



# Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 6 – THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

LESSON 114 – MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH – PART 5

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# Seven Marks of a Healthy Church

- ▶ What then are the marks of a sound church according to the Bible? We will summarize them into seven points over the next few weeks. These seven things must be present for a church to claim rightly that they are a church that is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ▶ 1. God is worshipped in spirit and truth – Rom.12:1; Philip.3:3; John 4:5-26
- ▶ 2. Prayer is central – Acts 2:42, 1Thes.5:17
- ▶ 3. Love for Christ and the Brethren is demonstrated – 1 Pet.1:22, Jam.1:22
- ▶ 4. The Word of God is faithfully preached, taught, and heard – Acts 6:4, 13:44; Rom.10:17; 2Tim.4:2
- ▶ 5. The Ordinances of Baptism and Communion are administered – Acts 2:42; Mat.28:19
- ▶ 6. Discipline of the membership is Biblically administered – 1 Cor.5:10-13; Mat.18:15-17
- ▶ 7. Church government and leadership as instituted by the Apostles is established – Acts 14:23, 6:2-3; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9

# Three Marks of a True Church

- ▶ In the next 3 lessons we will be taking a closer look at the 3 marks of a true church that we introduced in the first lesson:
- ▶ The Word of God is faithfully preached, taught, and heard – Acts 6:4, 13:44; Rom.10:17; 2Tim.4:2
- ▶ The Ordinances of Baptism and Communion are administered – Acts 2:42; Mat.28:19
- ▶ Discipline of the membership is Biblically administered – 1 Cor.5:10-13; Mat.18:15-17

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ The Fourth Mark of a Healthy Church: The Word of God is faithfully preached, taught, and heard.
- ▶ Acts 6:4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.
- ▶ Acts 13:44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.
- ▶ Rom.10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- ▶ 2 Tim.4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.



# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ To Preach: Gk *kerusso* (2 Tim. 4:2) – used 32 times in the NT
- ▶ Denoting the official activity of a herald announce, publicly proclaim.
- ▶ Declaration - make known extensively, tell everywhere.
- ▶ In a religious sense, denoting proclamation of a sacred message, to proclaim, preach, publish.
- ▶ As proclaiming the necessity of a course of action preach.
- ▶ Proclaim aloud, announce, mention publicly, preach most often in reference to God's saving action.
- ▶ 'Make a public announcement', in the manner of a herald, proclaim – a. mostly about the reign of God and associated themes, including repentance, faith, the importance of Jesus (Christ) or his mission

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ Message Preached: Gk *kerugma* (1 Cor. 1:21)
  - ▶ Refers specifically to the content of the proclamation.
  - ▶ A sacred message preached, proclaimed; preaching.
  - ▶ An important public announcement.
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- ▶ Preach: Gk *euangelidzo* (Rom. 1:15) – preach the gospel
  - ▶ To bring or announce good news.
  - ▶ To pass on information of good tidings.
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- ▶ Taken from: Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*; Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon* (GIN); Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon* (DAN).

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ Him we Preach: Gk *kataggello* (Col. 1:28)
- ▶ *Kata* (with) *Angelos* (message, tidings, angel)
- ▶ A solemn proclamation.
- ▶ To announce, proclaim, to tell about something.
- ▶ Proclaim in a broad dissemination.
  
- ▶ Speak: Gk *laleo* (Acts 16:6)
- ▶ To make a statement, to speak, to tell, to talk.
  
- ▶ So to preach the gospel you must use words!
- ▶ Taken from: Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*; Gingrich, *Greek NT Lexicon* (GIN); Danker, *Greek NT Lexicon* (DAN).

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ In these times when “easy-believism” and the prosperity gospel dominate most of the preaching people are exposed to, it is very important to understand that for a church to be a healthy church the Word of God must be faithfully and consistently preached, taught, and heard.
- ▶ Pastors are responsible before God for what they preach. That frightens me. Many pastors in the church today will be held accountable for leading people astray and for tickling itching ears instead of sounding forth the Word of Truth.
- ▶ The preaching of the Word must be central to our worship. We must have the Word preached to us and we must HEAR the Word. By hear, I do not mean listen to, I mean obey! We are commanded to hear and do (James 1:22-25). And the Word preached must be preached fully and faithfully. There is no place in the pulpit for the preaching of psychology, preaching to meet “felt needs,” preaching to further a political agenda, or preaching to sooth sin sick consciences.



# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ The preaching must be faithful to the Word, faithful to God, and faithful to the congregation, even if it means hearing something we don't want to hear. How often were the prophets in the Old Testament voted most popular? Often they were run out of town or killed because they told people the truth!
- ▶ Why is it so important that the Word preached is necessary for a church to be a healthy church?
- ▶ First, because through preaching God has ordained the spread of the gospel.
- ▶ 1 Cor. 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ Secondly, the Word is the only thing on this earth that can affect salvation and sanctification in the lives of believers!
- ▶ Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.
- ▶ Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- ▶ Col. 2:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.
- ▶ How did we receive Him? By faith!

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ Psalm 19:7-14. It tells us: The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ We must have a proper view of Scripture, believing it to be inspired and infallible. And in preaching the Word, we must preach it fully and faithfully.
- ▶ According to this text in Psalms we can understand exactly why the Word of God is central to the nature of the church we attend. If the church devalues Scripture and downplays the flood of liberalism, placing scientific theory or new age mysticism or secular humanism above revealed truth, then that church is a synagogue of Satan.
- ▶ The Word of God is our authority. It is the only rule we have for faith and practice.

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ This one section of Scripture in Psalm 19 teaches us the following about the Word of God:
- ▶ 1. The Law (doctrine, teaching) of the Lord is perfect (unimpaired, spotless) converting the soul (to restore, to revive, to bring life to the soul).
- ▶ 2. The Testimony (Ten Commandments, God's witness of Himself to us) of the Lord is sure (incontestable and reliable) making the simple wise (teaching wisdom to those who have no discernment).
- ▶ 3. The Statutes (precepts, orders) of the Lord are right (straight) rejoicing the heart (causing true joy).
- ▶ 4. The Commandment (code of order) of the Lord is pure (clear and clarifying) enlightening the eyes (illuminating the whole condition and perspective).



# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ 5. The Fear (reverent obedience) of the Lord is clean (morally clean and purifying) enduring forever (to abide with divine existence).
- ▶ 6. The Judgments (unchangeable legal decisions) of the Lord are true and righteous altogether (spoken as truth, firm, and inclusively just).
- ▶ 7. By His Judgments we are warned (to shine a light on danger) of our duty, danger, and remedy.
- ▶ 8. There is great reward (multiplied thousands of good consequences and gain) in keeping them.

# Fourth Mark: Preach the Word

- ▶ If all this is true of the Word of God, then why would we preach anything else? That is easy to answer. Because we are sinful. We would rather hear false doctrine to sooth our emotions and build up our self-esteem! We would rather hear lies than truth as long as the lies sound good and convince us that we are good, too.
- ▶ We naturally (in our fallen state) hate God and His Word. And it is no wonder then when so many church members today are not even genuinely saved in the first place that they do not want pastors who preach the Word. The Word brings conviction of sin and it is a mirror that reveals our true nature before God. It demands a change of heart and a daily renewal.
- ▶ The Word of God must be preached, taught, heard, and obeyed – or there is no soundness or health in the church.