

September 21, 2009

SERMONS FOR SUNDAY

September 27, 2009

a.m. "*The Fellowship of the Saints*"

Scripture: Malachi 3:16-18

p.m. "*A Scapegoat*"

Scripture: Leviticus 16:20-22

The Church

Don Hatch

The word church was defined by Jesus Christ. He give Himself for salvation of those who answer the call to be separated from the world. It is significant that a single word has such influence. The history wrapped up in this word declares the importance of "being called out". Being called out of darkness into the light of God is distinctively Christian (Col 1:12-14). As a body of those called out being in Christ implies a unique union of man with God (Eph 1:22, 23).

The Old Testament used a Hebrew word for Israel denoting a congregation no less than 123 times. It confirmed that they were an "assembly, congregation and company". They were a multitude of people with one common link to God via His covenant. Those without a covenant with God were not "His people" (Gen 13:1). Wherever the word is found in the Hebrew text it signifies a certain group of people selected from among others for a particular purpose. It has a religious aspect denoting that Israelites were a people selected, called out unto God, for God (Acts 7:38).

Jesus Christ became the head of the church (Eph 1:22, 23). He built the church (Matt 16:13-20). Knowing that His rejection by the Jewish people was imminent and His disciples would form an independent line of religion He gave them the terms "kingdom and church" to identify themselves. **He created** upon the rock of faith a living house of faith. It was not upon Peter which He built but a body of truth that would set men free (Jn 8:31, 32). The terms of the New Covenant are neither arbitrary nor capricious. Those who accept the essential fact that He is deity and confess Him before man will surely repent of sins and be baptized in His name for the remission of sins (Rom 10:1-17; Acts 2:38).

The church is to be made up of individuals who **congregate** in **assemblies** for the purpose of fellowship and worship. They will be under the authority of Jesus as their king. When a congregation is fully organized they will have members, Elders, Deacons and thus become an autonomously governed congregation. Great respect for the Bible is to be maintained. No one in modern times can go through a period of fasting and praying to change any of the ancient

order found within the Scriptures. What made the church was her faithfulness to the Apostolic Doctrine (Acts 2:42). When that faithfulness is destroyed they are no longer the church of Christ. The apostles took the words of Jesus and converted those who would obey its every principle, precept and command. Being short of obedience is called sin [falling short of the glory of God]. Christianity describes the people who are not encumbered by the world. They leave all worldly vices, teachings and practices in their repentance and watery grave of baptism. The practical aspect of this is that no individual or group has the authority to introduce anything into the worship unbidden by Scriptures. Praying and fasting do not equate with "divine inspiration" (2 Tim 3:16, 17). The point of importance is that the Scriptures never change, but men do. Israel repeatedly changed and was supplanted by a system of vain worshiping which God did not accept (Mal 1; Mat 15:1-20). The church must remain faithful to the Holy Writ. Using logical sense and seeing what happened over the centuries with those who changed the doctrine Heaven and Earth are witnesses to the apostasy which has raged and how countless souls have been "ship wrecked" (1 Tim 1:18-20).

The church is the body of Christ (Col 1:24). She is His bride (2 Cor 11:2, 3; Rev 19:7; 21:9; Eph 5:31-33). She is His glory (Eph 3:21; 2 Cor 8:23). She is His house (Heb 3:6; 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 10:21). Her worship is specifically designed by Christ. None of the acts of worship are negotiable. **Churches who have reduced the word of God to mere suggestions have had their candlestick removed** (Rev 1; 2; 3). To be the pillar and ground of truth the church cannot marginalize the Word of God. When salt has lost its savor it is cast out (Mat 5:13-15). Just men made perfect by the blood of Jesus did not die for a cause which could be altered by the next generation. Fundamentally Christ is deity (Jn 1:1-17; Mat 1:18-20). Can men withstand God? The character and constitution of the church requires faithfulness (Rom 1:16-32). The divine work of building the church was accomplished and needs no revision. Jesus' deity is the pivotal point of the church's future. Making Jesus an instrument of change is sacrilegious. Jesus remains the same.

John wrote in Revelation that the church became a kingdom and priesthood of believers (Rev 1:4-7). An illustration of unfaithful priests is, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children. As they were multiplied, so they sinned against me: I will change their glory into shame. They feed on the sin of my people, and set their heart on their iniquity. And it shall be, like people, like priest; and I will punish them for their ways, and will requite them their doings. And they shall eat, and not have enough; they shall play the harlot, and shall not increase; because they have left off taking heed to Jehovah (Hosea 4:6-10). The church is on a firm foundation when she uses only the Bible for her faith and practice. Love the church of Christ, honor the brotherhood, fear God and honor the King.

FAMILY CARE: A Message from Our Shepherds

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

We have heard this passage of scripture all of our life. As we take inventory of our lives, we must realize the importance of this scripture. Another word that we do not use frequently in our vocabulary is "backsliding."

Backsliding in Hebrew has the idea of “going back or “turning back” to the old life of sin and idolatry. Yes, backsliding is possible. What are some evidences of backsliding you might ask in our lives?

- Neglecting God’s Word
- Little desire for prayer and communion with God (Matt. 6:1-8)
- A growing fondness for worldly pleasures (2 Tim. 3:4)
- A decreasing anxiety for the salvation of others (Psalm 126:5-6)

As we look at some evidences of backsliding, we then begin to uncover the causes.

- Mixed marriages. Let me encourage you to marry in the Lord’s body. So many problems arise when you marry outside the body of Christ.
- Love of money (Matt 26:14-25). Money problems can cause us all kinds of problems.
- Reverting to sinful practices. Almost always apostasy is caused by reverting to a former practice rather than through the development of a new vice. Did Peter revert to cursing when he denied the Lord? (Matt. 26:74).
- Returning to false religion. The entire book of Hebrews was written to prevent the apostasy of converted Jews. Pressure from relatives or friends can become great; and, due to insufficient instruction and/or strength, babes in Christ at times return to a false religion.

May we take inventory of our personal lives and never allow such words as backsliding to come up on the inventory list. May we stand tall and strong for the cause of Christ in our lives. Jerry McKey

“And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them” (Rom 1:28-32).

Living Honestly

"Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly"(Heb 13:8)

Living honestly means to be “good, admirable or becoming”. It is when an individual determines that a Christian’s ethical practices are of greater benefit than the “lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and vain glory of life” (1 Jn 2:15-18). Honesty considers that which has honor, is honorable and brings honor to the name of the Lord. Honesty is found in the scriptures and it is generally in the company of items which are highly valued (Rom 12:1-5; 12:7; 2 Cor 8:21; 13:7). Those who are honest profess honor and occupy themselves with truthfulness (Tit 3:14). Venerating moral integrity brings the words “august, esteemed and decent” to the mind (Phil 4:8). Those individuals who serve God well will seek the honest things to do. It should go

without saying that every choice a Christian makes has consequences and should be honest and forthright.

It is understood in the scriptures that men and women of honor seek to emulate examples of others after which to model themselves (1 Cor 11:1). The Scriptures contain many references to righteous individuals who proved all things honest in the sight of men everywhere (Rom 12:7). Being able to talk to other effectively about Jesus, His church and salvation is vital and requires a commitment to an honest character. Mankind often judges Christians more harshly. Therefore they should live above questions of moral impurity. If men constantly watch what the Christian does he must try earnestly not to perform any dishonesty or out of character practices contrary to biblical virtues. God knows the heart, intents and will of all men. Christians provide "...for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor 8:20, 21). Paul encouraged the Christian to consider "...finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest . . . think on these things" (Phil 4:8).

Society may live with corruption and thrive on cynicism but Christians are to be a light of honesty. They enhance every city, cline and village of America and the world. They are the soldiers of Christ who do not fight against flesh and blood but principalities, powers, world-rulers of this darkness, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Not with weapons of a carnal nature but they are clad in the panoply of God (Eph 6:10-20). Cheating and loafing on the job are bookends of a corrupt world but the Christian is the trusted person who demonstrates that they work unto God. Petty dishonesties are endless until they come into the clear daylight of Christianity. If any society is to thrive and survive it will be because the Christian's influence of honesty is manifested among it. Any environment can be altered with Christian influence being exerted upon it. Unto the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, even their mind and conscience is corrupted (Tit 1:15, 16). Christianity is the cure for all social and religious ills.

When Christians refuse to be corrupted by the world they are a vital resource and contrast to degenerated morals. Christians have influence and should light up the corner where they live.

~ Don Hatch

GREETER ASSIGNMENTS

Sunday, September 27, 2009

Front foyer: Ilene Ashworth; Carol Swinney

Back foyer: Robert Taylor; Max Melton

Sunday, October 4, 2009

Front foyer: Jamie & Megan Little; Nancy Pond; Roberta Price

Back foyer: Mike & Elizabeth Garrison

Family News:

MISSION PRINTING

Mission Printing will meet **Sunday** at 4:00 p.m. in the Jr. Auditorium.

SINGING SESSION

The **Sunday afternoon** singing session will meet in room #116 at 5:15 p.m.

MENS' GATHERING/DEVOTIONAL

The **Monday morning** devotional will meet at 6:00 a.m. in the Annex.

GOSPEL MEETING

Just a reminder that our Gospel Meeting is coming up very soon: **October 25 – 28.**

WELCOME

We are so happy that long time visitor Gale Ratcliff placed her membership with us last Wednesday evening. Gale's address is 810 W. Royal Lane, #236; 75039; phone: 254-722-7368.

THANK YOU

We want to thank our Belt Line family for the outpouring of love & concern with cards, food, calls & prayers for me as I recover from my accident. Keep praying for me as I have a long way to go & for Jay for being my right hand. Much love in Christ, JC & Dessie Ross.

LADIES

Ladies' class will meet on **Tuesday, September 29th** at 9:30 a.m. with a lesson by Marinelle Zaun on "The Source of Power: God is Light".

The bear project is starting up again this fall. If you would like to take some of the work home to complete, please sign your name on one of the sheets in the front or back foyer or see Carol Swinney or Beverly McKey.

WITH SYMPATHY

Gwen Bingham passed away early yesterday morning. Visitation is scheduled at Donnelly's Funeral Home tomorrow (9/22) from 6pm – 8pm, services will be at the Grapevine Church of Christ on Wednesday (9/23) with interment at the National Cemetery.

Opal Hanlon (Laquita Baker's mother) passed away yesterday; services & interment will be at Restland Memorial Park in Dallas; date & times to come.

Lois McCoy of South Mac passed away last weekend. Visitation is at Brown's Funeral Home this evening from 6pm-8pm; services will be at S. Mac tomorrow (Tue) at 2pm.

NEWS OF THE SICK

- **Phoebe Latham** had an MRI & and EEG today; results are due Friday morning.
- **Lyda McAlister** is now home recuperating.
- **Max Melton** will have an MRI & see the doctor tomorrow for possible surgery on his shoulder.
- **Kati Mimms** was able to be in worship yesterday.
- **Carol Swinney** spent some time in Baylor/Irving with a blood count problem, but is now home; she was in worship yesterday.
- **Cathy Taylor** was also able to be in worship yesterday.
- **Leo Townsend** is experiencing difficulties & is still in the hospital.
- **Peggy Arnold** (Margaret Lewis' sister) is doing well following aneurysm surgery; she's in Harris Methodist/Ft. Worth.
- **Frank Bargainier** (of the N. Irving congregation) is in Baylor All Saints in Ft. Worth.
- **John Cosper** (Ann Ryon's son-in-law) is now home recuperating.
- **The Gierling's** (the Renfro's children) were in an auto accident last Wednesday.

Continuing Prayer Concerns:

Grady Fowler, Fauna Garrett, Billie Gilliam, Don & Judy Hancock, Jean Kelly, Jack & Frances LaFerney, Gardean Latham, Everett Newton, Tom Prince, Dessie Ross, Thomas West, Brad Anderson (Bill Paschall's friend), Charlie & Mary DiPalma (missionaries), Judy Morris (Carolyn Montgomery's niece), & our shut-ins.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Be sure and mark your calendar -

- September 27: Mission Printing in the Jr. Auditorium at 4:00 p.m.
- September 27: Singing session in room #116 at 5:15 p.m.
- September 29: Ladies' Bible Class at 9:30 a.m. in the Annex
- October 25-28: Gospel Meeting

LORD'S TABLE/MORNING

Front Table

- Purman Cofer
- Jerry Baker
- Dorris Walker
- Marvin Brown
- Mike Garrison
- Bill Matthews
- Ty Harvey
- Rob Farmer

Rear Table

- JC Ross
- Robert Taylor
- Max Melton
- Keith Vaughn
- Derrol Allen
- Brandon Howard
- Bobby Bowen
- Virgil LaFerney

SUNDAY A.M. PRAYERS

- Jerry McKey
- Mike Batot
- Jerry Baker

A.M. SCRIPTURE READING

- Bill Matthews
Malachi 3:16-18

A.M. SONG LEADER

- Darrell Allen

SUNDAY P.M. PRAYERS

- Ty Harvey
- Mike Garrison

P.M. SCRIPTURE READING

- Glen Kelly
Leviticus 16:20-22

P.M. SONG LEADER(S)

- Jerry Baker (last song: Denzil Myers)

LORD'S TABLE/EVENING

- Darrell Allen
- Garl Latham

COMMUNION TO SHUT-INS

- Bill Paschall

FOR THE RECORD: WEEK ENDING ATTENDANCE & BUDGET

	<u>Last Week</u>	<u>This Week</u>	<u>YTD Avg.</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Sun. Class	106	94	93	125
A.M. Worship	150	161	156	210
P.M. Worship	90	76	86	112
Wed. Class	89	73	81	110
Ladies Bible Class	-	26	30	35
Contribution	\$5573	\$5127	\$5360	\$5474

MISSIONS

Charlie & Mary DiPalma - India

Willie Gley – Ghana/Togo, Africa

Roland & Rose Mohsen – France

Gary & Nadya Workman – Ukraine

Glen & KuinTattersall – Australia

Oleg & Natasha Yakimenko - Russia

Wil & Telanda Sadler – Military Missions

Christ's Haven Children's Home - Keller, TX

Foster's Home for Children – Stephenille, TX

Bitragunta Church of Christ, Bitragunta, India

Ian & Mabel McPherson – Tasmania Australia

Wayne Jackson – Christian Courier on the Web

Ted Lingren - Sisophon Bible School – Cambodia

Mission Printing Worldwide Literature Distribution

Terry & Pam Laurence – Bear Valley School of Preaching

Dennis & Beth Johnson - Chennai Teacher Training School – India