

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Matthew 28:18-20

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

Acts 13:1-2

The work of the local church has been summarized as the **Great Commission**. The words “*Great Commission*” are not found in the Bible, but we use the expression to summarize the command of Christ to the local church. This command is mentioned five times in the New Testament in the following passages: **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8.**

It is important for every believer to have a biblical understanding of what the local church is to be doing in the world. We have already established in **lesson 6**, that every believer is to join himself/herself to a local New Testament church.

What is our purpose for existing? (Example from First State Baptist Church)

Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and the advancement of the Christian faith, to propagate the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into our local community, and the uttermost parts of the world, First State Baptist Church of Wilmington, DE was formed in the fourth month, on the second day in the year of our Lord two thousand and seventeen. We exist first to bring glory to God, to exalt His word, to equip His children for the work of the ministry, and to reach the lost with the blessed hope, “the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The work of the local church is clearly laid out in Scripture. To find a substitute for the work of God is to disobey God.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The purpose of the local church is to bring glory to God, and that is primarily accomplished by making God's redemption known.

Revelation 4:9-11, *“And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”*

As concerning the work of the church, we must always keep at the forefront the glory of God. The foundation of the work of the local church must always remain the glory of God.

A. God's Regard of Mankind

Jesus Christ constantly related Himself, His message, and His mission to the Old Testament.

“Jesus Christ did not contradict or destroy but modified, enriched, expanded, and in many ways transformed and glorified the Old Testament.” – A Biblical Theology of Missions by George Peters

The book of Genesis shows us a God who is sincerely interested in His creation, especially in man. There is nothing further from the Old Testament view than the picture of a God who created the world, established its laws, “set it going, and then went fishing.”

It is not just in **John 3:16** that we find God's concern expressed for mankind.

Beginning in **Genesis 3**, we discover that God is a missionary whose mission it is to reconcile man to Himself.

Who called out? Who was seeking? _____.

Genesis 3:8-9, *“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”*

God was the One who first sought Adam. Adam was running away from God. This is His mission, to reconcile man to Himself.

God gave mankind the promise of a Redeemer in **Genesis 3:15**,

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

We learn several truths contained in this promise:

First, Salvation is God-wrought

“And I will...”

God is the source of redemption; He is the originator, the initiator, the procurer.

Jesus Christ was delivered by the _____ counsel and foreknowledge of God.

Acts 2:21-23, *“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:”*

Second, Salvation will destroy the work of Satan

“...it shall bruise thy head...”

God promise to bruise the head of the serpent. The acts of God would be a death blow upon Satan and Satan’s work.

Jesus Christ triumphed over P_____ and P_____.

Colossians 2:13-15, *“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”*

Third, Salvation will affect mankind

“...I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed;”

The seed of the woman indicates that the impact of redemption would be procured for all mankind.

Jesus by the grace of God tasted death for _____ man.

Hebrews 2:9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Fourth, Salvation will come through a mediator

"...between thy seed and her seed;"

Redemption would be brought about through the seed of the woman. We know that the prophesy would later clarify that it would come through a virgin.

There is _____ mediator between God and men. This mediator is _____.

1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Who is the seed specifically referring to in the Old Testament? _____.

Galatians 3:16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Fifth, Salvation is demonstrated with the suffering of the Redeemer

"...thou shalt bruise his heel."

Redemption would come at a price. This redemption would not be achieved without suffering.

Christ suffered once for sins that he might bring us to _____.

1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"

B. God's Representatives among Mankind

The Old Testament Representatives

Beginning with Abraham, God raised up a people to be His representatives in the earth. Their purpose was to shew the glory of God by proclaiming His Holy Name.

In Abraham, all families of the earth would be _____.

Genesis 12:3, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of _____.

Exodus 19:5-6, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation..."

All the ends of the world shall remember and _____ unto the Lord.
Psalm 22:27, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee."

Who was to look unto God, and be saved? _____.
Isaiah 45:22, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

The New Testament Representatives

The gospel is to be preached to _____ creature.
Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Every believer has been called for obedience among all _____.
Romans 1:5-6, "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also called of Jesus Christ:"

Who should be justified through faith? _____.
Galatians 3:8, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

The believer is to shew forth the _____ of God.
1 Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:"

II. THE PLAN FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

The local church is not to reinvent a plan for world evangelism when it has been clearly stated in the Word of God. The church does not need new tricks, it needs a revival back to the Bible!

There were forty days between the resurrection of Christ and His ascension. During those forty days, **Christ repeated the Great Commission five times**. We learn some important truths within those five references:

A. The Local Church's Master - Who?

The believer is sent by the authority of the _____.

John 20:21, *"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."*

The mission of the local church does not begin with the need of man. The Great Commission begins with the heart of God. It all begins with God. The believer has been given authority to go, and this authority comes from God Himself.

"There is nothing in the world or the church – except the church's disobedience – to render the evangelization of the world in this generation an impossibility." – **Robert Speer**

B. The Local Church's Message - What?

Repentance and remission of sins should be preached among _____ nations.

Luke 22:46-48, *"And said unto them, thus it is written, and thus is behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."*

The message of the local church is two fold as mentioned in these verses:

First, We are to preach R_____. This is a plea with the sinner to change his mind about his sinful condition. This is the declaration that man is a sinner.

Second, We are to preach R_____ of sin. Remission is the act of being pardoned from sin, to receive forgiveness from sin. This is the declaration that Christ offers forgiveness to the sinner.

C. The Local Church's Method - How?

Matthew 28:18-20, *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

We Accomplish the work by **Obeying** the Command.

The local church must _____.

Verse 19, "Go ye therefore..."

We Accomplish the work by **Disciple-Making**.

The local church must T _____ and B _____.

Verse 19, "...teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost..."

We Accomplish the work by **Teaching** all Things.

The local church must T _____ them to observe all things commanded of Christ.

Verse 20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."

We Accomplish the work by **Depending** on the Lord.

We must go in the P _____ of Christ.

Christ promise that He would be with us _____, even unto the end.

Verse 18, 20, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

D. The Local Church's Magnitude - Why?

Mark 16:15-16, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

He that **believeth** the gospel shall be _____.

He that **believeth NOT** the gospel shall be _____.

The mission of the local church is of great magnitude because of the eternal destiny of the souls of men.

E. The Local Church's Map – Where?

The first church in Jerusalem was to be W _____.

Acts 1:8, *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*

We realize through this verse that there is no place to stop. The local church can stop its mission once all have heard the gospel and come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Please note that this command given is to be done simultaneously in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

Every local church has its Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

“Any church that is not seriously involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission has forfeited its biblical right to exist.” – **Oswald J. Smith**

III. THE PEOPLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The Great Commission has been given to the local New Testament church. We also understand that born-again believers make up the local church. It is therefore incumbent upon individual believers to take the work of God seriously.

Believers are to be striving _____ for the faith of the gospel.

Philippians 1:27, *“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”*

The believer within each local church must take God’s work seriously. The gospel of Christ must always remain the priority with each believer.

“The reason some folks don’t believe in missions is that the brand of religion they have isn’t worth propagating.” – **Unknown**

A. We Must Be A Surrendered People

The people of the local church must be willing to be used for the glory of God.

The believer is to present his _____ a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1-2, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by*

the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

What was Isaiah's response to God's plea? _____.

Isaiah 6:8, *"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I; send me."*

"God isn't looking for people of great faith, but for individuals ready to follow Him." – **Hudson Taylor**

B. We Must Be A Serving People

What were Barnabas and Saul doing before they were called? _____.

Acts 13:1-2, *"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."*

What is the one requirement of stewards? _____.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, *"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*

"If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice?" – **David Livingstone**

C. We Must Be A Supplicating People

The believers were praying for Peter _____ ceasing.

Acts 12:4, *"And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."*

What did the church do before sending out Barnabas and Saul? They _____ and _____.

Acts 13:3-4, *"And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."*

"Prayer is the mighty engine that is to move the missionary work." – **A.B. Simpson**

D. We Must Be A Sacrificial People

The church at Philippi was commended because they took care of Paul's _____.

Philippians 4:13-16, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity."

The churches of Macedonia were giving despite their deep _____.

2 Corinthians 8:1-4, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

"God's work done God's way will never lack God's supply." **Hudson Taylor**

E. We Must Be A Separate People

God cannot be glorified unless we abstain from fleshly _____.

1 Peter 2:11-12, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

Believers are called to be _____.

1 Peter 1:14-16, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

"If missions languish, it is because the whole of life of godliness is feeble. The command to go everywhere and preach to everybody is not obeyed until the will is lost by self-surrender in the will of God. Living, praying, giving and going will always be found together." – **Samuel Zwemer**

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

How many times was the Great Commission mentioned during the forty days after the resurrection of Christ? _____.

What is the purpose for the existence of a local church?

Fill in the blank: The foundation for the _____ of the local church must always remain the _____ of God.

How is God's regard for man displayed in Genesis 3?

Who were God's representatives in the Old Testament? _____

Who are God's representatives in the New Testament? _____

By what authority do we proclaim the gospel message? _____

What is the two-fold message of the local church according to Luke 22:46-48?

What is to be the church's method to accomplish the work of God according to Matthew 28?

The church is to O _____

The church is to M _____ D _____

The church is to T _____ all things

The church is to D _____ on the Lord.

How can believers in the local church be involved in God's work?

They must be S _____

They must be S _____

They must be S _____

They must be S _____

They must be S _____