

Institutionalism

Lesson 3 ñ The Mission of the Church

TEXT: 1 Tim. 3:15

INTRODUCTION:

A. THE CHURCH IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION WITH A DIVINE PURPOSE. B. HUMAN WISDOM HAD NO PART IN THE DESIGN OF THE CHURCH.

1. Not built by man's power.
2. Not ruled by his authority.

I. THE CHURCH IN GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE.

A. GOD'S WISDOM WAS MADE KNOWN THROUGH THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES AND THE CHURCH(**Eph. 3:8-10**). B. GOD PLANNED THIS FROM ETERNITY(**vs. 11**). C. GOD, THEN, WAS THE BUILDER & ARCHITECT OF THE CHURCH.

1. The nature & existence of the church evidence God's wisdom (**Rom. 11:33-36**).
2. The pattern represents divine will which can't be disregarded.
 - a. The tabernacle had a divine plan (**Heb. 8:1-5**)..
 - b. The "true tabernacle" (**1 Cor. 3:9-10; 2 Tim. 1:13**).

D. RULED BY DIVINE AUTHORITY.

1. All authority is Christ's(**Mat. 28: 18; Eph. 1:22-23**).
2. Whatever the church does is by Christ's direction(**Col. 3:17**).

II. THE CHURCH HAS A DIVINE PATTERN(**Eph. 4:11-12**).

A. *APOSTLES* & *PROPHETS*- DIVINE REVELATION(**Eph. 3:5**).

B. *EVANGELISTS*- PROCLAIM THE WORD(**2 Tim. 4:1-2**).

C. *PASTORS & TEACHERS* ñ

1. Pastors oversee congregations(**Acts 20:28; 14:23**).

2. We all are to grow to be teachers(**Heb. 5:12**).

D. DIVINE WISDOM & DIVINE ARRANGEMENT IMPLIES A DIVINE MISSION.

III. THE CHURCH HAS A DIVINE PROGRAM OF WORK.

A. ITS PRIMARY FUNCTION IS SPREADING THE GOSPEL(**1 Tim. 3:15; Phil. 1:3-5; 1 Thes. 1:8**).

B. EDIFICATION OF THE SAINTS(**Eph. 4:12-16**).

C. MINISTERING TO THE PHYSICAL NEEDS OF ITS OWN(**Acts 2:42-47; 6:1; 1 Cor. 16:1-2**).

D. ASSEMBLING FOR WORSHIP(**Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42**).

IV. WHAT THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IS NOT.

A. THE CHURCH IS **LIMITED** IN BENEVOLENCE TO **NEEDY SAINTS**.

1. Our only examples (**Acts 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:3-10**).

2. But what about **Galations 6:10** and **James 1:27**?

a. These verses address **individual concern** for the poor.

b. **Can the church do anything that the individual can do?** (**1 Tim. 5:16**).

3. Isn't general benevolence referred to in **2 Corinthians 9:13**?

a. **Word study needed:**

i. **liberality**, *haplotēs*; 1) **singleness**, **simplicity**, **sincerity**, mental honesty the virtue of one who is **free from pretence and hypocrisy**; 2) **not self-seeking**, openness of heart manifesting itself by generosity (**Thayer**).

ii. **contribution**, *koinonia*; fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse (**Thayer**).

b. **Comments by the experts:**

i. **Liberality** *haploteetos* . From haplou, single, simple. "The passage from single-mindedness or simplicity to liberality is not quite obvious" (**Robertson**).

ii. *Simplicity haploteeti*. In **2 Cor 8:2; 9:11,13** "Ö **liberality**" is, at best, very **doubtful**. The sense is unusual, and the rendering "simplicity or singleness" is defensible in all the passages (**Vincent's Word Studies** on **Rom. 12:8**).

iii. See also **Lenski** on **2 Cor. 8:2** and **9:13**, and **Pulpit Commentary**.

c. **Verses in the context:** 8:2, 7-8, 24; 9:3-4.

4. Would it be scriptural to take money out of the church treasury to help those who are not members of the church? (**2 John 9**).

B. OTHER WORKS TAKEN ON BY CHURCHES OF CHRIST:

1. Recreation for young people ñ Gyms, summer camps, skating parties, softball.

2. Social gatherings ñ Suppers, field trips, other activities (**1 Cor. 11:11, 34**).

3. Hospitals, Benevolent societies, Political action groups, Secular education.

QUESTION: Is it proper for the church to use money out of the treasury to build or maintain facilities for accomplishing work that God did not give it? ñ Fellowship Halls, Campgrounds, Colleges, Playgrounds, K-8 schools.

ANOTHER QUESTION: If a private individual provides the facility, and users pay the expenses, would it be alright for the church, the elders, or someone authorized by them to call for a work that was not authorized?

CONCLUSION: GOD HAS GIVEN A DIVINE PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH AND ITS WORK.