

“Why the Church” - Week 2

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2024 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Why the Church”

Last week, we began a sermon series entitled, Why the Church? This series examines some core traits and components that shape a local gathering of believers, often called a church. Why this series? Because culture, even some who claim to be people of faith, are taking aim at the church and making blanket statements, lumping all churches together, in their tearing apart the name of the church. Unfortunately, churches and church leadership are giving those opposed to the local church plenty of ammunition to use in undermining the effectiveness of the local church. While no local church gathering is perfect because it comprises imperfect people, we must strive to keep essential traits of the church in front of us, holding them tightly, defending, and standing upon them. In this series, we hope to open the box of what is the church, why the church, and look at God’s word as our instructions for the local body of believers, and allow scripture to guide us to put the pieces together. Last week, we began by defining the local church as follows: “The church is a beautiful collection of messy people who have experienced the grace and truth of God through faith in Jesus Christ and desire to communicate this good news to the world.” This week, we will begin to examine one of the core components of the church, a trait, a characteristic, and a crucial piece of the foundation of the local church: Biblical preaching and teaching.

Scripture - 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

All Scripture Is Breathed Out by God - 2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Preach the Word - 2 Timothy 4:1-5

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; John 15:3; Ephesians 2:11-22; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:12-16

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Definitions of the Church: The church is a beautiful collection of messy people who have experienced the grace and truth of God through faith in Jesus Christ and desire to communicate this good news to the world." ~Anonymous

Ephesians 2:1-22 - Here we see the core truth of the church: A belief in Jesus Christ binds us together.

- No longer spiritual strangers
- Fellow citizens
- Members of the household of God
- Built on the early leaders of the church
- Jesus Christ is the cornerstone: The church rises and falls on our belief and trust in Jesus.
- The church is joined together through Jesus Christ.

The church is comprised of people who were spiritual strangers but, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, are children of God and a part of His family. (Ephesians 2:22)

Biblical preaching is more than just speaking and listening.

"Biblical preaching is God speaking in the power of His Spirit about His Son from His word through a man." ~ Thabiti Anyabwile, How Do You Define Preaching

Biblical preaching involves the preparation of the preacher and the hearer, but it relies on the Spirit of God to work in the lives of both.

The Role of the Hearer

- Eliminate distractions.
- Pray before the service begins.
- Pray for the pastor speaking that day.
- Ask God to speak to you through His word.
- Participate in worship.
- Bring a Bible and open it.
- Don't run late.
- Take notes.
- Expect God to move.

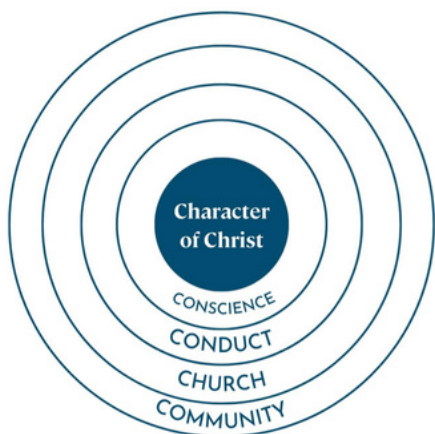
No pastor is the authority on Sunday mornings. God's Word, transforming us through His word, is the authority. However, we also believe God still speaks through His word, His Spirit, by the voices of faithful stewards.

Key Thoughts

A church built on biblical preaching should stand in awe and reverence for God's word. A key component of Biblical Preaching is believing God's Word forms and shapes this community of believers. Biblical preaching must rely upon a belief and trust in God's word.

"Every type of destruction that human philosophy, human science, human reason, human art, human cunning, human force and human brutality [can] bring to bear against a book has been brought to bear against this Book . . . and yet the Bible stands absolutely unshaken today. At times almost all the wise and great thinkers of the earth have been pitted against the Bible.... Yet [the Bible] has stood." ~ R.A. Torrey, *The Divine Origin of the Bible*, p. 32

Biblical preaching leads to transformation through the truths found in God's word. God's word teaches us. God's word convicts us. God's word corrects us. God's word trains us in righteousness. God's word completes us. (2 Timothy 2:16-17)



Inside: Character of Christ - When our character becomes more like Christ, our conscience follows.

Second Circle: Conscience - As we fill up our minds with things of God and his word, our minds begin to aim at a different target. How we think about our family, our work, and our daily decisions align more with that of scripture.

Third Circle: Conduct - Once the word of God sinks into our hearts, it begins to shape our conduct.

Fourth Circle: Church - When we join together in worship, we are not doing so as individuals, but rather as a bible community. Biblical preaching is not always going to provide a three-step fix for what troubles us. But biblical preaching in a gathering of believers, places us with a group of people, whom we should grow in trust and unity, therefore walking with each other through these moments and troubles, toward transformation. Transformation then leads us to impact our community.

Fifth Circle: Community - The church must look and behave distinctively different in our community because we have been transformed by God's word, and that word has been provided for us through biblical preaching and teaching.

Key Thoughts

For the preacher in biblical preaching:

- Is God pleased with my treatment of His Word?
- Were my motives pure in preparation?
- Is God pleased with my attitude and care for the church I am shepherding?

For the listener in biblical listening:

- Have I surrendered to Christ?
- Am I continuing to place myself under biblical teaching?
- Is my conscience and conduct shifting as a result of listening to God's word being preached?

Reflect & Respond

When it comes to biblical preaching, do you come ready to listen? What from the list on page 3, "Role of the Hearer", do you struggle with the most? What can you do to change this in order to become a better hearer?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Can you think of an example of how a passage of scripture has benefited you in one of these ways?

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5. Are the teachers that you regularly listen to adhering to sound and biblical teaching? How do you guard against falling into false teaching? Are you aware of false teaching when you see or hear it?

Looking at the Circle Graphic and description on page 4. What layer of this circle do you most struggle with or need to grow in?

Pray for those in preaching and teaching roles at Rich Fork.

Pray for those listening to come prepared for God's word.

Pray that we all desire, as a church, to be transformed by God's word.

As we work through this series, please know that you have **FREE access** to the book Twelve Traits: Embracing God's Design for the Church, by David Platt, which this series is taken from. You can find and download this short book for free at the link below and we encourage you to read through this with us throughout the series.

https://radical-net-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/images/20220308095847/12Traits_Web.pdf