

Foundations Theological Training Course

Week 7 - The Doctrine and Practices of
the Church

I. Introduction and definition of terms

Ecclesiology: Our theology regarding the church (ekklesia = the church)

The “Story of Christianity”:

A. What is the Church ?

1.

2.

B. What is the Purpose of the Church?

1. _____

Worship in the church is not merely a preparation for something else: it is in itself fulfilling the major purpose of the church with reference to its Lord. ~ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology

2. _____

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. Colossians 1:28

3. _____

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, 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 28:19--20

All are important, and none can be neglected!

C. What does the Church do?

Let's look at the ministries of the early Church - Acts 2:41-47

1. _____ (vs. 41, 47)
2. _____ (vs. 42)
3. _____ (vs. 41-47)
4. _____ (vs. 44-45)
5. _____ (vs. 47)

These are still essential elements for local churches today.

II. Four primary views on the Church:

A. _____

1. _____ : The Church is not built upon a common confession but on a common practice of bringing mercy, love, and acceptance to those in need. This is commonly known as the social gospel.

2. _____ : World Council of Churches (WCC), liberal churches of all denominations.

3. _____ :

- Emphasizes the necessity of the Church to carry on Christ's mission of mercy, love, and acceptance.
- Recognizes the diversity of Christian beliefs.
- Seeks to unify the Church under one purpose.

4. _____ :

- Fails to realize the importance of truth.
- Places orthopraxy (right practice) ahead of orthodoxy (right belief).
- The Church cannot have unity without a common confession about who Christ is and what the significance of His death is.

B. _____

1. **Belief:** The Church is Christ's liberating presence on the earth that represents Christ in fighting for those who are oppressed through social injustice and governmental abuse.

2. **Adherents:** Gustavo Gutierrez, many Roman Catholics primarily in Latin America.

3. **Strengths:**

- Rightly understands the impact that the Church can have on the culture.
- Recognizes the severity of social injustice and the need for Christians to stand against atrocities.

4. Weaknesses of the Liberation View:

- Fails to realize the importance of truth.
- Places orthopraxy (correct conduct) ahead of orthodoxy (correct belief).
- The Church cannot have unity without a common confession about who Christ is and what the significance of His death is.
- Fails to realize that governmental and societal oppression, while not ideal, is not always a bad thing. Maybe within God's will sometimes.

C. _____

1. Belief: The Church is the institutional authority given by God, led by the Pope, which Christ uses to administer His grace. It includes all those who submit to its mandates, doctrine, and instructions.

2. Adherents: Most Roman Catholics pre--Vatican II (1965)

3. Strengths:

- Sees the visible Church as an important component in the plan of God.
- Creates unity of doctrine and practice.

4. Weaknesses of the Roman Catholic view:

- Fails to realize the importance of the unity that the Holy Spirit gives to all those who have been justified by faith.
- Gives the institutional Church sacramental power that is not granted to it by God. The power is not in the sacrament itself but in the Holy Spirit working in the heart of the recipient.
- While it creates unity, it does not tend to recognize diversity.

D. _____

1. Belief: The Church is the body of Christ composed of all those who have been justified by faith alone.

2. Adherents: All Evangelical Protestants.

3. Strengths of the Evangelical Protestant view:

- Rightly understands the unity that the Holy Spirit brings to all believers, creating an invisible Church.
- Creates unity of doctrine that is limited to who Christ is, why He died on the cross, and how His death applies to us.
- Understands the priesthood of all believers and that we do not need an

institution in order to come to God. We have direct access as believers to God.

- Recognizes that Christ is the Head of the Church.

4. Weaknesses of the Evangelical Protestant view:

- Can emphasize the invisible Church to the neglect of the local Church.
- Can create an individualistic attitude that fails to see that sanctification happens in a community of believers, not in isolation.
- Can neglect the importance of social outreach (physical needs, environmental concerns, etc.).
- Can easily create disunity because of the under--emphasis of church authority.

III. The Practices of the Church

A. _____

1. _____ told us.

*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... **Matthew 28:19** NIV*

2. Baptism is not a part of the _____ .

*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. **Acts 2:41** NIV*

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. **Ephesians 2: 8** NIV*

* The word "**Baptism**" comes from the Greek word "**Baptizo**" which means, "**to plunge, dip, immerse.**"

a. Three modes of Baptism:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

* **Mikveh or Mikveh -Ritual baths for the Jews. They are still in use today.**

3. What about Infant Baptism?

There are no recorded instances of infants or children being baptized.

But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12 NIV

* *Does Foundations practice infant Baptism?*

Foundations practices believers baptism.

Child dedication is made available to parents that would like to “commit” their children to the Lord and community of believers to raising their children in a Christ honoring way.

If you were baptized as a child, it was the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Your Baptism as an adult can be viewed as the fulfillment of your parents’ wishes. It in no way repudiates the Baptism you received as a child.

4. What about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

a. _____ - (post--resurrection) receive the Holy Spirit at the time of Salvation.

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. - I Corinthians 12:13 NIV

b. _____ - believe that during a persons spiritual journey a Christian will be “baptized” by the Holy spirit and this is made evident by the speaking of tongues.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. - Acts 2:1-4 NIV

c. _____ - (under the influence) of the

Holy Spirit.

*Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. - **Ephesians 17-20** NIV*

**** Just as a wedding ring is an outward expression of marriage, Baptism is an outward expression of a commitment to follow Jesus Christ.***

B. _____

1. **Communion is** _____ It is full of meaning, truth, and beauty. It has great value in the life of a believer and the life of the church. All Christians should take the act of Communion very seriously, out of reverence and gratitude for Jesus.

2. **Communion is not** _____ The eating and drinking of communion refers to spiritual acts of the soul drawing near to Christ, and receiving him, and trusting him, and having the hunger and thirst of our souls be satisfied. This unites the Church in Christ.

** Some religions believe in "Transubstantiation" - the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ. This happens when the priest says "this is my body".*

*'Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."' - **John 6:35***

3. **Why We Participate in Communion**²

a. **Communion is taken to** _____ **Christ's sacrifice for our sins so we can have a righteous relationship with God.**

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the

¹

Mark Driscoll

² John Piper "Sermon on Communion"

*Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." - **1 Corinthians 11:23-25** NKJV*

**b. By participating in communion believers are“
_____ the Lord’s death.”**

*“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” **1 Corinthians 11:26** NKJV*

4. Who Should Take Communion:

a. Those who _____ Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives.

*“When we bless the cup at the Lord’s Table, aren’t we sharing in the blood of Christ? And when we break the bread, aren’t we sharing in the body of Christ? And though we are many, we all eat from one loaf of bread, showing that we are one body.” **1 Corinthians 10:16-17** NLT*

5. Communion is a time for the believer to:

- **Engage the _____** by recalling the cross and undeserved benefits it brings with a thankful heart.
- **Engage the _____** by reliving the anguish of the cross.
- **Engage the _____** by recommitting to the vows made to follow Christ Jesus fully.³

6. Who should not Take Communion:

a. _____

*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf. - **1. Corinthians 10:16-17** NIV*

b. _____

³ Randy Pope “Grace Commitments”

*“I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you’ve received it, it will be yours. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.” - **Mark 11:24-25** NLT*

c. _____

*So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. - **1 Corinthians 11:27** NIV*

7. How A Believer Must Approach Communion:

a. You must _____ yourself.

*“Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.” **1 Corinthians 11:28** NIV*

b. You must _____ the body of Christ.

*“For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.” - **1 Corinthians 11:29-30** NIV*

** Communion is a sacred sacrament full of meaning, truth, and beauty. It has great value in the life of a believer and the life of the church. All Christians should take the act of Communion very seriously, out of reverence and gratitude for Jesus.*

III. The Practices of the Church - Accountability and Care (Church Discipline)

Mutual accountability is critical to the health of the local church.

A. Settling Disputes in the Church.

1. What Jesus said about resolving conflict:

a. _____

*And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. - **Matthew 5:40-42** ESV*

b. _____

*When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud— even your own brothers! - **1 Corinthians 6:1-8** ESV*

c. _____

*“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. - **Matthew 18:15-17** ESV*

2. Foundations Church _____ and _____ Christ’s instruction found in **Matthew 18:15-17.** (See above) By following these principles the church can provide Christians with a safe home where:

- * God’s voice can be heard.
- * Individuals can share their hurts and feelings as well as their mistakes, without fear of judgment.
- * Forgiveness can be requested and granted.
- * True restoration can be found.
- * Agreements can be forged.

B. The process of restoration when someone appears to be habitually living non- Biblical. (Practiced at Foundations Church)

1. **Care and Accountability.** The goal is _____ and _____ with _____ and _____

*Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load. - **Galatians 6:1-5**
ESV*

2. Reasons we have an agreement that emphasizes mutual accountability and unity:

a. The agreement symbolizes the commitment we have to one another to uphold these critical Biblical principles that insure the spiritual health of the local body for:

* _____ of the Saints (Followers of Jesus)

* _____ up of the Church

* _____ of our faith and knowledge of God

* Achieving spiritual _____ and _____

* Proper _____ and function

* Practice of _____ and _____

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. **Ephesians 4:11-16**
ESV*