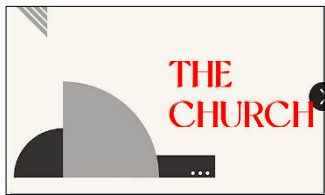


THE CHURCH

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 14 | 11.28.2021

[Teaching today: Pastor Lee Wiggins]

I'm hoping that you have your notebooks ready. If you are following along with us online or jumping on our website to – right on the front page there's a whole file called Doctrine with all of our podcasts and the Thursday night video. We'll be back on that this Thursday night. On there are our transcripts of all the messages and the notes for our time together, and that's a great way to follow along. I know a lot of you are putting together notebooks. We are covering the major doctrines of the Bible, we only have two more to go after today so we're thankful for the opportunity to lay a foundation. Here's what we believe, when you know truth then anything that's error around you will just flash like a red light. So I'm excited to continue to share that truth.



Today we're talking about the doctrine of The Church. In fact, I was thinking about a verse, actually a set of verses at the end of Colossians¹ that refers to the church in this way in Colossians 1:26, it refers to the church as:

²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

– COLOSSIANS 1:26-27 (ESV)

This thing called the church that we get to be a part of, for those people all the way up until the day of Pentecost, till Jesus left this earth, had no idea about this. It was a mystery. And today we live in a short, relatively, short period of time where God chooses to work through this local body called the church. The word *church* in the Greek is the word *ekklésia* and it means "to be called out of." And there's this picture of people being called out of the cities; it was of those city-states that people would be called out of and they would come to a town square and there they would meet in an assembly. So that's the second meaning of the word.

As you know many words have more than one meaning, so it's the called out ones, that's just taking the two parts of the word *ekklésia*, *ek* "out of" and *kaleó* which means "to be called," to be called out of or assembly. So we are called out of the world, we are called into an assembly together around the Lord Jesus Christ, and this verse reminds us that we're part of something way bigger. It's a mystery. It goes all the way back to when the church began on the Day of Pentecost and goes until Jesus returns again and we are looking forward to that day.

I want to talk about the church for a moment. As I've thought about it today there is within the church a place that does so many things so much better than any other organization or institution or group of people on the face of this earth. There is no better place to get connected with God, to be connected with Jesus Christ, to have the spiritual needs of who you are met. I'll prove it to you. You need prayer, you're going through something in your life that's hard right now, try something today. By the way, you're going to have to work with me on this one. Mention it to someone in this room. Here's what you, if you've been hanging around here for very long, notice, all around this place today you'll see people just pop their arm around someone's shoulder and pray over them because there is power in prayer. We have a God who listens to us, we have a God who answers prayer. And can you imagine

¹ Transcriber edit/correction: "Ephesians 1" is incorrectly referenced in the sermon video; correct reference for the passage read is Colossians 1.

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coming to this place and knowing that when you come here those burdens are going to be lifted, someone's going to care enough to put their arm around your shoulder and pray over you – only in the church. Mention something you're struggling with at work tomorrow, the chances are slim someone's going to just pop their arm around you and pray over you; but you come into this place that's exactly what takes place.

There is no place better to meet wonderful, lifelong friends who are of a very similar mind especially when it comes to spiritual things than the local church. There is no place where people serve more selflessly and give of themselves more graciously than in the church. Already today there are so many people all over this building have been since the earliest hours this morning and will be until the middle of the afternoon today all serving. They don't expect anything, they just care about people and they're just loving on people and they're caring for people. Some of you are going to leave this room and head right to a classroom or to a different post in this church, it's a place of serving.

There's no place where generosity is marked so openly than the church. We actively disadvantage ourselves constantly so as to help others and to get the Gospel out in a big sort of way. There is no place where forgiveness and love are so clearly manifest in the church. We'll mention it again later on today, we're a group of people that are flawed, we're a group of people that are sinners, we're a group of people that mess up, we're a group of people that say really goofy things and dumb things and things that we wish we hadn't; and yet when you come here this is a place where there's forgiveness, where we're going to love you right where you're at, and take you right from there and just walk alongside of you. This is a place of restoration. Our Bible is all about from very beginning to the very end of a complete restoration project on each one of us.

There is no place where you will be encouraged more to love your spouse, helped more on growing in your relationship with your spouse, encouraged to stay with your spouse, and to give your life to them. There's no place where you're going to be encouraged to grow in raising your children and loving them and helping them follow Jesus. And there's no place where you're going to find better mentors for your kids than right here. People that you're going to be like I want them to be the person that my kid, when they get in trouble or struggle with something, goes to. And that's why there's no better place than to bring your kids where they're going to be loved on this morning, where on Sundays right this very moment our teams are meeting. On Wednesdays this place is packed with teens because you know that here at the church it's a safe place and it's a place where they're going to grow.

There is no place that is better at caring for the needy than this church. We probably don't say enough about it because it's just constantly happening. In fact, I would say this to you, if you're hurting there is no better place to be than here. If you're not sure of that get sick, end up in the hospital, have someone in your family in trouble or die, and you're gonna just see this group just surround you and come around you. I've had some people just recently tell me, "I've gotten so much food, we're trying to find people to give it to now ourselves because everyone has just poured on us lavishly, just incredible amounts of love."

There's no place where you're going to find better music; music that focuses you in on the God of eternity in Heaven. You're gonna find some of the nicest, kindest, godliest people in this place. People trying to live their life according to The Book of God in front of them because the Spirit of God dwells in their life and is helping them do that. And we set aside our differences as a group to unify around one thing and that's Jesus Christ.

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If you even go historically you'll find that the greatest libraries were built by the church, the greatest education systems were built by the church, medical systems, medical centers, hospitals, healing, curing of diseases – all started in the local church. And I pause for only a second to say I get it, there are some of you that are running a reel in your head saying, *Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! That's not been my experience with the church.* And you're even running some statements that you've heard over the years talking about the problems in the church and how we mistreat each other and how harm is done. You can hardly open up a news article that it isn't telling us something horrific about the church and this kind of stuff. I get that, church hurt is a real thing, many of us have experienced it, I've experienced it.

All you have to do is Google our church's name and you're going to see moral disasters, you're going to see natural disasters, you're going to see all sorts of craziness, but in the midst of all of that I want you

MATTHEW 16:18 (ESV)
And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

to be very clear that it is Jesus who builds His church and He is building a movement. And Jesus Himself only mentions the church twice, mentions it by name twice, and when He mentions it He says He's building a movement so big and so powerful that's going to keep going. By the way, it is still going on. It's going to be so big that the gates of hell could not prevail against it.

By the way, if you're hurting the day over something in the church, I am so sorry. What my desire is is that would have never happened to you and I, again, as your pastor I mean this with all of my heart, I'm sorry that that happened to you. We are, we're just fallen people and stuff that shouldn't happen happens, and we can ask for forgiveness and we can bring healing and we can bring restoration when we come around each other and link arms together. And yet in the midst of that I would love to share with you a story that I don't just hear told very much and it's the story of what this mystery is, this thing called the church that Jesus ordained us to be part of, that we get the special privilege to be a part of.

This local church and all local churches are a visible expression of the universal church. The church is an assembly of believers as well as those that you can't see that have all put their trust in Jesus Christ from the time of Pentecost till Jesus returns. Right here in this room—those

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who have put their trust in Jesus—to those at churches all over this country and all over the world today right now somewhere worshiping Jesus, we all make up the church, and here individually and more closely locally we make up the church. So I'm going to speak of the church in terms of the local church and the universal church. This is the local church, there's a group of believers gathered, called out of the world, you've come out of wherever you were at this week, you've assembled together where you're going to encourage each other; and then there are people like us all over the world and that creates the universal church. First Corinthians Chapter 1, verse 2, says this extremely well, it says this:

²To the church of God that is in Corinth,

— *that was a city, along with those in every place* —

to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

– I CORINTHIANS 1:2 (ESV)

So you have the church in a city. You also have the church universal, 1st Thessalonians 1:1 says to the church of the Thessalonians:

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

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**To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.**

– I THESSALONIANS 1:1 (ESV)

Another church in a town. And at that time you didn't have a whole bunch of churches in the town, you had the church in that town. So here in Downingtown you'd have the church in Downingtown, and if you're in Glenmore you'd have the church in Glenmore. And they would assemble together at a given place there and they would come together united over this one thing that they had in common and that's Jesus Christ. Romans Chapter 16² talks along these lines – Priscilla³ and Aquila, greet the church in their house:

³ Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. ⁵ Greet also the church in their house.

– ROMANS 16:3-5 (ESV)

So it even indicates that many of the churches especially in that time, and it wouldn't even be wrong and this time, would actually meet in a house. It's when a group of believers gather together in a local expression of their faith connecting with each other. So whether they meet in a big building like this where there's so many seats in one room, or whether they meet in a living room gathered around a circle. Some of you do both, some of you come into this room but you also get together individually with a group of people in your home every week and you're having what we call small groups, the New Testament would understand that as church. You're having church.

Here's the key to be biblical and this would be my encouragement to remind us, we must be part of the church universal, that's – we have to put our faith and trust in Jesus and then we're part of all these other believers all over the world, part of something way bigger than ourselves, and we need to be part of the church local. That's what you're part of here, that's what you're part of in your home.

Now some of you said last night that you were going to go to church today and in your mind what you pictured was this building and this place. I had someone just this week say to me, "You know, have you ever thought about doing something to the outside of the church? It just doesn't look like a church." And I get that, we all have a mental image of what a church looks like or "should" look like, or if you drove by you'd be like, "Now *that's* a church." Or even the inside of a building, what's the inside... but forget that for a moment, I'd love to sort of wipe that clean for a moment.



In fact, there was a time in my church in Arizona where we had sold our building, it was a small building, we had outgrown it, we were in a bunch of services parking up and down the road. And the local authorities said you can't do that anymore, so we went to a high school and at that time we went and leased an old car dealership, it was way cool. The kids were meeting in the old service bays and all sorts of kind of stuff, and it just didn't look like a church, I mean, it looked like an old, greasy, car dealership. It just... there was no way around it. And so we just couldn't bring ourselves to call it, you know, come meet us at the church. So its address was 209, that was the numerical address of it, so we just called it "The 209" and it began to change in our mind that this [building] isn't the church. No one

² Transcriber edit/correction: In the sermon video "Romans 15" is incorrectly referenced; the correct reference is Romans 16.

³ English Bible translations provided on Bible Gateway state "Prisca" in 34 translations, and "Priscilla" in 28 translations.

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wanted that building to be called the church, it just wasn't the church, but it reminded us that this is the church, the people of the church.

So in 1st Peter Chapter 2 starting in verse 5, let me read to you what it says:

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

- 1 PETER 2:5 & 9 (ESV)

I just want you to hear this, what this verse is saying, it isn't about the bricks and mortar of this building, that's meaningless, it's helpful. We're blessed, by the way, God's blessed us with this phenomenal facility, we are overwhelmed with it, and to know that it's paid off, debt free, and that we can meet in here, it's warm and comfortable and so comfortable but listen, this could go away. You are the church. And this verse is describing us as each of us as a stone put together and we're a part of this spiritual activity and this spiritual body that creates and forms this thing called the church.

When you come into this place my hope would be, yeah and by the way, by the end of this day it's going to be decorated amazing for Christmas. I thought it looked pretty good already when we walked in here this morning, but it isn't this place that's going to give us the warm fuzzies about Christmas, it's going to be the fact that all of the church, all of the bodies, all of you are gathering together to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. The one who Colossians⁴ says is the head of the church, who we come in under His authority and listen to Him in this place.

Now I hear people say this all the time and people are repeaters, they'll say things and we'll all go, "Oh, that's really good." And they'll say, "Hey, listen, I'm part of the church" – big "C" – but I don't need the local church to be a Christian. Have you ever heard anyone say that? And, um, I mean, technically that's correct, you put your trust in Jesus Christ you are a Christian, you are a Christ follower, you are saved from your sins, you are no longer under the curse of death. We preach that here all the time. We want you to know that. And it's true in that this building isn't the church, so you coming to this building doesn't mean anything, but I want to ask you to be very careful when saying that because the Bible never imagines a situation where we are separated from each other. In fact, it warns us that being separated from each other and not being in fellowship with each other, not being part of the local church is a recipe for Satan to come and lead us away and lead us astray. We need each other and together we are the church.

Here's another thing I hear oftentimes, "I love Jesus but I don't love the church." To sort of go back to what we talked about a moment ago – "I was hurt in there." "I was hurt when I was a kid." "I was hurt at this one church." "I went through some really tough stuff and so I have put up a wall and a barrier against it and I'm just not okay with that." Let me read to you a verse, Revelation Chapter 19 starting verse 7:

⁴ Transcriber edit/correction: In the sermon video "Ephesians" is incorrectly referenced; the correct reference is Colossians. Colossians 1:18a (ESV) states: **And he is the head of the body, the church.**

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⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—

– REVELATION 19:7-8a (ESV)

The church is described as the Bride of Christ. Please, please, please don't say I love Jesus and not the church. To say that is to say I love Jesus but I don't love His Bride. If you say you love me but you dislike Anne, it doesn't go very well. My wife, by the way, if you don't know who Anne is. I mean, it's just, it's just – I love that woman. And that's what Jesus would say, I love My Bride, I love the church, I gave My life for her. If Jesus would give His life for you, who are you to say I love Jesus but not His Bride? He loves His Bride and we love Him. In fact, Jesus prayed that we would be united because – isn't that why we even get to that place in the first place? I've had people say to me I come to first service because, well, my ex goes to second service and I don't want to be near her. I sit in such-and-such place because I can't see him. Jesus would pray that we would be united.

We live among division in our world. That's why even in this last couple years we have pushed back so hard as a church to not allow division to take root into this place and it's been hard because we have different opinions about stuff – don't we? Come on, shake your head. We have some different opinions in this room and strongly held, and some empty seats in this room used to be filled with people who had very strong opinions that couldn't stand the fact that I wouldn't stand up here and promote their opinion, because the only opinion I want to promote is just the Word of God. We've got plenty to talk about and we are under our head, Jesus, in here and we just want to talk about what He wants to talk about. He's the one who said fear not, I am the beginning and the end, I died and I rose and I'm alive, and we're going hey, we're about life in this room, we're about love, we're about unity. And Jesus would say these words in John 17, I pray:

²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

– JOHN 17:21-23 (ESV)

We could spend the rest of our day talking about that. If you can't figure out what to talk about in your groups this week, this would be worthwhile chatting about. If you decided to take off the rest of the year as your group – don't do it! Why would you do that? Oh, because we're busy? What's more important? We need to get together and talk about this because there is division in our society and the one thing we can do better than anyone else can do is bring about unity because Jesus prayed to the Father that we would have unity, that we would be united. Spend a lot of time with each other seeking the things that we can agree on, the things that unite us. And Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, the core of the good news, the Gospel, is something that every one of us should be able to unite on. If we can't unite on that you're probably not dealing with another believer.

Don't let the world dictate to us what we're going to divide over, let the Bible dictate to us what we're going to unite over – Jesus. And what He says here, He says I've given them my glory, that's what Jesus prays, I've given you my glory so that we can be one as God the Father is one with Jesus. I don't, I just tell you we've got to get excited about that. We've got to allow the glory of God to come across

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this place. And as the glory of God comes across this place, anyone who comes in contact with us and especially us as a unit, they're going to say, "I want something, I want what they have."

Can you imagine walking in here and seeing the bright smiling faces that we have at our doors to be able to walk 10 feet away from them and find someone without a name tag? That means that they're not the professional greeter trained to do a wonderful job at that, and all of a sudden they're reaching out to you and loving you, too, because that's what we as Christians do. You step into this room and someone just can't wait to meet you because they've never seen you before. "Are you new here? I'm sorry, oh, you've been going here ten years? I'm sorry, I only been here a year, I'm sorry I've never met you." And we start getting to know each other and finding out about each other and we're building a relationship and a rapport, and the other person is saying, "Do you want to come to our group? Pastor mentioned groups this week, we have an extra seat, you want to come?" "Hey, you want to come over for lunch today?" And we start uniting together. That's what the church is.

Hebrews Chapter 10, verse 24:

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

– HEBREWS 10:24-25 (ESV)

Next week we're going to be talking about the return of Jesus. We need to be loving each other more and more because Jesus is coming soon. Now listen, be part of a church before you need a church, and what I mean by that is very simple, is when life happens you need a church. And some of you knew our dear brothers and sisters family, the Rolands, who lost their son to ALS last week. I was just communicating back and forth with them yesterday and they told me about a letter that came to them from someone—a lot of people just poured out their love on them, they're overwhelmed and thrilled and just blown away by the love of this church—but someone wrote a letter and just made this comment. They said, "I know you have the love of your church," and they mentioned Calvary Fellowship on there. And her comment to me was it's odd because I've never mentioned Calvary Fellowship to this person. And then she writes almost like in the next sentence, she goes, "Well, years ago, I am sure we mentioned it to them."

You see, long ago they were part of this church. Long ago they were getting to know people here. They were serving, ministering, they were caring for people, and so in the moment when they needed help someone was there for them. We need to get involved. I think so many churches in America today have become so consumer mentality thing. It's was like where's the best show this month? Where's the best food? We got the best bagels. Right? And so, "Oh, I want the church of bagels." And someone, "Nah, that's dumb, that's stupid. We like the church with..." And as a result we've said hey church is about bagels, church is about whether the seats are comfortable, church is about whether it looks like a church from the outside, church is about whether you like the guy up front or the team that's singing. And you say stop a minute, church is about you.

One of my elders one time at another church came up to me and said, "I don't come here for your preaching." [LAUGHTER] Stop laughing. He goes, "I just can't wait all week long to be with all the people." And I've never forgotten that because I sort of responded the way you did. I'm like, oh, okay, good. It's not about me, it's not about them [THE WORSHIP TEAM], it's not about the comfort of this room, it's not about the lighting, and the building [RAPID SPEED INDISCERNIBLE] that doesn't exist anymore because, well, we can talk [VOICE TRAILS OFF] about that another day. It's about each other.

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Craig Groeschel wrote these words, I liked them, "To many people church is just a place. It's buildings bricks, mortar, and destination, we go to church. The problem with thinking 'we go to church' is that it gives us a consumer mindset: I'm looking for a church that meets my needs. I need a good church that will help me. The church is actually God's chosen vehicle to meet through other human beings people's true needs including our own." What happens here changes the world, we need each other.

May I encourage you to treat this church like your home and not a hotel? When we leave a hotel most of us don't run the towels down to the washing machine. Most of us don't empty the trash. Most of us don't make the beds. Most of us don't wipe down the counters before we leave. In fact, we get up and we call and ask for more towels to be delivered and someone shows up at the door like this [FIGURE 1]. There are a lot of people that do treat church like a hotel and it's very quick that they leave because it doesn't meet their needs. It doesn't feel the way they wanted it to feel. But to that person that treats this like their home, they just jump in, they see stuff on the floor they pick it up. They see a table out of order in the lobby, they straighten it. They see junk all over the countertops in the bathroom, or like I saw the other day, I guess some kids had taken some wet paper towels and really had some fun with the ceiling in the bathroom. I saw some guy in there cleaning it up. Pretty cool.



FIGURE 1

I was talking to Melody and Ashley this week, they run our children's ministry and they are amazing, and I don't just say that, they are amazing. They had us back full children's ministries the week after we returned from COVID. That's – everyone tells you that was impossible and they did the impossible. Our children's ministry, I'm being told, is way above in numerical size what it was prior to COVID. That doesn't happen. And they said to me this week, "Pastor, we need more teachers. We have a lot of people that want to serve but we just need more teachers to teach the kids." I said, "How cool is that that that's what we need?!" And isn't that cool that that's what they're asking for? They're not saying just, "Hey, we just need some crowd control in that room."

By the way, if you want to do that, go up to the top of the steps to the children's thing today and say, "Where's my Melody and Ashley, I hear you guys are amazing. Can I teach?" Some of you are teachers all week long, would you give your gifts to doing that? Some of you are going, "I would love to figure that out," just jump in, go up there and see them afterwards today. It is just way important here.

We've mentioned this already here, everywhere you look you're going to see statistics that the church in America today is in trouble. I just mentioned COVID, you can't mention COVID without saying what the church was before COVID and after COVID, and before COVID it was this and after COVID it's this. Let me tell you what, the only church that's in trouble in America today is the institutional church. It's dying and it needs to die because it has been a dead institution. It just still had a lot of people showing up every week.

The church that matters is the church that Jesus says I will build my church. It is the movement that He started 2,000 years ago that is still going strong. And when God's people act like the church and are the church it is not dying in any way. And it's not dying here and it's not dying in this place in any way. Our ministries, our groups, our care is greater and better than it ever has been before.

I think we for a long time measured church by the wrong things. I would love to encourage us to begin to think about how does Jesus measure church? When the church began, listen to these words, Acts 1:

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⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

- ACTS 1:7-8 (ESV)

Jesus says hey, listen, when I leave you don't go do it alone, go wait in this room, I'm going to send my Holy Spirit, when I send my Holy Spirit you're going to have power to do the very thing that I've called you to do. And from that moment when the Holy Spirit comes upon them the church is birthed and God says here's what I want you to be doing as a church, I want you to gather people together—and by the way, that's whether it's two or three of you just getting together this week for tea or sitting around in one of these lobbies. The women's groups in this church are amazing. There's – you come in here on a Wednesday morning, evening, there's groups everywhere and they're meeting, and I'll tell you what, they are committed to each other and they are growing together and they are loving each other. That's gathering, it's what you're doing in here this morning. It's why I encourage you online, type in there, connect with the people online, encourage each other. Someone says they're hurting, weigh in on that, be back and forth because we need each other even if we're separated.

I talked to someone just this week who was walking by my house said, "Pastor," and I talked to them. They have a really legitimate reason why they cannot come into this room, but they need you, you need them, they're beautiful, wonderful, lovely people. We need each other. They're followers of Jesus and we need to find ways to keep doing that. We are so blessed in our day that we have so many ways to reach out, that we have the freedom that we have, the opportunities that we have, homes that we can meet in, that we can jump on Zoom, that we can communicate with each other.

But then there is the responsibility that we have to scatter, to go out from beyond here and to take our faith outside of this room, to not just be a bunch of people stuck in here where we're in our little huddle. That's one of the biggest risks of church, it's the biggest risk of us getting together and gathering is that we never scatter, that we never go out there and be the light to the world. We never go serve the world that's out there. It's what Jesus told us to do. In fact Jesus would say these words just before He'd leave the earth, Matthew 28. By the way, in this verse He gives us what we would call His mission, this is His mission that He gives to us, and when I define that word *mission* I define it as this is our assignment. What is our assignment? Well, I told you, Jesus is in charge of the church, He gives His church an assignment, and here's His assignment to us, Matthew 28:18:

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- MATTHEW 28:18-20 (ESV)

Hey, what's the deal here? He says here's my mission to you: I want you to disciple people, I want you to just grow them up in their faith, and I want you to evangelize people. I want you to tell them about Jesus. We need to be doing both of those things. We need to be doing both of those things all the time. That's what Calvary is about we're about helping people grow in their faith, that's why we're taking you through this DOCTRINE series. It's thick but that's why so many of you are jumping in deep. You're going, "I want some answers. I want to know what I believe and why I believe it." You're going, even today, it's like, "Wow! I see church through a different lens now."

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So we're going to grow you in what is truth, but we're also going to challenge you to say hey, I know you can just keep on taking in information and sitting in a little huddle singing and crying together and singing kumbaya and feeling like, wow, that was amazing, but we need to go beyond here because there are other people that need that relationship, need that love, and need Jesus also. And so we don't just stay in our huddle, we scatter out beyond here.

When the church gets together here's what we're supposed to do, Acts 2:42, listen to these words:

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

– ACTS 2:42 (ESV)

Apostles' teaching, that's what we're doing right now; fellowship, you're going to do that right afterwards and don't rush out of here. If you are one that just heads for the doors—who's among us that just heads for the doors—[HE SURVEYS THE AUDIENCE AND CHUCKLES] you're so honest, it's awesome, I love that—slow down a minute, go grab a bagel. If you're like, "I can't have one more carb and that's why I have to hit the doors," stand outside underneath the canopies and talk to someone. We're gathering together for fellowship and the breaking of bread – see, there's the bagels – and prayers, that's what we talked about putting your arms around each other and praying over each other. And listen to this, it said as a result of that:

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

– ACTS 2:43-44 (ESV)

And it just goes on. You gotta look at Acts 2, it's just a beautiful picture of what God was doing in His people and in the church and the results were huge. What happens here changes the world.

I want to just say this to you – I love my church. And I just want to clarify something here for a moment and I've been thinking about this this week, you know our shirts that say I LOVE MY CHURCH, I want you to feel like this is your church. I want you to feel like this is your home. I want you to feel like you're on assignment here. Once in a while people say, "Pastor, I like your church." I'm like, what? I – it just doesn't feel right. First of all I would tell you this is not my church, this is Jesus' church. Period, end of sentence. I am one here under His authority for a period of time, we each have an expiration date. This torch will be passed at some time, this isn't my church, this is His church, we're under His authority.

And yet the verse that I began with in Colossians⁵ 1, the Apostle Paul says of this church I was made a minister, I was given the stewardship, [VERSE 25] I was given the responsibility, and so while it's not my church it absolutely is my church. I care about every last one of you in the deepest sort of way. You are the church, you matter, you are Jesus' children, you are the Bride of Christ. You *are* my church and I love you. Isn't that interesting tension that we run there? Not my church but absolutely my church. Jump in there, get involved, love on each other, care for each other.

Let me end with this, 2nd Timothy 4:9, the Apostle Paul at the end of his life says this:

⁵ Transcriber edit/correction: In the sermon video "Ephesians 1" is incorrectly referenced; the correct reference is Colossians 1.

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⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,

– 2 TIMOTHY 4:7-8a (ESV)

Do you know what he says next? I mean, he's like wow, wow, I was, like, I'm about ready to go to Heaven where God's gonna give me a crown. What's next? He says this:

⁹ Do your best to come to me quickly.

– 2 TIMOTHY 4:9 (NIV)

Paul's saying to Timothy come, come to me, I need you. I need my church. I love you, I need you, I need you in my life. There's some of you in this room right now going, *I need someone bad right now*. We need each other, we need to minister to each other today, don't wait for us to create a program for that, it probably won't happen. We need each other. We need to be the church. You are the church. I love my church. It's Jesus' church, we're under His authority, and He says love on each other. I pray that you'll be united. I pray that you'll love being together and when the world sees your unity, they're going to say I want to be part of that, too, because I need that really bad.

Oh, and just to go back to what we said earlier, why did he need Timothy to come so quickly? He says:

¹⁰ For Demas,

— *who was* —

in love with this present world, has deserted me

– 2 TIMOTHY 4:10a (ESV)

Remember I mentioned, I mean, some of us have church pain because there are some people that show up into this world, we think they're followers of Jesus but they just enjoyed hanging out in the room. They enjoyed the benefits, the splash over of the blessings that come with being in the church. But Demas loved this world, loved money, loved the things of this world, loved following his own desires and his own passions more and he had left Paul. Paul didn't know that when he first met Demas, I'm sure. And he said Timothy, I need you because I've been hurt deeply.

For those of you who have been hurt by the church I'm just going to tell you there were a lot of demons out there. There are probably some demons in this room right now. We work real hard at dealing with that quickly. When we see that kind of selfishness, when we see that kind of pride, we say no, not on our watch. That's not how it works around here because we're going to love on each other. Paul says Timothy, come to me quickly, I need you, I've been hurt. Would you lower your guard today? Would you say I need you, church, I need each of you.

This is Jesus' church, we're under His authority. I'm not looking for man to please me, I know man will disappoint me. Demas did to Paul, but I need you, the Bride of Christ, the ones that Jesus loves, and I'm going to surround myself with each other. I'm going to jump into serving. I'm going to make this my home. I'm going to become committed here. I'm going to love the people of this place and I know as a result of that they're going to love me. I love my church. I love Jesus' church. I hope you do, too.

Let me pray for us. Team, you can come up.

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Lord Jesus,



I pray that this church, these people that are in front of me, these people that are watching online that are part of this local body of believers, I pray that this morning would cause us each to become committed to the body of Christ, the church universal, and the church local. Thank You for giving your life because You love us so much. Thank You for giving us each other, and thank You for calling us your Bride. May You be glorified through us, this local expression of your body here in Downingtown; may we please You and glorify You. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.



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