

THE ESSENTIALS OF A BIBLICALLY HEALTHY CHURCH

The Master's Plan For His Church Colossians 2:1-10

There are certain *essential truths* that a church must be committed to if it is to have a *sound structure*...and truly be the Church that *reflects* the *attributes* and *character* of God. These *doctrines* are *unalterable* and *non-negotiable*...they *cannot be compromised* in any way.

I. A HIGH VIEW OF GOD: *Our focus...our surrender...our exaltation...bond-servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

It is *absolutely essential* that the church *comprehends* that they are God's *creation...established* for the *glory of God*. I fear that the church in America has *descended* from that lofty *purpose* and has *focused* instead on *humanity*...only concerned with *meeting the needs of itself*. The church has been reduced from an *organism* that emphasizes *knowing* and *glorifying* God to an *organization* that focuses on *man's felt needs...man's desires...and man's preferences*.

Sovereign...God exercising power over His creation.

Lordship...Master...Savior...Lord...

"...God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

~Philippians 2:9-11

We must take God *seriously* and *exalt* Him...we must not have a *man-centered* church. Yes, we are to *reach out* to people in the *love* of Christ...and help *meet needs*, but God is still to be the *focus* of our *worship* and our *life*.

II. THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE:

The basis and essence of our faith.

One of the *worst assaults* on God's Word comes from people who say they *believe* the Bible but either *don't know* what it *teaches* or are *unwilling* to *accept it* as their *authority*. How can one *believe* what they *don't know*?

- **Truth...**(*relative* vs. *absolute truth*). *Absolute truth* is *what God says*...and since the words of the Bible are *God's words*, and since God *cannot lie* or *speak falsely*, it's correct to conclude that there is *no untruthfulness* or *error* in any part of the words of Scripture.

"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."

~John 17:17

- **Inspiration...**literally means *God breathed*. It's a term referring to the fact that the words of Scripture are *spoken by God*. God *spoken (breathed)*...man *penned*.
"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

~II Timothy 3:16-17

- **Inerrant...**the idea that Scripture in the original manuscripts *does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact or truth*...that Scripture contains *no errors* when written in its original form.

"Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him."

~Proverbs 30:5

- **Infallible...dependable...reliable...unfailing...**it *makes no mistakes*. The idea that Scripture is *not able to lead us astray* in matters of *faith* and *practice*.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul...”

~Psalm 19:7

- **Authoritative**...the idea that Scripture is the *highest authority* in one’s *life*...an *authority* that *cannot be disproved* by *appeal* to any *higher authority*. God is the *final authority* (**Galatians 3:10**).

“The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.”

~Psalm 12:6

- **Complete**...nothing needs to be *added* or *taken away*.

“Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”

~Proverbs 30:6

“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

~Revelation 22:18-19

- **Sufficient**...the idea that Scripture *contains all the words of God that He intended His people to have at each stage of redemptive history*...and that it now contains all the words of God we *need for salvation*...for *trusting Him* perfectly...and for *obeying Him* perfectly. It *equips* us for every *good work* (**II Timothy 3:16-17**)
- **Effective**...effective in *overcoming temptation* and *sin*. Scripture gives guidance to *face issues in life* and *leads us to live the victorious Christian life*. It *directs us to victory* that *overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil* (**I John 5:4**). It *transforms lives* (**Isaiah 55:11**).

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

~Hebrews 4:12

III. SOUND DOCTRINE: *The Foundation*

The third essential that a church must have is *sound doctrine*. Many Christians today are *vague* about *doctrine*. We need *truths* that we can *hold onto*...*truths* to *build our lives on*...*truths* that are our *foundation of faith*.

“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; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.”

~Ephesians 4:14-15

God the Father	Jesus Christ	Holy Spirit
Trinity	Bible	Man
Fall of Man	Sin	Salvation
Eternal Security	The Church	Baptism
Evangelism	Satan	End Times
Creation	Virgin Birth	Deity of Christ
Physical Resurrection	Second Coming of Christ	
Substitutionary Death	Incarnation of Christ	

Caution towards *bad doctrine*...*false teachers*...

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.”

~II Timothy 4:2

“Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings...”

~Hebrews 13:9a

“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”

~I Timothy 6:3-5

IV. PERSONAL HOLINESS: *Our Witness and Testimony*

Colossians 3:1-17

Christians are called to live a *pure life*...a life of *holiness* ...and we *can't compromise* that. But many Christians just aren't as concerned about *personal holiness* as they should be. We can't live *semi-committed* Christian lives and still expect to *personally* and *corporately experience* God.

God is *more concerned* with our *holiness* than even our *happiness*! God is *not concerned* with making us *happy*... He's *concerned* with making us *holy*, which in return brings us *joy*.

God is *more concerned* with our *character* than with our *works*! Ie. Who we *are* instead of what we *are doing*! God is *more concerned* with your *character* than He is with your *career*!

“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all

your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’.”

~I Peter 1:14-16

V. SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY: *Our Protection*

A church must understand that *Christ is the Head of His Church* (**Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15**) and that He *mediates His rule* in the church through *godly pastors* and *elders* (**I Thessalonians 5:13-14**) (**Hebrews 13:7, 17**).

An *umbrella of protection*...

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

~Hebrews 13:17

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

~I Thessalonians 5:12-13

In conclusion...to sum it all up...

For the church to be *effective* as the **Body of Christ**, it must have the *right framework*. It must have a *high view of God*...it must *worship* and *exalt* God. The pursuit of a church should have a *high view of Scripture* and a *commitment to teaching sound doctrine*.

And for the church to be the **Bride of Christ**, the people of a church should also seek *personal holiness* and *submit* their souls to the care of those the Lord has placed over them as *spiritual authorities*.