

God's Purpose For His Church

Text : **Acts 2: 37-47 , Eph. 4: 11-16**

S#1.

S#2.

A. The previous 2 lessons we have focused on God's command to examine ourselves.

1. We first examined ourselves individually.
 - a. Are we maturing spiritually or just doing more churchy things ?
 - b. Are we accurately evaluating ourselves or have our sinful hearts deceived us ?
 - c. Do we use only the scriptures as the standard by which we evaluate ourselves ?
2. Then we broadened our scope to evaluate our congregation and our place in it.
 - a. We saw that Jesus is aware of what is happening in every congregation. **Rev. 2-3**
 - b. Jesus is actively involved in the lives of His congregations and His servants.
 - c. He both rewards and disciplines those whom He loves.

B. There is a point at which Christ disavows a non-functioning congregation.

S#3.

Rev. 2: 5 – Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

S#4.

C. We evaluate our congregation and our part in it because the church is important.

1. The church is important because of the price God paid to purchase. **S#5.**
 - a. **Acts 20: 28 – Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**
 - b. We dare not place a lesser value on the church than God places on it.
2. The church is important because it contains every saved person on earth. **S#6.**
 - a. **Acts 2: 47 – And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.**
 - b. Since all saved people are in the church, the church is the vestibule of Heaven.
3. Membership isn't optional; no one "*joins the church*" God adds saved people to it.
 - a. No one in scripture was ever told to get saved and go join a church.
 - b. No one was ever given the option to "*I'll take the man, but not the plan.*"

D. God places ALL saved people in His church because He has a plan for it.

S#7.

1. Jesus announced that He would build His church on faith that He is the Christ.

Matt. 16: 18 – I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. **S#8.**

2. ***Jesus planned to build a church so He had a purpose for that church.***

I. God uses the church to bring glory to Himself.**S#9.****A. Jesus directly commanded all of us to bring glory to God.****S#10.**

Matt. 5: 13-16 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. **14** You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; **S#11.**
15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

(**Rev 1 .. lampstand**) **16** Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

B. The activities of the N.T. congregations were seen as glory to God.**S#12.**

1. **II Cor. 8: 19** – ... he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself. ...

2. That which we do in the name of Christ must be to the glory of Christ.

S#13.

Vs. 23 – **As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.**

S#14.**C. Thus, it is clearly stated that the church is for the glory of God ... of His Christ.**

1. **Eph. 4: 20–21** Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, **21** to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

2. Where else would God be glorified more than in His body ? (**Eph. 1: 22-23**)

II. God uses His church to proclaim salvation to the world.**S#15.****S#16.****A. Every member of God's body is commanded to do God's work on the earth.**

1. Jesus came to earth for the sole purpose of saving mankind from sin.

a. **Matt. 1: 21** ... Before Jesus was born the angel said He would save sinners.

b. **Luke 19: 10** ... While on the earth Jesus said He came to save sinners.

c. **I Tim. 1: 15** ... After Jesus had ascended it was taught that He came to save.

2. Jesus told all disciples to go tell the gospel to everyone they met.

S#17.

Matt. 28: 19 – **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;**

S#18.

B. The specific reason that YOU were called by God is to proclaim God to all.

I Pet. 2: 9 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

S#19.

C. Christians (His church) are God official representatives on the earth.

II Cor. 5: 20 – Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

S#20.

D. No one else is commanded or qualified to represent God on the earth.

III. God uses His church to develop and train His followers.

S#21.

A. After one is called by the gospel and baptized into Christ he must be taught. #22.

Matt. 28: 19 – Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;

B. The church is organized in such a way as to train up immature followers.

Eph. 4: 11-16 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

S#24.

¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

S#25.

1. Every position in the church is for the purpose of developing the members.
2. Members come in immature, like spiritual children.
3. The immature are unstable ... **tossed and carried about**
4. Each member is developed to the point he contributes to the whole.
5. The ultimate goal is to be of the stature of Christ ... **building up love.**

S#26.

C. There is no other way to achieve spiritual maturity .. it's a product of the church.

IV. God uses His church to support and to protect the weak.

S#27.

A. Jesus declared His desire to protect the holy city of God's people.

S#28.

Matt. 23: 37 – Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

B. Jesus designed the church to be that “hen” that protects her “chicks.”

S#29.

Rom. 15: 1 – Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

C. When any Christian is weak he has a prayer circle to prop him up.

S#30.

James 5: 16 – Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

V. God uses His church to discipline and to correct those who stray.

S#31.

S#32.

A. Christians don't wait for a brother to fall, they go to him when they observe.

- Gal. 6: 1-2** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.
- “caught in” : *prolambano* : to take one by forestalling (him i.e. before he can flee)
- This is something that is observed as it is developing. *Assistance not judgment*

B. The one who falters is to be approached as discretely as possible.

S#33.

- Matt. 18: 15-17** If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 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.

S#34.

- The clear objective is to win the brother back to Christ.
- Without rescue he is lost, expelled from the fellowship, treated as an outsider.

C. The objective of all church discipline is to restore the brother.**S#35.**

1. **I Cor 5: 5** – I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
2. **II Cor. 2: 6-8** Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which *was inflicted* **S#36.** by the majority, ⁷ so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

D. Church discipline is a required function of the church.**VI. God uses His church to prepare the next generation.****S#37.****A. The church is never more than one generation away from extinction.****S#38.**

1. In order to be faithful each generation must prepare the next generation.
2. The Apostles entrusted the faith to younger men to perpetuate it. (cf–**Gal 2:7**) **S#39.**
I Tim. 1: 8 – This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, **S#40.**
3. Those to whom the faith was taught were commanded to insure it was perpetuated.
II Tim. 2: 2 – The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

B. When leaders are chosen for a congregation they must have the ability to communicate the faith to the next generation. (cf – **Titus 1: 5-9)****S#41.**

I Tim. 3: 2 – An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

C. Older ladies are required to train the next generation of ladies.

Titus 2: 3-5 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

S#42.**VII. God uses His church to keep His followers stirred up and motivated.****S#43.****A. The hottest ember will grow cold when by itself.****S#44.**

B. The church fights Satan as an interdependent, cohesive unit.**S#45.**

1. Each member is responsible to keep every other member stirred up, **motivated**.
2. **Heb 10: 23-25** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **S#46.**
for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to
stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking
our own assembling together, as is the habit of some,
but encouraging *one another*;

S#47.**C. Any time Christians are together, they are seeking to light each other's fires.**

1. **Rom. 1: 12** – that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, **S#48.**
each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.
2. **I Cor. 14: 26b** – ... Let all things be done for edification.

CONCLUSION :**A. Jesus built His church to fulfill His purpose on the earth.****S#49.**

1. God's church must bring glory to God.
2. Christ's church is the only means by which His saving gospel is proclaimed.
3. His church develops and trains His servants to serve Him in saving lost man.
4. His church must protect and strengthen the weaker members of the body.
5. His church must be vigilant to keep His flock faithfully following Him.
6. God's church must perpetuate itself from generation to generation.
7. God's church is the way He keeps His disciples motivated and actively serving Him.

B. As we consider work for 2015, we must set goals that accomplish God's purpose for His church.**S#50.**

1. God's church must be active ... not just a worship society.
2. As we saw in our lesson last week, Jesus will hold us accountable. **S#51.**
3. **OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, WHY WERE YOU CALLED ?**
He called you to accomplish HIS purpose on the earth.

INVITATION :

Lesson Text :**Acts 2: 37-47**

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" **38** Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." **40** And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" **41** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. **42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. **44** And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; **45** and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. **46** Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Eph. 4: 11-16

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.