

The Church Is Important To The World

Text : II Thessalonians 1: 3-12

INTRODUCTION :

A. What's the church to you ?

1. On a scale of **1** to **10**, how does it rank among the important things in your life ?
2. To help determine that ask yourself, how does the church effect :
 - a. The way I think ?
 - b. The way I spend my time ?
 - c. The way I allocate my resources ?

B. In our previous two lessons we have observed :

1. The church is important to God.
 - a. He **planned** it before the foundation of the world.
 - b. He paid the highest **price** ever paid for anything.
 - c. He **uses** it as His representative and His arms/feet to accomplish His will on the earth.
2. The church is important to the Christian.
 - a. It is the spiritual incubator in which we mature into the likeness of Christ.
 - b. It is the safety net that catches us when we fall, preventing spiritual death.
 - c. It is the platform from which we glorify God.
 - d. The church is the vestibule through which man enters Heaven. (**only entrance**)

C. Today we want to observe that the church is important to the world because :

1. It is God's messenger of salvation. **We've been entrusted to lead the world to God.**
2. Like salt, the church preserves the world forestalling the coming judgment.
3. The church is the fighting force which prevents evil from reigning on the earth.

TRANSITION :

Though the world does not realize it, the church is essential to its survival.

I. The church is important to the world because it alone carries the message of salvation.

A. The world is lost in sin and has absolutely no hope of salvation other than Jesus.

1. The Apostle Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians what had been their condition before they became Christians :

- Eph. 2: 12-** *Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*
2. In our modern “PC” culture, it’s not considered politically correct to question one’s status before or relationship with God, but God will call every person into account.
 - a. **Rom. 14: 12-** *So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.*
 - b. **II Cor. 5: 10-** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*
 - c. Those who speak evil of the church (i.e., of Christians) will be judged by God.

I Pet. 4:5- *In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with **them** into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; ⁵ but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*
 3. Our hearts of compassion want to find a way for people to escape judgment, but God judges every person with absolute justice. (**all judged alike or none judged**)
 - a. There is no person who does not sin.

Rom. 3: 10- *There is none righteous, not even one;*

Rom. 3: 23- *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (**Sin = crime vs God**)*
 - b. Every person who sins deserves to die for their crime against God.

Rom. 6: 23- *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 - c. Though He must punish the guilty, God does not want for anyone to be punished.
- B. God has provided a way for people to avoid being condemned for sin and for God remain just while forgiving them.**
1. Jesus, God in flesh, paid the death penalty on behalf of those who have sinned.
 - a. **I Tim. 2: 3-6** *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, *the man* Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.*
 - b. **Read ... Rom. 5: 8-11**
 2. Everyone who will truly have faith in Jesus the risen Christ will be saved from His sins.

Eph. 2: 8- *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;*
 3. This is great news,(i.e. gospel,) and it saves.

Rom. 1: 16- *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

C. This saving grace is available to anyone and everyone who will have faith in Jesus.

1. **Tit. 2:11**- For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ...
2. **John 12: 32** ... The very purpose for which Jesus died was to save **ALL** men.
3. **Rom. 1: 16** ... Salvation was to be extended to the Jews first, but then also gentiles.

D. Jesus paid the price for salvation and offers it as a free gift.

1. **Rom. 6:23**- For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
2. Salvation is something TOO VALUABLE to earn. **I must be given.**
3. Being a gift, salvation must be received. (**God will not impose it on anyone.**)
 - a. No one can receive a gift that is not offered. ... **Rom. 10: 14**
 - b. No one can accept a gift if he does not know it even exists.
 - c. No one will qualify himself for a gift unless he is told how to do it.

ILL. - Restaurant makes offer :

The first 10 customers in door on Monday will receive a free steak dinner.

How does one get the free steak dinner ?

He must first be aware that the free steaks will be given away.

He must then believe that the dinner will really be give away.

He must go to the restaurant on Monday.

Be one of the first 10 inside. (not standing outside by the door.)

Preparations needed :

Find out where the correct restaurant is located.

Find out when the doors open on Monday.

Find out if reservations are required.

Find out if there is a dress code.

E. The world has precisely the same problem as the one who wants the free steak dinner.

1. They must first be made aware that they have a problem caused by sin.
2. Then they must be made aware that God is offering them pardon as a free gift.
3. Finally, they must learn how to qualify to receive God's free gift.

*** How can they learn about their problem and about God's solution, about His gift ?**

→ Satan certainly won't tell them.

→ In fact, Satan will do all he can to prevent people from learning about the gift.

* **The church is God's messenger to the world to tell them of His free gift, of His love.**

→ The Church must tell every person on the earth that God has a gift for them.

Mark 16: 15- And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world,
and preach the gospel to every creature.

→ The Church must tell every person on the earth how to receive God's gift.

Mark 16: 16- He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved;
but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned

* **The church is important to the world because it hold the world's eternal destiny.**

→ The church is answerable to God for the way it carries out its assignment.

→ The world is answerable to God for the way it responds to the church's message.

4. Everyone sins so everyone must pay the price or have God pay it for him.

a. Sin is like a cancer, it kills whether we know we have it or not.

b. **II Thes. 1: 7b-** The Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

II. The church is important to the world because it preserves the world.

A. The ancient world was destroyed because the wicked people dominated the earth.

1. **Gen. 6: 5-8** ... God destroyed mankind because sin dominated the earth.
2. Had it not been for the righteousness of Noah (Vs. 8) mankind would've been extinct.

B. God has long taken the moral condition of a country into account before judging.

1. God considers the level of wickedness before bringing His judgments.
Gen. 15: 16- Then in the fourth generation they will return here,
for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete
2. God told Abraham that he should wait until the Amorites had had a chance to :
 - a. run their sinfulness to the end of its course.
 - b. to repent and return to Him.
3. In the end, the justice of God was obvious when He judged them.

C. A righteous minority can save a whole population. (City, Country, World)

1. God was willing to save Sodom, Gomorrah and the 10 cities of the plain if there were as few as 10 righteous inhabitants.
2. Tell the story of **Gen. 18 & 19**

3. In the same way today, as the earth and our country become increasingly wicked, the few righteous can save it from judgment. (**The church can preserve the world.**)

D. God's patience is not infinite.

1. **II Pet. 3: 9-** The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
2. The Justice of God demands that He eventually brings judgment.
 - a. **The church will be judged on how we communicated the saving message.**
 - b. **The world will be judged on how they responded to the message.**

III. The church is God's arm to fight against evil on the earth.

A. All that it take is for evil to dominate is for good men to keep silent.

1. Good men allowing evil men to dominate caused the ancient world to be destroyed by the flood.
2. Good men allowed evil to take control in Sodom resulting in its doom.
3. The silence of the good people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem allowed the voices calling for His crucifixion to bring about the death of Jesus.
4. The silence of good men enabled the holocaust to occur in Germany.
5. The silence of good men is allowing a worst holocaust to occur today ... **abortion.**

B. As evil dominates, the quality of life goes down.

1. **ILL.-** Drugs have destroyed millions of lives.
2. **ILL.-** Gangs have forced decent people out of neighborhoods.
3. Crime brings down the property values of all. (**Lowers quality of education**)

C. Christians must be strong and vocal advocates for righteousness.

1. Evil feeds upon itself. **It keeps getting worse until stopped.**
2. Christians are commanded to speak out against evil.

Eph. 5: 11- Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

***CHRISTIANS don't have the option of being silent on the great moral issues of our time.**

NOTE : No matter what a candidate offers, a Christian can never vote for anyone who advocates or endorses evil.
(**The world votes its wallet, but Christians vote for godliness.**)

D. The prophets, Jesus and other great men of the bible spoke out against evil.

1. **John** the baptizer was killed for speaking out against evil. ... **Luke 3: 19-20**
2. The Apostle **Paul** preacher righteous and judgment to Felix. ... **Acts 24:25**
3. **LIKEWISE** : **Christians** today must speak out against evil and advocate godliness.

CONCLUSION :

A. The church is the very most important thing on this earth.

1. Jesus refuses to be put behind anything else or anyone. **The church is His body.**
2. The church is the only thing on earth that will be with God eternally.

B. The church is important to God.

1. He **planned** it before the foundation of the world.
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C. The church is important to the Christian.

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4. The church is the **vestibule** through which man enters Heaven. (**No other entrance.**)

D. The church is important to the world.

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E. What is the church to you ?

- a. Is it as important to you as it is to God ?
- b. Are you involved enough in it to reap the benefits it offers ?
- c. Are you making the church important to your part of the world ?

INVITATION :

A. If you desire to establish a relationship with God via His church, come.

B. If you have let your relationship with the church deteriorate, come re-establish it.