

What the Church Was Meant to Be – Part 3

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Introduction:

- A. We're talking about what the church is meant to be.
- B. The purpose of the church is to glorify God.
 - 1. We talked about principles of glorifying God.
 - 2. We need godly leaders.
 - 3. Ungodly leaders distort the message of the church.

I. Today we want to talk about how glorifying God means leaders must exhibit a high standard of holiness. (2 Corinthians 3)

- A. There must be purity.
 - 1. This means we need discipline and chastening.
 - 2. The Corinthians were unholy.
 - 3. In the first four chapters of Corinthians they were guilty of forming cliques to the exclusion of others in the body.
 - 3. Chapter 5 shows incest.
 - 4. Later chapters show them involved in fornication and litigation against each other.
 - 5. They misused spiritual gifts.
 - 6. Paul called them to holiness.
 - 7. The church cannot tolerate sin.
 - 8. Thyratira was guilty of allowing people to commit fornication. (Revelation 2:18)
 - a. Jesus appeared to them with eyes of a flame of fire, symbolizing judgment.
 - b. The Lord called them to purity of life.
 - 9. The focal point of the church occurs at the Lord's Table.
 - a. This calls the church to purity.
 - b. We are to examine ourselves before we eat.

c. The Corinthians were weak because they failed to examine themselves.

10. Apart from holiness we generate little spiritual power.

11. There must be purity in the church.

a. Isaiah faced an immoral culture and recited a parable to Israel about how God cared for his vineyard and expected good grapes but yielded worthless grapes. (Isaiah 5:1-6)

b. This parable goes on to become a funeral dirge, lamenting the destruction of Israel.

c. Everyone knew how much care went into cultivating a grape vine so the picture is one of sadness in dealing with rebellious Israel.

d. God looked for justice and found injustice; he looked for righteousness but found distress.

e. The image of God's people as a vineyard is not new. (Matthew 21:33-44; Psalm 80; John 15)

f. God cared for Israel as a precious vineyard.

g. God planted Israel as a choice vine and he has preserved them through the years and will preserve them for a future.

h. God gave Israel the Law and the sacrificial system.

i. What more could God have done?

j. Why did Israel bring forth worthless grapes?

k. Paul said God could have done nothing more. (Romans 9)

l. America is not God's covenant people, Israel is, but America parallels Israel in its history.

m. Beginning with verse 8 of Isaiah 5 six sins are listed.

1. Grasping materialism, bringing the judgment of economic depression.

2. Drunken pleasure seeking, bringing the judgment of exile.

3. Defiant sinfulness, resulting in arrogance toward God.

i. Some claimed Hemmingway defied God yet he committed suicide.

ii. Sinclair Lewis tried to mock Christianity by writing *Elmer Gantry*.

4. Calling good evil and evil good.

i. We used to honor marriage.

ii. Now we make heroes out of evil men, even homosexuals.

5. Men who are wise in their own eyes.

i. God says the wise in their own eyes are fools.

ii. Men today claim the Bible is not the only right source of revelation based only on their own thoughts.

iii. Man is like a clock, he's right twice a day but this does not mean he is right about God.

6. Debauched leadership.

i. They are drunken.

ii. They love bribes.

12. What is God going to do? First God gives his parable, then he penetrates the sinfulness of the people, then he talks of the punishment of God.

a. God sent Israel into exile.

b. God will also punish America if we do not repent.

c. Uzziah had build the greatest economic and military might in Israel's history. (2 Chronicles 26)

d. In the year King Uzziah died Isaiah saw the Lord. (Isaiah 6:1)

1. Uzziah had become prideful and burnt incense unlawfully. (2 Chronicles 26:16)

2. In this vision Isaiah saw the holiness of God, announced by Seraphim.

3. The Bible does not claim God is love, love, love, nor justice, justice, justice, but that God is holy, holy, holy.

4. We must recognize that God is holy.

5. The reason for shallowness and disobedience in the church is a lack of perception of God's holiness.

6. Jesus taught people to pray Father, Hallowed be thy name.

7. When Isaiah saw the holiness of God the temple began to shake.

8. We have made God into a grandfather image but he is holy.
9. Isaiah saw God and felt he was worthy of a curse, recognizing that he was a man of a dirty mouth. (Isaiah 6:5)
10. He felt this way because he had seen God.
11. Job also abhorred himself when he saw God. (Job 42)
12. Jesus' disciples marveled and were amazed at Jesus.
13. When Peter caught the miraculous catch of fish he pleaded with Jesus to depart from him because Peter saw his sinfulness.
14. When the disciples got caught in a storm Jesus calmed the sea and they feared the Lord.
15. We often play games with God's standard instead of fearing him.
16. Jesus told believers to be holy as he is holy.
17. We perceive Christ in a mundane way.

e. God revealed his holiness to Isaiah to expose Isaiah's worthlessness, yet Seraphim laid a live coal on Isaiah's lips to purify him.

1. Purifying a man is painful business.
2. Repentance and letting go of the old life is not easy.
3. Brokenness is not enjoyable but it yields purity of life.
4. This purifying was necessary before commissioning Isaiah to minister in Israel.
5. Ministers need to understand that they cannot serve God in their own power.
6. God promised Isaiah that a remnant would be preserved in Israel.
7. Perhaps America will have only a remnant preserved after judgment.

13. The church of Jesus Christ must focus on the glory of God and that means we must be led by godly men who understand holiness.

1. Programs will not work.
2. We need true holiness of living.

C. The church must also be built on solid biblical teaching, which we will talk about tomorrow.