

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
ECCLESIOLOGY
THE STUDY OF THE CHURCH
PART 3

This morning, in our series Foundation of Faith we are continuing to look at ecclesiology or the study of the church. In our previous study we looked at what the church is and we said that: ***THE CHURCH IS BELIEVERS JOINED TO CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL BODY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE CHURCH IS INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE PLACED THEIR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE CHURCH ON THE EARTH IS JOINED TO A LOCAL BODY OF BELIEVERS WHO MEET REGULARLY, THE CHURCH IS FOR EQUIPPING FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY AND EDIFICATION, and THE CHURCH IS A PLACE OF WORSHIP AND OBSERVING ORDINANCES.***

In our last study we looked at what the Universal Church is all about and we said that the Universal Church or the Invisible Church is made up of all believers, living and in heaven. We then moved on to look at the Visible Church which is made of up believers and unbelievers and we see that in every church today. There are those who believe and those that don't or we might say that there are tares among the wheat.

Now it is important to understand some of the marks of the Visible Church and we said that these marks were: ***JOY, HOLINESS, TRUTH, MISSION, UNITY, and LOVE.*** We saw how all these marks really flow out of love. If you take love out of any of these you are in trouble.

Let's start out with **JOY**, the first one we looked at this morning. If you subtract love from joy you end up with hedonism, self-indulgence or an exuberance in life and its pleasures but without the sanctifying joy found in a relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The next one we looked at was **HOLINESS** and this too is important. But, if you take love from holiness you find self-righteousness, the kind of self-contentment that characterized the Pharisees of Christ's day. You begin to look down upon others because you have lifted yourself up so high. It is all about you.

What about **TRUTH**? That is the next one we looked at. How does that work if we take love from truth? If you take love from truth you have a bitter orthodoxy, the kind of teaching which is right but which does not win anybody. It is harsh, it is cold, it is unloving!

Next we looked at the **MISSION** of the church and this too applies here. You see, if you take love from mission you have imperialism, colonialism in ecclesiastical garb. It is a form of godliness but it is denying its power, the power that comes from God. You may be all dressed up but there is no place for you to go!

And then we looked at **UNITY** and this too is important. You see, if you take love from unity what ends up happening is you soon have tyranny, oppression, domination. Tyranny develops in a hierarchical church where there is no compassion for people or desire to involve them in the decision-making process.

Obviously that is not good, that is not what we are to do. Let's turn it around and see what we do have if we add **LOVE** to these marks or characters.

If you have love for God the Father you have joy in what God has done for us.

If you have love for the Lord Jesus Christ and know that one day you will see Him again, it will lead to holiness. I John 3:3.

If you have love for His Word then you will have a deepening desire to grow in Him and you will hunger and thirst to know God through His Word.

If you have a love for this world, for the people of this world it will cause us to bring the Gospel message to the lost, it is our mission!

And if you have a love for our brothers and sisters in Christ then we will find unity with each other.

That is what love will do and it is obviously important for us, the Church!

This morning we are continuing to look at the church and see what it is all about. The focus is going to be the mission of the church, what it is suppose to be about. Now before we get to that let me share this story with you because it will help to set the stage for what we will be looking at this morning regarding the church. And keep in mind that the church is not a building or organization, but it is people, believers and it is a living organism! We are told,

A man was being tailgated by a stressed out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, finger printed, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally . . . I assumed you had stolen the car."

- Source Unknown

Funny story but it does drive home the point that people are watching us, what the church you might say is doing, what the church is saying and from that they come to their conclusions about the God we serve. Thus, as a body of believers we need to live out our faith in a way that would honor the Lord and bless the body of Christ!

Now as we look at the mission of the church I think Paul lays it out for us in I Timothy 3:14-16 as he wrote, **“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.”**

Now before we get to the mission of the church, let me share with you three points that Paul makes regarding what the church is. First of all Paul says that the church is the **HOUSE OF GOD** in I Timothy 3:15a. The church is not a building or organization but it is a living organism made up of all Christians in the world, but here, I believe Paul is speaking of the local churches, the local houses of God!

I do realize for some, church, gathering together with the family of God is not really a priority in their life. They allow things to interfere with coming together as a body of believers to worship God. I can't imagine doing that. Now some may say, “Hey, you're the pastor, you have to be here!” True, I may have a little more incentive than you because if I don't show up, it will affect all of you, everyone will notice! And the reality is, I don't have to be here, I love to be here, I love to gather together with the family of God to worship God and study His Word. But also, if you are part of the body of Christ and you are, if you don't show up doesn't that affect the body of Christ also? You bet it does! So this is important.

Maybe you heard of this story about the church that was for fanatics. We are told:

I was a supply preacher for a small town Texas Church, coming in early Sunday, preaching a sermon to the congregation, and then leaving after lunch. Arriving early one Sunday I sat down at a local donut shop, opened my Bible and went over my sermon notes.

A man was sitting down the counter from me and said, "You a preacher or something?"

I replied, "Yes I preach at the Christian Church here in town."

He got excited and said, "Hey, I'm a member of that church."

The church was small and I knew all the regulars so I said, "I've been preaching there for about three months and I've never seen you there."

He looked at me kinda strange and said, "I said I was a member of that church. I never said I was fanatical about it."

- Source Unknown

We laugh at that but is there some truth to it? Are we members of a local church because we are card-carrying members or because we are actively involved in the church, the family that God has brought together here in Manitowoc? Some may view this as fanatical but I just see it as a part of my life and so did the early church.

In Acts 2:42-47 we are told, **“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”**

Notice the fellowship they had was centered upon the Lord. I love to gather together for fellowship. I love coming together to study God's Word, to worship the Lord, to share in communion as a body of believers and I hope you also enjoy it. Paul, in Hebrews 10:25 said, **“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”** Notice, for some believers it had become a habit not to fellowship together, to worship the Lord and study His Word and Paul tells them and us that is the wrong attitude to have. As I have said, if you miss coming to church then there is something that another part of the local body will have to do because you are not there!

You see, as part of the family of God we are to gather together, a kind of family reunion that we have often. I love seeing how many of you stick around after service to fellowship with each other, pray with each other, have food in back with each other. That is a blessing to see and it is how the body of Christ is to function, we are all part of His body! Now, if you are struggling in this area just ask God to help you and then step out and do it and you will be blessed. God says that He inhabits the praises of His people and He is here with us as a body of believers and individually! (Psalm 22:3). ***The Church is the House of God!***

Paul also says that the church is the ***PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF THE TRUTH*** in I Timothy 3:15b. You see, not only does the church have God's truth but also it is the vessel that God uses to proclaim it to the world! A pillar is a supporting structure and we hold up God's Word to the people of this world. The foundation is also a supporting structure and this world rests upon one of two foundations, the truth or the lie, but if the foundation is weak, the structure will be unstable. Thus, to bring stability to the people of this world, we need to bring them the truths of God that are found in the Word of God! There is no other truth that the church needs than what is found in the Word of God and that is where many have gone astray. They have brought the philosophies of this world into the church and the church is weakened by it. We stand strong because of God's Word, it is the truth and apart from that strong foundation we are in trouble!

Now, as you look at the church, with all its weaknesses, all its frailties, all its carnality, it is hard to imagine we can have any impact on anyone. I know, especially for myself, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture because I know what I am like, my weaknesses. But folks, if it was all about what we can do, we might as well give up right now because in the end, we won't succeed!

“What? How can you say that?” Simply, because we can't do it without the Lord, Jesus said that in John chapter 15 that apart from Him we can do nothing that He would accept, no matter how successful in the eyes of the world it may be! Paul, tells us in I Corinthians 1:18-31, **“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and**

the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption - that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.'"

Do you see that? God uses those who are not too wise, not too strong, not too noble but has taken the foolish things of this world to put to shame those who are wise in their own eyes so that the Lord can receive the glory. You see, in Christ we have obtained the wisdom of God, the sanctification of God, and the redemption of God so that our boasting is not in us, but in the Lord!

Yes, we may look like Barney Fife from the Andy Griffith show, not looking too impressive, only carrying one bullet, but our Lord enables us to do great things, mighty things for Him just as Andy helped Barney out and Barney thought it was all his work, and we at times do the same! May we not lose sight of what God is doing in us and through us for His glory and without Him we can do nothing. It is the Lord who enables us and thus, He should get the glory!

Thus, as a local church we must be faithful to preserve the truth, preach the truth and put into practice the truth so that as people look at our faith, they see that it is real! One of the problems in the church today is that the Word of God is not being taught as it should, teachers rightly dividing the Word and teaching it. They tend to make it say what they want it to say, but not what God has said. Jesus said in John 17:17, "**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**" *The Church is the Pillar and Foundation of the Truth!*

And lastly Paul tells us that the church is the ***BODY OF CHRIST*** in I Timothy 3:16. Here is a picture of the ministry of Jesus Christ. God became flesh and dwelt among us in the incarnation. Throughout His life – His Baptism, Transfiguration, and death we see the Holy Spirit showing us He was without sin. We also see angels at His birth, during His earthly ministry, in the Garden of Gethsemane, at His resurrection and when He was received up in glory. He not only taught the Jews of Salvation in Him but also the Gentiles and many believed. And after his death and resurrection He was received up in glory!

What does that have to do with us? Everything! You see, we are the body of Christ. We have His hands to minister and touch people's lives with. We are His feet to travel the highways and byways compelling men to come into the kingdom of God, bringing to them the Gospel message. We are His lips to speak forth the Gospel message. We are His ears to listen to the cries of people, to be sensitive to their hurt and minister to them the love of God. The mystery of godliness is that God is going to use man to do His work, to bring forth the Gospel message to a lost and dying world!

Like the human body which is made up of many different parts, many different members, so too is the local church. And within the church God has gifted every person with a gift to be used in the body of Christ. Thus, a healthy body is one that is working together and an unhealthy body is one where only a few are working! The same is true in the church.

Thus, as the church moves forward, speaking the Gospel message, we see lives transformed by the power of God. You see, we continue the Work that He started! Jesus said in John 14:12-14, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”** Not greater in ability, Jesus raised people from the dead, but greater in scope because we are part of the body of Christ, we can cover the world while Jesus, in His earthly ministry, could only be in one place at a time. And so we are finishing the work of Christ here on earth, God is using us as His instruments to work through. ***The Church is the Body of Christ!***

And so we have seen that The Church is The House of God, The Pillar and Foundation of the Truth, and The Body of Christ. If we begin to lose sight of how we are to conduct ourselves, how the church is to function, then we are moving towards apostasy and of course, that is dangerous and we are seeing that happen in many churches today. Now let’s move on to the mission of the church, and, as you will see, this too is very important for us to understand, it flows right out of what we have been talking about so far this morning.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

1. TO GLORIFY GOD

Now this one may seem so obvious to you, that the mission of the church is to glorify God, and I guess it is obvious but many times that is missing in the church! What do I mean by that? I mean that we can become so focused on self within the church that we leave God out. We have the money, the resources, the talented people, the programs, the worship team that is perfect, we have this and we have that and yet where is the Lord in all of that?

Let me show you what can happen in one of the letters that Jesus wrote to the seven churches in Asia Minor. In Revelation 3:15-20 Jesus wrote to the church in Laodicea and said, **“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked - I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”**”

The church in Laodicea had everything except the Lord. They were self-sufficient and they did not even see that they were lukewarm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked! We don't come to church because we want to satisfy some need in our life, look for some mate, hear a great band, be entertained by a great show, we gather together to worship the Lord, to glorify Him! And you know what happens as you do that? You are blessed by God; He will meet your needs, not your wants. That is just the way our Lord works. But, if you come to church because you want something, you are coming for the wrong reason. You come to glorify God and hear from Him and you will be blessed!

In regards to worship, listen to what A. W. Tozer had to say:

What is worship? Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that Majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call Our Father Which Are in Heaven.

- A. W. Tozer, quoted in D. J. Fant,
A. W. Tozer, Christian Publications,
1964, p. 90

Also, regarding worship, we are told:

Barclay quotes William Temple, the renowned archbishop of Canterbury, as defining worship as quickening the conscience by the holiness of God, feeding the mind with the truth of God, purging the imagination by the beauty of God, opening the heart to the love of God, and devoting the will to the purpose of God.

- R. Mounce, Matthew, p. 151

You see, the focus is upon God and as we bow down before Him He blesses us with His presence in our lives. Why is worship so important? Because it is the primary reason that God has created us and redeemed us, that we would worship Him. In Revelation 4:11 we are told, and this is from the King James Version of the Bible, **“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”** We were created for *HIS* good pleasure and not *OURS!* And the wonderful thing here is that if we do what we were created for, we are blessed, we find that joy, that satisfaction that is only found in the Lord. When we don’t, well we are not joyful; we are not satisfied because we are not doing what we were created for in the first place!

Remember what Jesus said in John 4:23-24, **“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”** Thus, if worship is the ultimate priority of the Christian life, we need to understand what true Biblical worship is all about.

We are going to spend some time looking at what true Biblical worship is all about and the reason again is because many have lost the focus of what worship is, that we are to glorify God. They many times think it is singing songs, but as you will see it is far more than just signing songs! Also remember what the Devil wants, he wants to be worshiped as God is and thus, if he can get us off course in our worship of God, even if we are worshiping self, then he has accomplished what he wants! May we wake up and worship the true and living God not because we have to but because He is worthy of our praises and we get to worship Him!

A. Reverence

The first aspect we are going to look at is Reverence and to do that we need to first understand what Biblical worship is all about. To do that we can look at the Greek word that is translated into our English word, “**worship.**” The Greek word is PROSKUENO and it literally means, “to kiss toward.” You see, there was the ancient custom of kissing the hand of a superior such as a king. Also, it speaks of bowing down before a superior being with a sense of respect, reverence, awe, and homage. Thus, the true worship of God is seen in our reverence towards Him as we bow before Him. You see, He is God and He therefore deserves our worship!

It is amazing the things that we bow down to today, which are nothing more than idols in our lives. People bow down before their jobs, sports, money, cars, and yes, even motorcycles and entertainment and yet, when it comes time to bow down before God, they just don't have the time or energy to do so! I remember when we were in Jamaica and it is obviously Bob Marley country down there. We were in this store area that had this garden in the middle of it and there was this big statue of Bob Marley and to my shock here was this older couple and the man was taking a picture of his wife bowing down before and worshipping this Bob Marley statue! She had her hands lifted up and then brought them down, it was crazy! You are worshipping a man who abused drugs and died of a brain tumor! It was a sad picture in deed! Who are you going to worship, the creator of heaven and earth or His creation? It seems so obvious and yet many today worship the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever! You see the focus needs to be the true and living God and the priorities in our life need to be focused on Him because He deserves our worship!

B. Sacrifice

The next point we will be looking at in regards to worship is that of sacrifice.

Now in studying the Scriptures there is the law of first mention, which basically states that the first time a word is used in the Scriptures it sets the tone for what that word is all about. Do you know where in the Bible we see the word “**worship**” first used?

Interestingly enough it is found in the book of Genesis, the book of beginnings and it is seen in the story of Abraham and his son Isaac. You know the story in Genesis chapter 22. God tells Abraham to take his only son to a mountain He has specified and offer him as a sacrifice unto God. Now this was a beautiful picture of what our heavenly Father would do some 2,000 years later on that same mountain as He offered His only begotten Son to pay for the sins of the world. Also, you need to keep in mind that Abraham did not go through with the sacrifice of his son; God stopped him and provided an animal for a sacrifice.

What I want you to see is what is said in Genesis 22:5, “**And Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.’**” You see, worship, true Biblical worship is not only seen in reverence towards God, but it will cost us something, it will be a sacrifice unto Him!

Paul, in Romans 12:1 put it like this, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”** That phrase, **“reasonable service”** in the Greek literally means **“spiritual worship.”** The New International Version translates this verse like this, **“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.”** You see, our lives are like a sacrifice unto God, a living sacrifice unto Him. It is a sweet smelling sacrifice that ascends to the throne of God. But, do you know what the only problem is with a living sacrifice? It can and often does get up off the altar of sacrifice and runs away! Thus, we need to understand that true worship will cost us something! We need to be willing to lay our lives down for Him no matter the cost!

Do we see other examples in the Scriptures besides the offering of Isaac by Abraham? You bet we do and the one in II Samuel chapter 24 fits in perfectly with what we are discussing right now. In that chapter David does a foolish thing and he numbers the people, something that God did not want him to do. And God is angry and we are told in II Samuel 24:11-13, **“Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ‘Go and tell David, “Thus says the LORD: ‘I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.’”’ So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, ‘Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me.’”**

And David falls upon the mercy of God and chooses the plague by the Lord and in this judgment seventy thousand men died. And as the angel was preparing to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord prevented this and this angel of the Lord stopped at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David repents of his sin before God and Gad the Seer comes to David and tells David to build an altar unto God on this spot, the threshing floor of Araunah.

And in II Samuel chapter 24, beginning in verse 20 we are told, **“Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. Then Araunah said, ‘Why has my lord the king come to his servant?’ And David said, ‘To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.’ Now Araunah said to David, ‘Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king.’ And Araunah said to the king, ‘May the LORD your God accept you.’ Then the king said to Araunah, ‘No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.’ So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.”** II Samuel 24:20-25.

Here is a perfect example that the worship of the Lord is a sacrifice unto Him, it will cost you something. It may cost you your time, your possessions, positions in the work place; it may even cost you money and-so-on. But to be true worship, it will be a sacrifice!

Now, in saying that, let me also stress this point. God will not accept a sacrifice with a heart that is wrong. Again in Amos chapter 5 we are told, **“I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.”** Amos 5:20-21.

I think that is very clear, if your heart is not right, God will not accept your sacrifice you have offered to Him. It is as G. Campbell Morgan said, “God seeks and values the gifts we bring Him – gifts of praise, thanksgiving and service, and material offerings. In all such giving at the altar we enter into the highest experiences of fellowship. But the gift is acceptable to God in the measure to which the one who offers it is in fellowship with Him in character and conduct; and the test of this is in our relationships with our fellow men. We are thus charged to postpone giving to God until right relationships are established with others. Could the neglect of this be the explanation of the barrenness of our worship? (Matt 5:24).”

Worship, the worship of God will cost you something, it should or is it really worship?

C. Praise

The next aspect in regard's to worship is that of praise and listen carefully to what Paul admonishes us to do in Hebrews 13:15, "**Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.**" We are to praise God with our lips. Notice also that it is the "**sacrifice of praise**" that we offer unto God. You see, as you sing out with joy to the Lord, as you praise Him for who He is, some will not like it and they may come against what you are doing. That should not stop us. Think about in a restaurant when you give thanks and praise unto God for the food that He has provided for you, will everyone appreciate that? No, but don't let that stop you. I am always amazed at those who watch what we are doing and as they leave they say they were blessed when they saw us pray!

Paul in Colossians 3:16 put it this way, "**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**" Our praise of God should be continual; in good times and in bad times we should thank Him and praise Him for being our God!

Turn with me to Psalm 150 and let's read through this Psalm of praise unto the Lord. We are told, "**Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!**"

Psalm 150:1-6.

First of all, where is God? He is in His sanctuary, in heaven. Why are we to praise God? We are to praise God for all He has done – His mighty acts. We are to praise God according to what? We are to praise God according to His greatness – He is awesome, He is perfect, He is gracious, He is holy and-so-on. What are we to praise God with? Now this is interesting. We are to praise God with the sound of a trumpet, with a lute and harp. We need some more worship instruments. We are to praise Him with timbrel and dance, with stringed instruments. There you go Art, Brian and Travis, not the dance, but the stringed instruments! Now try to get that picture out of your mind, the boys dancing! We are to praise Him with flutes and loud cymbals and with crashing cymbals – bang away Mickey! Again, no dancing Mickey! Lastly, who should praise the Lord? Everything that has breath is to praise the Lord. As I look around here this morning some of you look tired, but I don't think I've killed any of you. You are all still breathing and thus, if you have breath in you then you are to praise the Lord by the words, by the songs you sing, by the music that comes from your life.

D. *Giving*

Now here is one that you might not have thought of but our giving is a form of worship unto God. In Philippians 4:15-18 Paul tells us, **“Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”**

Paul says that this support for his ministry, this gift of money the church at Philippi sent him was a sweet smelling aroma unto God; it was an acceptable sacrifice that was pleasing to God!

Now the reason we give to the Lord is not to get something back, but it is done out of love. In fact, all we have comes from Him and we are just giving to Him what He has entrusted to us. And folks, this is not just speaking of money here, but our time, our talents, our gifts that we can give to the Lord by ministering to the body of Christ. I am so thankful here at Calvary Chapel that so many of you use the resources that God has given to you to edify the body of Christ. And yes, it is a sacrifice, but you do so willingly, freely.

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 9:6-7, **“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”** Our giving is a form of worship unto God!

E. Converts

Did you realize that winning people to Christ is a form of spiritual worship unto God? It is as Paul tells us in Romans 15:16, **“that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”** When Paul says that his **“offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable,”** he is saying that these converts he has won to Christ is a form of worship unto God!

We see this illustrated for us in Revelation 7:9-10 where we are told, **“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”** This is some of the fruit of the witnessing of these 144,000 Jewish witnesses for Christ during the Tribulation Period. It is their worship unto God. Now, when this happens, as these saved, martyred Tribulation Saints stand before the throne of God, do you know what takes place in heaven? The worship of God for the salvation of these saints! You see, they did not worship these 144,000 for they were just the instruments that God used. God alone deserves our worship!

We see a great illustration of this in Luke chapter 15, beginning in verse 4 where we are told, **“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”** Luke 15:4-7.

You see, all heaven breaks forth with praise unto God for one sinner that repents and gets saved, can you imagine the noise when this innumerable number of Tribulation sinners becomes saints! And so, the conversion of a sinner to a saint as we share the Gospel message with the lost is a form of worship unto God!

E. Loving the body of Christ

And lastly this morning, our spiritual worship is seen as we love the body of Christ, our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Look at Romans 14:14-23 for a minute and you will see what I mean. Paul tells us, **“I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”**

In other words, a form of worship unto God is ministering to others in the body of Christ, sacrificing your life for them. There is no jockeying for positions, no who is better than another, but as Paul said in Philippians 2:3-4, **“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”** That should be our hearts desire and if it is, it is not only head knowledge but this is actively seen in our lives, then this is a form of worship unto God.

Paul put it this way in Galatians 5:13-15, **“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”** And folks, this is not an option. And look at how ugly it is when we are fighting; we are like cannibals devouring each other.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:23-24, **“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”** You see, if you have a problem with someone in the body of Christ, you better deal with it!

Now, why is this so hard for us to do? The reason is simple. We let pride, because we must be right, because we refuse to submit to one another in the fear of the Lord, get in the way. And the end result is we see all kinds of fighting in the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:21). Again, we must surrender to God and submit to His will and love the brethren.

Let me take you back to Romans chapter 14 for a minute. In verse 18 the word “**serves**” is the Greek word LATREO and it is often translated in the New Testament as “**worship.**” Thus, Paul is saying that if we treat our family in Christ with love by putting their needs above our own then that is a form of acceptable worship that is well pleasing to God! Folks, that is what God desires of us, that we rally around each other, that we love each other, because, as we do we are worshiping Him!

And so, we have seen this morning that true Biblical worship is – **REVERENCE, SACRIFICE, PRAISE, GIVING, CONVERTS, and LOVE TOWARDS OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST.**

We will continue with this study of the mission of the church next time but I hope you have seen this morning the importance of the church. We have seen this morning that the mission of the church is to **GLORIFY GOD** and this is done through worship, the worship of God. And this worship is manifested in several different ways. It is seen in **OUR REVERENCE OF GOD, OUR SACRIFICE UNTO GOD, OUR PRAISE OF GOD, OUR GIVING TO GOD, OUR CONVERTS WE BRING UNTO GOD, and OUR LOVING THE BODY OF CHRIST!** That is what we are to be because the church is the **HOUSE OF GOD, THE PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH** and we are **THE BODY OF CHRIST!** May we not lose sight of that fact, may our focus be upwards upon the Lord and manifested in and through our lives to bring glory and honor to Him!