

The Measure of His Church: Walking In His Image

Theme: Growing Into The Fullness Of Christ!

Lesson 2: The Measure Of His Church

Text: Ephesians 4:17

Introduction

1. If Paul sat down to write to us, how would he begin the letter? _____
2. In our world today, how do most churches measure success? _____
3. When Paul wrote to different local churches, what was he most thankful for? 3 aspects of the Christian life that should exist in us all: _____
4. Let us look carefully at Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.
 - a. Would you classify this church as a very immature church? 1Corinthians 3:1-2
 - b. The name "**Corinthian**" is defined as: _____
5. Even though this local church of Jesus Christ was very immature at the time Paul wrote to them, Paul saw the need finally in ch.13 to refer to faith, hope and love. (vs.13)
 - a. The word for "love" in vs.13 is agape.
 - b. This is where Paul begins to "measure" the degree to which a local church reflects the image of Jesus Christ.
 - (1) 1Corinthians 13:13
 - (2) 1Thessalonians 1:2-3
 - (3) 2Thessalonians 1:3-4
 - (4) Ephesians 1:15-18

I. Comparing Introductions

- A. When the introductions are compared there are several similarities - 1Thess. & 2Thess
 1. What was Paul thankful for? _____
 2. What was his thanksgiving focused on? _____
 3. Paul described their qualities and how they were reflected in the Thessalonian church.
 - a. works of **Faith** _____
 - b. labor of **Love** _____
 - c. patience of **Hope** _____
 4. When Paul thanked God for their faith, hope and love, he used the plural pronoun "you" and "your".
 - a. Paul is referring to their corporate growth.
 - b. What did he remember about them? _____
 - c. Why is it difficult to measure the maturity of a group at times? _____

B. Measurable Growth

1. When one reads the introduction of 1 & 2Thessalonians, there is a significant difference between the two.
2. see 2Thessalonians 1:3-4
3. see especially vs.4 _____

C. Paul's Two Additional Letters

1. After Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he wrote two additional letters that clearly focused on the qualities of faith, hope and love.
2. While under house arrest, Paul wrote the epistles of **Colossians** and **Ephesians**.
 - a. **Colossians** (plural pronouns) – **1:3-5**
 - b. **Ephesians** (plural pronouns) – **1:15,16,18**

3. The Corinthian Letter

- a. Why did Paul want to begin discussing the qualities of faith, hope and love toward the end of his letter?
- b. The answer to this question lies in understanding the degree to which this church measure up – or how they did not measure up.
- c. Note: When Paul wrote to them, he attested to the fact that they came short in no gift.
 - (1) **1Corinthians 1:4-7**
 - (2) Why did God give them these gifts? see **Hebrews 2:3-4**
 - (3) How long did Paul spend with them teaching the word of God? **Acts 18:11**
 - (4) They still needed to grow up. see 3:1-2

II. The Love Chapter – 1Corinthians13

A. They Lacked Love – 13:1-13

1. Even though they lacked in no gift (by His grace), they still needed to grow in love.
2. In essence, what was Paul saying to them?

B. Paul uses a very tactful grammatical technique in ch.13:1-4.

1. He puts himself in their place. see vs.1-4
2. **"I"** – "Though I speak . . ." vs.1

C. A very powerful communication technique.

1. Their gifts: Not a mark of maturity. vs.1-3

- a. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . ."vs.1 _____
 - b. "and though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge . . ."vs.2 _____
 - c. "and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned . . ." vs.3 _____
2. Their love: They had very little. (vs.4-6)
- a. see vs.4a – compare 3:3
 - b. see vs.4b - compare 3:21; 4:5-7, 18
 - c. see vs.5a – compare 5:1-2,6; 11:20-21
 - d. vs.5b – compare 6:1,6,8
 - e. vs.5c, 6a – compare 6:15, 20
 - f. vs.7a – compare 8:9
 - g. vs.7b – compare 9:1-2
 - h. vs.7c – compare 15:17-19
 - i. vs.7d – compare chapter 1-12, 15

D. A Biblical Goal: Pursue Faith, Hope and Love

1. Love never fails (13:8) meaning - _____
2. As a church family, what was their present condition spiritually?

3. What would be their condition if they became a mature church?

Conclusion

1. What have we learned from this lesson about the churches corporate lifestyle among unbelievers?
2. What qualities does God want all of us to reflect to the lost world?
3. Let's end this lesson where we began – with a question: If the apostle Paul sat down to write a letter to us as a church, how would he begin the letter? What would he thank God for?