

What is The Church? Lesson 2 – The Marks of a True Church

Introduction:

- How can we _____ a true church?
- What things must be true of a church for it to be a true, _____ church?
- We want to understand what _____ must exist in a gathering of true Christians for it to be considered a true church.
- We want to see what Scripture teaches on the _____ of a true church.

1. There are _____ churches and _____ churches.

A. False churches are founded, led, and attended by _____.

- Paul talked about _____ temples as false churches.

1 Cor 10.20 *No, I imply that **what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God.** I do not want you to be participants with demons.*

- Scripture speaks of religious assemblies that are really “synagogues of _____”.

Rev 2.9 *“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a **synagogue of Satan.**”*

Rev 3.9 *Behold, I will make those of the **synagogue of Satan** who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.*

- Even those who gather together in the name of the true God, but do not have true saving faith, are considered a _____ church.

B. True churches are formed, led, and attended by _____ Christians.

2. The _____ of a true church.

A. True churches faithfully proclaim _____.

- Proclaiming the Gospel is our primary mission and _____ as Christians!

Mark 16.15 And he said to them, “Go into all the world and **proclaim the gospel** to the whole creation.

1 Cor 15.3–4 For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was **raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures,

1 Cor 2.1–2 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except **Jesus Christ and him crucified**.

1 Cor 9.16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. **Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!**

- If we don’t preach the Gospel, then we’ll end up preaching our own _____.

1 Cor 1.17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but **to preach the gospel**, and not with words of **eloquent wisdom**, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

- If we don’t preach about Jesus, then we’ll end up preaching about _____.

2 Cor 4.5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, **but Jesus Christ as Lord**, with **ourselves as your servants** for Jesus’ sake.

- If we don’t preach the Gospel, then we’ll end up preaching _____.

1 Tim 1.8–11 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, 10 the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is **contrary to sound doctrine**, 11 **in accordance with the gospel** of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

- Everything we believe and teach must _____ with the truth of the Gospel.
- There are several doctrines on which Christianity and the Gospel stands or falls, and if you deny them, you have _____ the Christian faith.
 - The Trinity
 - The full deity of Christ

- The actual humanity of Christ
 - The death and resurrection of Christ.
 - Justification by faith alone
 - The Inspiration and authority of the Scriptures
- The truth of the Gospel _____ on these doctrines being true, therefore they must be believed and taught in a church in order for it to be a true church.

B. True churches properly perform _____ and _____.

- These are the two ordinances that Jesus _____ the church to practice until He returns.

Matt 28.19–20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, **to the end of the age.**”

1 Cor. 11.23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**” 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. **Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.**” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death **until he comes.**

- When an organization begins to practice baptism and the Lord’s Supper, it is attempting to _____ as a church.

Acts 2.41–42 So those who received his word were **baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the **breaking of bread** and the prayers.

- The right use of baptism and the Lord’s Supper serves as “membership _____” for the church.
 - Baptism is the means for _____ people into the church.
 - The Lord’s Supper is the means for allowing people to show that they are _____ in the membership of the church.
- When we give someone baptism and communion in our local church, we’re saying that that person is a _____ of the true church of Jesus Christ.

- Groups who do not administer baptism and the Lord's Supper are showing that they are not _____ as a church.

C. True churches practice _____.

Matt 18.15–20 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to **listen even to the church**, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For **where two or three are gathered in my name**, there am I among them.”

- Just like with baptism and communion, church discipline serves as a “_____ control” for the church.
 - Church discipline is the means for maintaining the _____ of church doctrine and church members.
- Church discipline requires a structure of church _____ that can properly carry it out.

Acts 20.28–30 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God**, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Heb 13.17 **Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls**, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

3. More pure and less pure churches.

- The purity of a church can be measured by three things:
 - Its degree of freedom from _____ doctrine
 - Its degree of freedom from _____ conduct
 - Its degree of conformity to God's revealed _____ for the church

A. In churches that are more pure, there are very _____ doctrinal or moral problems, and they give evidence of spiritual fruit.

Phil 1.3–7 *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.*

1 Thess 1.2–3 *We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thess 1.6–10 *And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. 9 For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

B. In churches that are less pure, there are _____ doctrinal and moral problems.

Gal 1.6–7 *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ*

Gal 3.1–3 *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*

1 Cor 3.1–4 *But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?*

C. God’s goal for our church is that we would work for the purity of our own church in _____.

Eph 5.26–27 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, **that she might be holy and without blemish.**

Conclusion:

- We must understand there will never be a _____ church on this earth.
- Two dangers must be avoided:
 - Impure _____ exposes the church to serious spiritual danger.
 - Impure _____ expose the church to serious spiritual danger.
- We must _____ the church like a treasure entrusted to our care by the Lord.