that help illustrate the nature of the church.
- \* For example: Paul described the church as the body of Christ.
- \* Brainstorm: What other NT descriptions of the church can you think of?
- \* We'll discuss a sampling of these pictures to give us an idea of the richness of the church.

#### 1. People of God

- \* The church is God's assembly--the elect of God.
- \* The church is people called by God, incorporated into Christ and indwelt by HS.
- \* We are members of Christ who enjoy fellowship with the Holy Spirit.
- \* We use many terms to describe God's people: believers, disciples, faithful, Christians, saints, brethren, etc.

#### 2. Body of Christ

- \* Paul provides the metaphor between the church and the body of Christ.
- \* The picture refers to one universal church under the headship of Jesus Christ, more than just a local church location.
- \* Members of the body are individual people, not groups of people.
- \* Paul stresses 3 important features of the body: Unity, diversity, mutuality.
  - \* Unity: There are many members, but one body.
  - \* Diversity: One body has many members.
  - \* Mutuality: One body with many members are mutually dependent upon each other for our common good.
- \* Christ is the head of the body.

- \* As head He is sovereign leader, the source of life, and our sustenance.

### 3. **Temple/Building**

- \* Paul also describes the church as a temple or a building.
- \* The church is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10ff)
- \* (The church is built on the work of the apostles and prophets only to the extent that their message was Jesus Christ - Eph. 2:20; 4).
- \* Jesus is the cornerstone of this building Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6
- \* "We are the stones," the "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:5).
- \* This building is being "fitted together...into a dwelling of God" (Eph. 2:19-22)
- \* Each of us (stone) builds directly upon the foundation--Jesus.
- \* We are continually being shaped/fit together in relationship to the other stones.
- \* We are "growing into the Holy Temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:21-22)
- \* The Lord dwells here. It is the habitation of the Lord.

### 4. **Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22)**

- \* The NT describes the deep love of the Bridegroom (Christ) for his bride (church)
- \* The bridegroom's activity toward His bride (church) is dynamic and creative, making her what she needs to be for her benefit.
- \* The bride is called to reciprocate His love (1 Jn. 4:19; Matt. 6:24; Eph. 5:24)
- \* We are to be loyal to Christ.
- \* Completely faithful, "no spot or wrinkle; holy & blameless"
- \* Our ultimate "marriage" is to come. It has yet to be realized.

### 5. **Flock/Good Shepherd (John 10; Ps. 23)**

- \* We are God's flock--we belong to Him.
- \* He created us and we were purchased with a price. (1 Pet 5:2; Jn 10:11, 27-30)
- \* Christ is the good shepherd to his flock (John 10)
  - \* He cares for the flock
  - \* He knows his flock
  - \* He provides pasture (rest) for his flock
  - \* He leads the flock
  - \* He searches for lost members of his flock
  - \* He guards his flock
  - \* He goes before the sheep and prepares the way
- \* Just as sheep are totally dependent on the shepherd, the church is to be totally dependent on God.

### 6. **Vine and Branches (John 15)**

- \* God is the vine and we are the branches.
- \* In this organic union, the branch depends on the vine for its life.
- \* Life flows from vine to branch.
- \* Branches have a choice, and must choose to abide/stay in the vine (Christ).
- \* The power to grow and reproduction is through vine to the branch.
- \* A branch severed from the vine cannot bear fruit.
- \* Reproduction/fruit characterizes a healthy life
- \* Branch which bears fruit will be pruned so it can bear more fruit.

## C. The Purpose of the Church

### 1. **To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world**

- \* The church helps Christians grow in their faith, one of the natural results will be sharing that faith with others.
- \* The church can encourage believers to share their faith, and even help provide

evangelism opportunities for believers to reach out to others.

- \* Many times, the combined efforts of the body can enable believers to do what they would never have been able to do on their own.
- \* See Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16: 15-16

## 2. **To be a corporate body in which man may worship God**

- \* Provide opportunity for the body to Christ to corporately worship (1 Cor. 12:13)
- \* There's something powerful & dynamic when we worship together w/other believers

## 3. **To be a channel which assists believers in Christian growth**

- \* The church exists to train believers in the Word, and in the basic elements of Christian growth (Eph. 4:11f; 1 Cor. 12:28; 14:12).
- \* The goal is the perfecting of the saints into the image of Christ.
- \* Christian discipleship is an important function of the body of Christ.

# D. Ministry of the Church

## 1. **Foundation: All members of the Church are Ministers**

- \* The NT reveals a sharp contrast from the pattern of the OT.
- \* In the OT, ministry was relegated to select group, but in NT ministry is for all.
- \* Every member of the church is a minister (1 Cor. 12).
- \* I'm afraid we often set up too great a division between clergy/laity--this is not a healthy biblical picture.

## 2. **Nature of Ministry**

- \* The best understanding of ministry can be seen in the example of Jesus: servant.
- \* He taught and exemplified this (footwashing) (Mark 10:42-45).
- \* The picture of the early church is also one of service:
  - \* *doulos*: slave/servant Rom. 1:1.
  - \* *leitourgos*: Priestly service to God (Giving to those in need Rom 15:27).
  - \* *diakonia*: describes the service of a table waiter. Selfless, loving service.

## 3. **General Types of Ministries**

- \* *God seems to gift some people with more permanent or "resident" giftings.*

### a. **Apostles** (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 2:20)

- \* One sent forth to found and lead churches in unevangelized areas.
- \* Ability to assume and exercise leadership over churches with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters which is recognized and appreciated by those churches.
  - \* This term was used first in an official restricted sense, and later in an unofficial broader sense.
  - \* Today, we can still use the term in a broader sense, referring to one who has been sent forth.
  - \* They would say that today's equivalent in function is a missionary.
  - \* Linguistically, missionary and apostles are the same.
    - \* Apostle comes from the Latin "to send"
    - \* Missionary comes from the Greek "to send"
  - \* Missionaries who go into unevangelized areas and start new churches function in the same way as the biblical understanding of the term.

### b. **Prophets** (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28,29)

- \* A person who speaks to God's people under the inspiration of the HS.
- \* While all Spirit-filled Christians could potentially operate in this gift, scripture implies that there were some who regularly functioned this way.
- \* He/she is a spokesperson for God. (More than simply preaching.)
- \* They may foretell (predict future) or forthtell (bring forth word of God).

c. **Evangelist** (Eph. 4:11)

- \* One whose single focus is preaching the gospel with the intent of making converts (Acts 21:8 Philip; 2 Tim. 4:5)
- \* Their primary task is to communicate the gospel in relevant terms to unbelievers; proclaiming effectively so that people respond to the claims of Christ in conversion.
- \* Some feel this is more like what we call the missionary of our day, rather than what we think of as an evangelist.
- \* See also: 2 Tim. 4:5; Acts 8:5-6; 8:26-40; 14:21; 21:8

d. **Pastors** (Eph. 4:11)

- \* Elder/pastor/overseer/bishop are synonymous)
- \* One charged with the guidance, shepherding and instruction of local congregations.
- \* They assume long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.
- \* This office is combined with that of teacher, which shows the close relationship. A pastor (shepherd) will feed his flock.
- \* They function as a shepherd to the flock
- \* They function under the chief shepherd. Pastor should not feel that he is the pastor of that church.
- \* They do not minister for gain, or to lord it over others (1 Pt 5:1-5)
- \* There are many qualifications for this office (1Tm 3:2-7 Tit. 1:5f)
- \* See also John 10:1-18; 1 Pet. 5:1-3

e. **Teacher** (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28,29)

- \* One who is charged with instructing the church in the known truths of God (the Bible).
- \* To be able to understand and present truths in such a way that people will learn.
- \* There were some who regularly gave teachings in the communities.
- \* This office is sometimes combined with that of pastor (Eph. 4:11).
- \* This shows the close relationship. A shepherd will feed his flock.

\* *In addition to these more "full time" ministries, there are many ways in which God gifts people for various ministries.*

f. **Deacons**

- \* Minister assisting the pastor
- \* Administer church's programs (Acts 6), and assist the church in practical and material ways.
- \* 1 Tim. 3:8-13 lists qualifications.
- \* Rm 16:1-Grk *diakono* seems to imply/allow women deaconesses
- \* The lines between pastor & deacon are not always clear cut.
- \* Generally, pastor more preaching/teaching, spiritual shepherding

- \* Generally, deacons more material needs, business and finances.

g. **Many miscellaneous giftings**

- \* Scriptures lists many ways in which God equips people to minister.
- \* Gifts of helps, administration, leadership, serving, etc.

E. **Ordinances of the Church**

- \* Why do we call them ordinances instead of sacraments?
- \* A sacrament is used to denote a worship observance in which grace is communicated.
- \* We choose to see grace not communicated through any observance.
- \* Rather, ordinances are things we simply do in obedience to expectations of Christ.

1. **Lord's Supper**

a. **Why do we observe the Lord's supper?**

- \* It was instituted by the Lord.
- \* Jesus both commanded it and modeled it.
- \* See Mt. 26:17ff; Mk 14:12ff; Luke 22:7ff; 1Cor. 11:23

b. **What is the meaning of the Lord's supper?**

- \* This is an act of remembrance.
- \* The Lord's Supper is the act of recalling of the past so as to become a present reality in which one may share.

(1) We remember Christ's death.

- \* The elements force us to (wine-blood; bread-body).
- \* We have a powerful reminder of His salvation.

(2) We remember in anticipation of His return.

- \* Do this until I come (1 Cor. 11:26).

(3) We remember our present fellowship with Christ.

- \* He will be at the table to fellowship with us.
- \* He is the very substance of the meal.
- \* How is this interpreted?

(a) **Roman Catholic: Transubstantiation**

- \* This means that the elements actually change into the literal body and blood of the Lord. Metaphysical body of the Lord.
- \* Problem: Christ said: "This is my body/blood" while he was still present physically on earth.
- \* In their culture figurative language is very common.
- \* The disciples understood this and needed no explanation.

(b) **Lutherans: Consubstantiation**

- \* Martin Luther, in a 1529 debate with Zwingli declared:
- \* The presence of Christ is -in, with and under-the elements.
- \* No metaphysical change occurs.
- \* It is still bread and juice, but Christ's presence is in it.
- \* But this is really just playing word games.
- \* It doesn't really move away from transubstantiation.

**(c) Zwingly: Memorial/Spiritual Presence of Christ**

- \* The presence of Christ is not literally present, but is spiritually present at the participation of the Lord's supper.
- \* It is a memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.
- \* They remind us about the presence of Christ.
- \* Danger: May not take seriously enough the presence of Christ.

**(d) Calvinist: Seeing Christ Present in the Spirit.**

- \* More than a memorial meal, but it is coming into contact with the Christ in the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- \* The Spirit of Christ makes Christ real to the believers at the time of partaking of the elements.

**c. Who can participate in the Lord's Supper?**

- \* Believers, as part of the church's observance
- \* Believers who have examined themselves (I Cor. 11:28)
- \* Examine our growth, attitudes, motivations and relationships.
  - \* Believers who are assembled together.
  - \* It is a testimony of unity and community.
  - \* *Show comic: Do you have any wafers that are nacho cheese flavored?*

**2. Water Baptism**

**a. Why do we practice water baptism?**

- \* Christian baptism has been followed since John baptized Jesus.
- \* This baptism was unique from that practiced in Judaism.
- \* Jews could be self-baptized, and it was often repeated.
- \* But Jesus, even though he had no sin, he set the example for us.
- \* Baptism is in the Commands of Jesus (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Acts 3:8)
- \* Since then the church has been obedient to practice baptism.
- \* *Show comic: "No, it's call baptism, not a slam dunk."*

**b. What is the meaning of water baptism?**

- \* We practice water baptism to symbolize the saving work that Christ has done in our lives.
- \* We are not saved by water baptism; it is simply a sign of the operation of God/forgiveness of sin.
- \* The NT draws an analogy/comparison between baptism and washing or cleansing.
- \* It is a sign of removal of sin (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5)
- \* The NT draws an analogy/comparison of baptism and death/resurrection
- \* This testifies that they are not the person that they were before (Rom. 6:3)
- \* Not simply reformed, but a new life.

**c. Who can be water baptized?**

- \* Subjects for baptism must be believers.
- \* Must be believers able to make a response to the claims of faith.
- \* Some traditions argue for infant baptism.
- \* But baptism is not salvation in itself, rather its a sign of faith.
- \* If baptism is a sign, then faith is vital for baptism.
- \* Faith must be expressed by that individual-it cannot be expressed by

others on their behalf.

**d. In what way should water baptism be done?**

(1) Baptism by immersion

- \* The Biblical language seems to demand immersion
- \* "baptidzo" means to immerse, dip or submerge
- \* Biblical examples of baptism appear to be by immersion (Acts 8)
- \* Witness of Church History (Didache prescribes immersion)
- \* *Show comic: "OK, Who put the turtle in the baptistry?"*
- \* *Sow comic: Just relax, I haven't lost anyone yet."*

(2) Baptism by sprinkling

- \* This entails sprinkling a small amount of water on the candidate.
- \* Some take this view one step further and actual pour a limited amount of water poured over head (affusion).

- \* *Show comic: 2 Ministers watering plants (sprinkling & immersion)*
- \* Note: The importance of baptism is not in the mode but in the response to the grace of God and it is only a symbol of an inward experience.
- \* The significance lies in God's grace and obedience to Christ's command.

