

Work of the Church

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- Summary:

- **1: What is the church?** origin of the church, membership in the church, what the church is, what the church isn't
- **2: Organization of the Church:** Christ is head, apostles and prophets no longer on earth, elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, all members are saints

- this lesson:

- **What is the work of the church?** go to God's word and only do the things He's authorized
 - **overview:** assemble and worship, evangelism and teaching, benevolence to saints, discipline - result is edification

➤ Work of the church is limited in scope:

- every organization has a limited scope – no group can be all things to all people

- **illus.: What organization upon earth is all things to all people in every circumstance?** none, impossible

- **Kiwanis:** children priority one

- **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation:** – work limited in scope

- “Our focus is clear—and limited” (foundation web site, Guiding Principles)

- “supporting minority students – such as improving health and reducing extreme poverty in the developing world and improving high school education in the U.S.” (foundation web site)

- **Scott Love's insurance agency** limited to selling insurance, not groceries

➤ - work of the church is limited in scope by God, as ordained in His word

- **illus.: 1 Cor. 16:1-2** funds collected by church for saints – **limited**, just like \$ Gates Foundation collects

➤ - work of individual Christians is broader in scope than the church

- **Gal. 6:9-10** good to all men as have opportunity

- **1 Tim. 5:16** individuals have responsibility in some areas church doesn't

- **illus.: scope of Tom Trask's insurance agency is very limited**, but he has a much broader scope of work in his personal life (family, church, etc.)

➤ - argument of some: church can do anything an individual can do

- **no true (1 Tim. 5:16):** sin to relieve saints who are relieved by family

- **not make sense:** personal answer, I'm not taking my wife to that church

- **God is smarter than man:** he hasn't placed an impossible burden on the church

- **scope of work limited – not all things to all people, impossible**

➤ Assembly of the saints

- **Heb. 10:24-25** assembly – result is stimulated to love and good deeds

- **next lesson:** worship of the church

- **worship:** L.S., sing, pray, teach and learn, contribute

- **result: edification, building up (Eph. 4:11-16)**

➤ **Evangelism and teaching**

- **note:** previous lessons studied evangelists and teachers

- **Great Commission**
 - **Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20** **commission**, make disciples and teach, **includes evangelism**
- - **Jude 1:3** contend earnestly for the **faith – evangelism**

- - **purpose of evangelism** (teaching):
 - **Eph. 4:11-12, 16** **teach and edify** (build up) the **saints** – Bible classes, preaching
- - **Acts 8:5-6, 12** work of Philip the evangelist, **teach** and **convert** the **lost**

- - **the church is evangelistic** (teaches):
 - **1 Tim. 3:14-15** **evangelistic to world:** pillar and support (ground) of the truth – **proclaim to people**
- - **Eph. 3:10-11** **evangelistic to rulers and authorities in heavenly places** – **proclaim to spiritual beings** – **How did angels learn about things not disclosed to them (1 Pet. 1:12)?**

- - **local churches sent out, and supported, missionaries:** *two examples below*
 - **Acts 11:22-23** church in Jerusalem sent **Barnabas to Antioch**
- - **Acts 13:1a, 2-3** church in Antioch sent out **Paul and Barnabas** on **missionary journey**
 - **illus.: men we support in congregation - Allan, Paul**
 - **train men to preach such as Paul** – **Heath permanent evangelist in Norway**, congregation **very** instrumental
 - **people reach with Internet:**
 - **3-4k+/- visitors every day** (BSG only, plus RFH)
 - **advertise on Google**
 - **RFH: visitors, Atlanta, came because had been listening to audio lessons**, giving to others
 - **BSG reach:** Zambia, Aruba, Bulgaria, Mongolia, Croatia, Kazakhstan, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cayman Islands, Albania, Grenada, Iceland, Cambodia, Ecuador, Qatar, Uruguay, Libya, Peru, Cyprus, Turkey, Guatemala, Malta, Laos, Syria, Simbabwe, Barbados, Egypt, Portugal, Hungary, Bahamas, Jamaica, Vietnam, Poland, Ireland, Kuwait, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Lithuania, Kenya, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Romania, Philippines, Indonesia, Netherlands, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, China, etc.
 - **Beth: missionary without leaving home**
 - **video soon** (video podcast, on video sites), working with Joseph
 - **illus.: men support outside congregation (USA, Philippines)**

- - **missionaries were also supported by individual Christians:**
 - **3 Jn. 1:5-8** Gaius supported **traveling preachers**

- - **financial support went direct to the person:**
 - **the church is not a “funder organization”**
 - **illus. funder organization: Bill and Belinda Gates Foundation** fund other organizations to do the work
 - “We are funders and shapers—we rely on others to act and implement.” (foundation web site)
 - **church not fund other organizations to do work – it is the organization that does the word**
 - **3 Jn. 1:5-8** Gaius gave support direct to the person
- - **2 Cor. 11:8-9** churches supported **Paul** to preach in **Corinth**
- - **Phil. 1:3-5; 4:15-16** church in **Philippi** supported **Paul** to preach **various places**

- - **wisdom of God: money sent direct to man** – no denomination, sponsoring church, human society
 - **saves money – 100% to man and preaching:**
 - **if intermediary organization involved** (denomination, missionary society) **some money goes to the organization** to support it – often a lot
 - **illus.: business, middle man** – Thomasville Bedding, buy from manufacturer
 - **illus.: \$ given to Salvation Army (kettle)**, tithe (10%) goes to their headquarters
- - **intermediary organizations** (e.g., denominations) **often lose money** through human inefficiencies, accidents, mismanagement, fraud
- - **intermediary organizations** (e.g., denominations) are **political**
 - **illus.: Catholic Charities receive tax \$** so regulated by government
 - **illus.: orphan homes supported by institutional churches of Christ** have refused to allow Christians to adopt children – lose \$
- - **cuts down on sin by reducing temptation and opportunity**
 - lying, stealing, greed, covetousness, not put a lot of power in a few people's hands, inappropriately divert \$ for pet projects
- 2 - **makes the man accountable to every church and every person** who supports him, not just a single organization – **more accountability is better**
 - **illus.: when supported by churches**, number of elders and Christians watching, questioning

➤ - **end Part I**

- **summary:** work of church is limited in scope, assemble and worship, evangelism and teaching
- **inv.:** if not a Christian, not a member of the Lord's church, can't be participating as a member

➤ 4 - **begin Part II: intro, review - benevolence**

➤ **Benevolence of the church is limited in scope**

- **examples of human institutions** – last week, 1st point in lesson
 - **Kiwanis:** children priority one
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 - “supporting minority students – such as improving health and reducing extreme poverty in the developing world and improving high school education in the U.S.” (foundation web site)
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- - **benevolence of the church is limited in scope** by God, as ordained in His word
 - **illus.: 1 Cor. 16:1-2** funds collected by church for saints – **limited**, just like \$ Gates Foundation collects

- - **benevolence of individual Christians is broader in scope** than the church – last week, 1st point in lesson
 - **illus.: scope of Tom Trask’s insurance agency is very limited**, but he has a much broader scope of work in his personal life (family, church, etc.)
 - **Gal. 6:9-10** good to all men as have opportunity

- - **1 Tim. 5:16** individuals have responsibility in some areas church doesn’t

- - **Ja. 1:27** individual have responsibility to visit widows and orphans
 - “visit” (*episkeptomai*) means *to look upon or after, to inspect, to examine with the eyes in order to help*
 - this command cannot be accomplished without personally seeing to their needs
 - **illus.: Dorcas**, believer charitable to widows, made clothes (**Acts 9:36, 39**)

- - **argument of some: church can do anything an individual can do**
 - **no true (1 Tim. 5:16):** sin to relieve saints who are relieved by family
 - **not make sense:** personal answer, I’m not taking my wife to that church

➤ **Benevolence of the church is for limited to Christians**

- church in Jerusalem: – **local Christians**
 - **Acts 4:34-35** Christians sold property, gave money to apostles for distribution
- - **Acts 6:1-2** disciples who were widows were cared for by the church - **1 Tim. 5:16**

- - church in Antioch: – **Christians other congregations - \$ sent to elders**
 - **Acts 11:27-30** church in Antioch, churches in Judea
 - **method of distribution:** from the giving congregation to the receiving congregation
 - **like support of evangelist:** congregation to evangelist – last week, 1st point in lesson
 - **no human organization between** (e.g., denomination, society, convention, sponsoring church)
- 5 - **pic:** explain, history, divisions

- - church in Corinth: – **for saints**
 - **1 Cor. 16:1-2** collection, Sunday, for the saints
- - **1 Cor. 16:3-4; 2 Cor. 8:19, 23** brethren responsible for delivery, not human institution or other church – **method of distribution**
- - **pic:** review
- - **2 Cor. 8:4; 9:12a** money collected for financial support of saints

- - **qualifications of a widow who may be supported by the congregation permanently (roll): – limited benevolence – Acts 6:1-2**
 - **1 Tim. 5:3-4, 8** no family - had no other means of support
 - **1 Tim. 5:5, 9-10** age, reputation, work in the Lord

- **Is there ever a time when an exception should be made, and the church extend benevolence to unbelievers?**
 - **I believe so, as expressed in earlier lessons on authority.** – this is brief reminder
- - **God desires mercy and not sacrifice** – Jesus taught on 2 occasions
 - **Matt. 12:1-8** (cf. Matt. 9:9-13) apostles innocent, like David and priests, though technically breaking the Mosaic Law – **God desires mercy and not sacrifice**
- - **NT teaching on mercy: we must understand and apply the principle today, to go to heaven**
 - **Matt. 5:7** the merciful will obtain mercy
 - - **Matt. 23:23** mercy is a weightier matter of law than tithing
 - - **Ja. 2:13** judgment is without mercy to those who haven't shown mercy
- **"Mercy" demands that the aids we employ in service to God be used to meet the emergency needs of people which cannot be met in any other authorized way**
 - **illus.: If the only way we can meet the emergency needs of people involved in an auto accident** is to use the church's first-aid kit, telephone, and building, we must use them to meet the emergency needs. The emergency medical needs of people are of greater importance than a first-aid kit, telephone, or church building.
 - **note: not authorized** us to change the work of the church to fund, build, and oversee a hospital to care the world
 - **illus.: One congregation accidentally ran out of communion cups** one Sunday morning. They called a brother from another congregation who gave them some of the communion cups from the neighboring congregation.
 - **note: not work of church to provide communion cups to other congregations**
 - **illus.: Hurricane Andrew** devastated parts of Florida. Churches could not contact the Christians and churches in the devastated area to send relief. A congregation near the devastated area collected the benevolent funds and distributed them to needy congregations.
 - **note: this arrangement closely resembles the sponsoring church arrangement, this emergency situation doesn't authorize the church to do this under normal circumstances**
- **"sacrifice" does not represent the doctrinal issues** commanded in Christ's law (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; 2 Jn. 1:9).
 - **illus.: we could not deny Christ** to save our own life or the life of another person (Matt. 10:32-33; 1 Tim. 6:11-14; Rev. 2:10)
 - **illus.: we could not observe the Lord's Supper on a monthly basis** rather than a weekly basis attempting to reach lost souls (Acts 20:7)
 - **illus.: we could not add mechanical instruments of music** to try and attract unbelievers to the assembly (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
- **thought questions:**
 - **In times of utter devastation, could a congregation use their building and money to help Christians?** Could the congregation **share with unbelievers?** Why?
 - **If all our homes and our neighbors' homes were destroyed, could the members live in the church building?** Could the members **invite their neighbors to live in the church building?** Why?
 - **If all our homes were destroyed and we lost all our money, could we buy food for Christians from the treasury?** Could we **buy food for our neighbors** living with us in the church building? Why?
 - **In this situation, should we invite** unbelievers into the assembly on Sunday morning and serve them the **Lord's Supper**, then **turn them out hungry** into the elements while we gather to eat?

- summary:

- benevolence of church **limited to Christians** (saints)
 - **“mercy” may demand us to extend this to unbelievers if** the situation demands it
- benevolence **sent to a congregation, goes direct from sending church to receiving church**
 - **no human organization between 2 churches** (e.g., no denomination, society, sponsoring church, convention)
- **widows** who can be supported **permanently** by the congregation must **meet qualifications**

►- Dennis (elder) address congregation

- benevolence of the congregation, thoughts relating to benevolent work of the SL congregation, work we are doing, possible pray

- end Part II

- **summary:** benevolence of church is limited to Christians, “mercy” may demand that we make an exception and extend benevolence to unbelievers
- **inv.:** if not a Christian, not a member of the Lord’s church, can’t be participating as a member

➤ **10 - begin Part III: intro, review - discipline**

- very difficult questions arise – men in preacher training program always want to discuss
- Jerry Flatt, elder, to comment at end of lesson, help explain and clarify - leave plenty of time

➤ **Discipline**

- **1 Cor. 5:9-13** not keep company with immoral brethren – covetous, idolater, swindler, reviler, drunkard – notice brethren under consideration, not weak brethren who are genuinely trying

- vs. 10 command not applicable to unbelievers, or have to be hermits
- vs. 11b not to eat with - have social fellowship as if nothing was wrong
- vs. 13b must remove wicked person from ourselves (church)
 - vs. 6 so sin not permeate throughout church

- **2 Th. 3:6, 14-15** not keep company with brethren who are unruly

- vs. 14b why? so shamed - repent
 - **1 Cor. 5:5** for destruction of the flesh, so spirit saved – repent
- vs. 15 admonish as brother, not treat like enemy

- **Matt. 18:15-17** process: go individually, then take 1 or 2 brethren with (elders), then take to church

- **Gal. 6:1-2** those who are spiritual, bear burdens
- **Ja. 5:19-20** result: salvation
- some Christians withdraw from brethren with whom they've not gone through the process: they are as guilty of sin as the one from whom they've withdrawn
 - some says: I've withdrawn from brother so and so – questions: have you talked to Him

➤ **What is the time frame we should have regarding withdrawing fellowship?**

- **Tit. 3:10-11** when brother is causing division, reject after 1st and 3rd warning
- **1 Cor. 5:5-6** when blatant sin involved that could cause harm to others, must act more quickly
- **2 Tim. 4:2** longsuffering, when not reason to act quickly (above)
 - in cases where others not being harmed, longsuffering, exhausting all avenues first, usually most prudent
 - as long as the person is trying - still a work in progress - we should be patient and longsuffering it at all possible

- **Application: From whom should we withdraw?**

- **illus. / questions:**

- 12 year old, new Christian, doesn't absolutely obey parents and teachers, withdraw first time child back talks
- widow, recently lost husband, having trouble getting back to church
- new convert having trouble making all the necessary changes to a Christian life
- older Christian who goes on vacation and spends time recreating but hasn't visited the struggling widow or struggling new Christian
- older Christian who drives over the speed limit rather than trying to drive at the limit
- older Christian who has some doctrinal misconceptions, not matter of salvation, he's not divisive about
- young Christians who says, "Oh my gosh"
- young Christian who contributes 1-2% of income rather than 5-10%
- all of us could be disfellowshipped - someone could find a fault in all of us and disfellowship us, if they wanted, looked hard enough

- **examples of people withdrawn from in Bible**

- **1 Cor. 5** man involved in vile sin, even unreligious people knew was wrong: man had father's wife, refused to repent after teaching and instructing with longsuffering
- **Tit. 3:10-11** man purposely turning people from God – divisive, trouble maker
- **2 Th. 3:6, 10** unruly man, refused to work but kept taking food from other people
- **1 Tim. 1:20** blatant blasphemers: Hymenaeus and Alexander, rejected and suffered shipwreck regarding their faith, guilty of blaspheming – blatantly sinful, not trying to do the right thing
- **summary:**
 - withdraw from people who are causing division - they're the reason some people are turning from God
 - withdraw from people with whom we have exhausted every effort, with great longsuffering, and they don't repent
 - if make a mistake in this area, better to be too longsuffering, to have a chance to save a soul (2 Pet. 3:9)

- **Application: Should we withdraw from family members?**

- **difficult question:** brethren broadly undecided, many struggle with
- **my thoughts:** yes, to a degree / but balance with all priorities – admonish as brother
 - **Eph. 5:22-33** husband and wives have special responsibilities - obey, cherish, nourish
 - **Eph. 6:4** responsible for bringing children up in training and admonition of Lord – can't kick out dependant children
 - **grandchildren involved:** good if can keep door open to work with future generations
- **must apply all commands and principles, balance all responsibilities**

➤ Mistaken ideas regarding disciple:

- new Christians only have a week or so to get their act together – shouldn't be longsuffering
 - incorrect view, especially toward those who have to make a lot of changed
 - 2 Tim. 4:2 longsuffering, when not reason to act quickly – more time needed by some
 - Heb. 5:12-14 it can take considerable time for one to train their senses, especially if was deeply involved with the world
- withdraw from every Christian who has sin in his life
 - Paul wrote to many brethren with sins, didn't instruct that all of them to withdraw from one another (Rome; Corinth; Asian churches in Rev., etc.)
 - What is the difference between Christians with "big" sin in their lives that brethren weren't suppose to withdraw, and those from whom they were.
- one congregation can (should) withdraw fellowship from another, if there's sin
 - no command or example
 - congregations don't have "fellowship"
 - people have "fellowship" - eat together (1 Cor. 5:11)
- we should withdraw fellowship from Christians in sin whom we don't know and don't have any interaction with
 - illus.: do you know brother so-and-so – no, I've withdrawn from him
 - there's no fellowship to withdraw from, if not know someone
- we can withdraw fellowship from someone who has already withdrawn from us
 - we can mark them, but there no longer remains anything to withdraw from – they've already withdrawn
- we shouldn't have fellowship with someone, just because they've been withdrawn from by another congregation
 - maybe, maybe not – some sinful brethren have withdrawn from good brethren - must personally investigate
- withdrawing fellowship means no interaction
 - we are to admonish as brother, requires interaction
 - can't associate with them as if nothing is wrong, must always be admonishing when together

➤ Summary

- what, when, who

- Jerry (elder) address congregation

- felt would be good, since the issue of discipline can be one of the more difficult issues we deal with, individually and as a church

- end Part III

- summary: discipline necessary for the sake of the person in sin and the congregation, but when mishandled it can cost someone their soul
- inv.: if not a Christian, not a member of the Lord's church, can't be participating as a member

➤ 11 Part IV: intro, review – **edification / work of the church is not. . . .**

- last lesson on the work of the church

➤ **Is Edification a Work of the Church?**

- **illus.:** brethren, work of the church is edification – probably mean correctly, perhaps misstated

- “The primary work of the church is edification” (Mark Copeland, class book sermon outline on 1 Th.)

- “Work of the Church: Edification” (TheBibleSpeaks.com)

- **Is edification a work of the church?** – assemble, evangelism and teaching, benevolence, discipline, edification????

➤ - **Importance:** some people use edification of the church it to justify doing unlawful works in the church – gymnasium is for edification, retreats are for edification, instruments of music are for edification

- **illus.:** Second Vatican Counsel (Roman Catholic), reason why instruments lawful in church worship

- But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship. . . . This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.

- **reasoning:** if edification is a work of the church, then anything that edifies can be done

➤ - **Edification:** (noun) Greek, *oikodome* (oy-kod-om-ay')

- a building, literally or figuratively

➤ 2 - **review PP Scriptures:** Matt. 24:1 (temple); 1 Cor. 3:9 (church)

➤ - the act of promoting spiritual growth, building up

➤ 2 - **review PP Scriptures:** Rom. 14:19; 15:2

➤ - **Edification is the result of doing God’s work:**

- **1 Cor. 14:26b** let all things be done for (result) edification

- when we do the things authorized by God, the right way, the result is edification

- this does not authorize us to do unlawful things to edify people

- **illus.:** Vatican II, instruments (above)

- **illus.:** having recreational events to entice people to come to church – breakfast, fairs, children’s church

- **edification (building up) results when we obey God and do His work, the way He commands**

- doing unlawful work tears down, even if people like it

➤ - **Eph. 4:12, 16** result of each person doing his work is edification

- **work of service = building up (edification)**

- **edification is not a “work”** of the church like “teaching”, it is the result of doing the work

- **illus.:** lawful teaching results in lawful edification / unlawful teaching results in unlawful edification

- **Is edification a work of the church, or a result of the church doing its work?**

- the work is our service, the result is edification (**Eph. 4:12, 16**)

- **illus.:** “salvation” (noun), it’s what you get, it’s not what you do – “edification” is what you get, not do

- **illus.:** want to edify Polly, go visit, take food, encourage with spiritual thoughts, go home

- **What was the work?** go visit, take food, etc.

- **Was edification the work or the result?**

➤ 2 - **illus.:** PP - **Rom. 14:19** (things, make, peace, building up); **Rom. 15:2** (please, neighbor, edification)

- **Work the church is not authorized to do. . . . – sampling**
 - church not authorized to do an individual Christian's work
 - **1 Tim. 5:16** church not to be burdened with work to be done by individual Christians
 - **institutionalism:** argument, church can do anything an individual can do
 - **2 Th. 3:10** if a person doesn't work, he's not to eat
- - **institutionalism:**
 - **church to institution:** church not have authority to support secular (human) institutions
 - **no authority** for taking money **from the treasury** and **making a contribution** to a human institution
 - **institutionalism: make contribution** to institution rather than doing the work – e.g., **missionary society**
 - **institution to church:** church not have authority to receive money from human institutions – **do it's work**
 - **no authority** for taking money **from government, business, or charities**
 - **1 Cor. 16:1-2** work of church funded by saints making contribution on Sunday
 - **illus.: Catholic Charities**, \$ from government, must **operate according to their stipulations**, **homosexuality**
 - **if church takes money** from a human institution, gives some control to the institution
- - **recreation, social fellowship:**
 - **Acts 2:46** social fellowship is a **work of individual Christians**, not the church
 - **no authority for church to:**
 - **build and maintain property** for providing **church-sponsored recreation**
 - camps (retreats), life centers, swimming pools, kitchens, gymnasiums
 - **employing** musicians and actors
 - **provide and promote** dancing, swimming, sports, parties, lunches, dinners, receptions
 - some churches provide alcohol to members
 - **rent out the building** for any activity
- - **secular business:**
 - **no authority to conduct business** in, and through, the church
 - **illus.: raising money through** ice cream socials, car washes, and bake sales, raffles, bingo (gambling), printing and publishing companies, farms, apartment houses, schools, retirement homes, and hospitals
 - **Lk. 19:46** Jews who did this in the temple made it into a robber's den
 - **no authority for using the facilities** to make a **profit** (rent out)
 - **illus.:** rent out their facilities for meetings, beauty pageants, weddings, and receptions
- - **secular education, educational institutions:**
 - **no authority** for **establishing, building, funding, or overseeing schools**
 - **no authority** for **making a contribution to a school** – major issue early 20th century split
- - **politics:**
 - **no authority** for **sponsoring political candidates**
 - **no authority** for **financial support** of political candidates
 - **no authority** for **using its facilities** to **aid** political candidates in any fashion
 - **no authority** for **providing** candidates with a **forum or facility to politic**
 - **no authority** for **supporting political views** through the **disbursal of political literature**, etc.

➤ **end Part IV – series of lessons on the work of the church**

- **summary:** work of the church limited in scope

- assembly (worship), next series
- evangelism and teaching
- benevolence
- discipline
- result is edification, built up

- **inv.:** if not a Christian, not a member of the Lord's church, can't be participate in the work