

Marks of a Good Church

Lesson 22

Memorize (Select One) –

- ✓ Acts 2:42 – They were continually devoting themselves to the Apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- ✓ Galatians 6:10 – So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

“The wisdom you need to choose a church is a little like the wisdom a person needs to choose a spouse. For example, its not wrong for a woman to want to marry a man with blonde hair who likes Italian food and hiking. But it would be foolish to place these preferences over the priority of his being truly converted and growing in godliness. In the same way, its not wrong to want a church with a lot of people your age or to prefer a certain style of worship music – but these are secondary concerns. The criteria God’s Word gives is the ‘must have’ list.” – J. Harris [Stop Dating the Church]

Because false teachers, false prophets, and unbiblical doctrines have always plagued the church, it is therefore all the more important that you be able to identify the biblical characteristics of a good church. A bad church does not display a warning label, “This church may be hazardous to your spiritual health.” A discerning Christian will have a number of questions in mind when seeking a church home. Here are several of the primary questions that must be considered:

I. **Is this church where God’s Word is clearly and faithfully taught?**

- ◆ What was the solemn charge that Paul gave to Pastor Timothy in II Timothy 4:1 & 2?

- ◆ Systematic Bible exposition is where the Bible is explained and its relevance related to your life. Faithful teaching conveys with clarity; what the Bible says, what the Bible means and how the Bible works in your life.

- ◆ Fill in the blanks. “All Scripture is inspired by God and _____ for _____, for _____, for _____, for _____ in _____” (II Timothy 3:16).

II. Is this church where sound doctrine really matters?

- ◆ What does the Bible predict will be characteristic of many in our day?
- ◆ Summarize II Timothy 4:3 in your own words:

- ◆ A good church is where great foundational doctrines will be regularly referred to and explained. Doctrines such as justification, sanctification, glorification, preservation of the saints, atonement, propitiation, redemption, election, attributes of God, etc.

III. Is this church where a high view of God is evident?

- ◆ According to Jeremiah 9:23 & 24, what is the best boast a believer can make? _____
- ◆ A good church will stretch you in your theology and emphasize man’s purpose of bringing glory to God. Beware of the church that is man centered with constant teaching or formulas that depict God as a geni who exists to meet your every wish.

IV. Is this church where the Gospel is concise and proclaimed?

- ◆ How is the primacy of the Gospel expressed in I Cor. 15:3a?

- ◆ In Galatians 1:8 & 9, what does Paul pronounce upon those who pervert the Gospel?

- ◆ A good church is where the way of salvation is concise as to the person and work of Christ. It is a church where faith alone in the atoning work of Christ is the sole means of conversion.

V. Is this church where evangelism is emphasized and practiced?

- ◆ According to Acts 1:8, for what purpose is the believer empowered by the Holy Spirit? _____
- ◆ Based upon Romans 1:16, describe Paul's attitude toward the Gospel.

- ◆ In Luke 24:46 & 47, what did Jesus say should be proclaimed to all nations?

- ◆ To what extent should the Christian be prepared to speak of Christ according to I Peter 3:15? _____

VI. Is this a church that exhibits a servant's atmosphere?

- ◆ Where the Word is taught and saints are growing there will be people serving.
- ◆ Finish the following from Galatians 5:13, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love _____."

VII. Is this a church where personal growth and obedience is stressed?

- ◆ What is the clear command of II Peter 3:18?

- ◆ What did Jesus say would show our love for Him (John 14:15)?

- ◆ A good church will stress progressive sanctification with the putting _____ of the _____ man habits and the putting _____ of the _____ man (Ephesians 4:22-24).

VIII. Is this a church committed to the sufficiency of the Scriptures?

- ◆ A good church is where preaching and teaching is done under the presupposition that God has given to us a Bible with answers for life’s questions and problems. This truth is the intent of the Holy Spirit’s statement in II Peter 1:3 where we are clearly told that God has “granted to us _____ pertaining to life and Godliness.”
- ◆ A good church will not substitute heart issues with psychological jargon (please read Matt. 15:19), or label sin as a disease.
- ◆ The Psalmist declared the sufficiency of God’s wisdom when he said, “The law of the Lord is _____, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is _____, making wise the simple.” (Psalm 19:7)

IX. Is this a church where leaders are characterized by authentic humility and proven integrity?

Godly leadership is where character is of higher importance than title, position, or outward success.

- ◆ Read Titus 1:6-9 and list some of the character qualities of a leader in the church: _____

- ◆ According to III John 9 & 10, what will mark those who do not qualify for leadership? _____

X. Is this a church where people display love for one another?

- ◆ Mutual commitment to love one another will be more than words in a good church. The New Testament calls saints to no less than 30 “one anothers” that are all demonstrations of love.
- ◆ Accord to II Thessalonians 1:3, what will accompany growth in faith?

XI. Is this a church that is willing to confront the wayward?

- ◆ Many churches preach against sin but fail to confront. God says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Proverbs 27:6), and He commands us to speak the truth in love.
- ◆ Fill in the following from I Thessalonians 5:14: “We urge you, brethren, _____ the _____, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be _____ with everyone.”
- ◆ “Look for a church that will not only welcome you into membership, but will lovingly hold you to your commitments as a Christian.” – J. Harris

XII. Is this a perfect church?

It has been well stated, “If you should find the perfect church, don’t join it because you will ruin it.”

- ◆ ***You *think* it’s a perfect church.***
- ◆ ***There is no such thing.***

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” - I John 3:2