

# Understanding God's Design for the Church

Sunday, January 10, 2010

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## Message Truth:

All local churches are not victorious and seem not to benefit from Jesus' protection or prosperity. Why? Every church is not a church in the biblical sense. Jesus founded the church, and He alone determines its purpose and function. Jesus only guarantees, or protects, churches which execute His purposes. Churches which do not carry out His will suffer His judgment and ultimately cease to exist. Today we will seek to determine if we at First Baptist are a church or if we have any congregation tendencies.

## 1. Jesus P\_\_\_\_\_ the Church

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"  
<sup>14</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"  
<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.** <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. Matthew 16:13-20

## Six Purposes of the Church

<sup>34</sup> Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. <sup>35</sup> One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: " '**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**' <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: '**Love your neighbor as yourself.**' <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:34-40

**FBCE Purpose # 1: E\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Communing with God**

**FBCE Purpose # 2: E\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Contributing for People's Needs**

<sup>12</sup> Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. <sup>13</sup> "It is written," he said to them, "**'My house will be called a house of prayer,'** but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" Matthew 21:12-13

**FBCE Purpose # 3: E\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Communicating with God**

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** <sup>20</sup> and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

**FBCE Purpose # 4: E\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Convincing People Concerning the Gospel**

**FBCE Purpose # 5: E\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Creating Community So People Flourish**

**FBCE Purpose # 6: E\_\_\_\_\_**  
**Cultivating People's God Given Abilities**

Churches will be involved to some degree in all six of these purposes. Those that are not are not churches in the biblical sense. They are congregations of people who call themselves a church, but they are not true New Testament churches.

## 2. The Purposes of the Church A\_\_\_\_\_

- ☺ Churches exist for those who are not yet a part of them more than for those who are already a part.
- ☹ Congregations (Churches that cease to function properly) exist for those who are already a part of them more than for those who are not yet a part.
- ☺ In order to accomplish these purposes, true New Testament churches have an outward focus.
- ☹ Congregations (Churches that cease to function properly) have an inward focus.

- ☺ Churches are filled with those who understand that the Christian life is meant to give away and not to keep.
- ☹ Congregations (Churches that cease to function properly) are filled with those who try to keep the Christian life and not give it away.
- ☺ Churches seek to raise esteem for the kingdom and are not interested in their own institutional survival but in God's glory.
- ☹ Congregations (Churches that cease to function properly) seek merely to raise money and insure their own institutional survival.

## The Example of the Church in Ephesus

*<sup>4</sup> . . . I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. <sup>5</sup> Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*  
Revelation 2:4b-5

If Jesus were to apply His judgment to First Baptist Church of Emerson would He allow our lampstand to stay or would He remove it?

Are our purposes for FBCE consistent with His purposes for our church?

Do we have the characteristics of a church or those of a congregation?