

Women's Doctrinal Series

First Baptist Church, Paso Robles

Shelanie Voorheis, Director of Worship and Women's Ministry
rob.shel@fbcpasorobles.org

15 June 2019: Lesson 6--THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence. Ephesians 1:22-23, The MSG

What is doctrine and why do we care?

- Doctrine is the whole teaching of the Bible on a given subject. It matters because right _____ (*mind*) leads to right _____ (*heart/soul*) which lead to right _____ (*strength*).
- 2 Peter 3:17-18

Assumptions:

- The Bible is:
 - _____: *The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God. (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, pg. 73)*
 - _____: *The inerrancy of Scripture means that the Bible always tells the truth, and...it always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about. This definition does not mean that the Bible tells us every fact there is to know about any one subject, but it affirms that what it does say about any subject is true. (Grudem 91)*
 - _____: *The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture...contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly. (Grudem 127)*

The Church: Its Nature, Its Marks, Its Purposes, and Its Means of Grace

The Nature of the Church

- Definition:

_____ (Grudem 853)

- *Ekklēsia*: the term translated “church” in the New Testament, meaning:

- “In every New Testament usage, while *ekklēsia* can mean *more* than a gathering, it never means something *unrelated* to a gathering.” (Bernard N. Howard, “What Is This Thing Called Church?”)
- Pastor Jeff Vanderstelt’s perspective on the Church as “the gathered ones” in “Who is the Church?” presented by Desiring God
- Theologian J.I. Packer’s perspective on the Church as “God’s family”
- Ruled by _____
 - *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.* (Ephesians 1:22-23)
- Centered around _____ in both _____ and _____
 - *You have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to . . . the church of the firstborn. . . . You have come . . . to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.* (Heb. 12:22–24)
 - *God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.* (Eph. 2:6, see also Col. 3:1–4)
 - *As you come to him, the living Stone . . . you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house.* (1 Peter 2:4–5)

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- Built by _____
 - *I will build my church...* (Matt. 16:18)
 - *...the Lord added to their number every day those who were being saved.* (Acts 2:47)
 - Includes:
 - _____
 - *"...on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, '**Gather the people to me**, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.'" (Deuteronomy 4:10, my emphasis)*
 - *"...we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses..." (Hebrews 12:1)*
 - _____
 - *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. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:18-19)*
 - *To the church of God that is in Corinth, 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... (1 Cor. 1:2)*
 - The Church is _____, yet _____
 - INVISIBLE
 - *The invisible church is the church as God sees it. (Grudem 855)*
 - *"The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim. 2:19)*
 - What kinds of dangers could follow a misunderstanding of this principle?
 - VISIBLE
 - *The visible church is the church as Christians on earth see it. In this sense, the visible church includes all who profess faith in Christ and give evidence of that faith in their lives. (Grudem 856)*
 - Paul writes epistles (letters) to the visible church in multiple communities:
 - *To the church of God which is at Corinth... (1 Cor. 1:2)*

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- *To the church of the Thessalonians...*(1 Thess. 1:1)
 - *To Philemon...and Apphia...and Archippus...and the church in your house...*(Philemon 1-2)
 - What kinds of dangers could follow a misunderstanding of this principle?
 - The Church is _____ and _____
 - The church in a _____
 - *"Greet also the church in their house"* (Romans 16:5)
 - The church in a _____
 - *"To the church of God that is in Corinth"* (1 Cor. 1:2)
 - The church in a _____
 - *"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up."* (Acts 9:31)
 - The church throughout the _____
(a.k.a. "The universal church")
 - *Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* (Eph. 5:25)
 - *"God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers..."* (1 Cor. 12:28)

*Does this challenge any preconceived notions or understandings that you may have held regarding what may acceptably qualify as a gathering of the church?

- Metaphors for the Church
 - "To help us understand the nature of the church, Scripture uses a wide range of metaphors and images to describe to us what the church is like." (Grudem 858)
 - Family (spiritual brothers and sisters) (2 Cor. 6:18; Matt. 12:49-50; 1 John 3:14-18)
 - Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7)
 - Branches on a vine (John 15:5)
 - An olive tree (Rom. 11:17-24)
 - A building (1 Cor. 3:9)
 - A harvest (Matt. 13:1-30; John 4:35)

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- A new temple comprised of living stones (1 Pet. 2:4-8)
 - The body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27)

*Why should we be familiar with the range of metaphors used to help us understand the nature of the church?

*What dangers could come from focusing too heavily on any one metaphor?

- The Church and Israel: A brief overview of dispensational theology, covenant theology, and new covenant theology, taken from *“What Does John Piper Believe About Dispensationalism, Covenant Theology, and New Covenant Theology?”* by Matt Perman, desiringgod.org
 - Dispensationalism

First, dispensationalism sees God as structuring His relationship with mankind through several stages of revelation which mark off different dispensations, or stewardship arrangements. Each dispensation is a “test” of mankind to be faithful to the particular revelation given at the time. Generally, seven dispensations are distinguished: innocence (before the fall), conscience (Adam to Noah), government (Noah to Babel), promise (Abraham to Moses), Law (Moses to Christ), grace (Pentecost to the rapture), and the millennium.

Second, dispensationalism holds to a literal interpretation of Scripture. This does not deny the existence of figures of speech and non-literal language in the Bible, but rather means that there is a literal meaning behind the figurative passages.

Third, as a result of this literal interpretation of Scripture, dispensationalism holds to a distinction between Israel (even believing Israel) and the church. On this view, the promises made to Israel in the OT were not intended as prophecies about what God would do spiritually for the church, but will literally be fulfilled by Israel itself (largely in the millennium). For example, the promise of the land is interpreted to mean that God will one day fully restore Israel to Palestine. In contrast, non-dispensationalists typically see the land promise as intended by God to prophesy, in shadowy Old-covenant-form, the greater reality that He would one day make the entire church, Jews and Gentiles, heirs of the whole renewed world (cf. [Romans 4:13](#)).

In many ways it is thus accurate to say that dispensationalism believes in “two peoples of God.” Although both Jews and Gentiles are saved by Christ through faith, believing Israel will be the recipient of additional “earthly” promises (such as prosperity in the specific land

of Palestine, to be fully realized in the millennium) that do not apply to believing Gentiles, whose primary inheritance is thus “heavenly.”

- Covenant Theology

Covenant theology believes that God has structured his relationship with humanity by covenants rather than dispensations. For example, in Scripture we explicitly read of various covenants functioning as the major stages in redemptive history, such as the covenant with Abraham, the giving of the law, the covenant with David, and the new covenant. These post-fall covenants are not new tests of man’s faithfulness to each new stage of revelation (as are the dispensations in dispensationalism), but are rather differing administrations of the single, overarching covenant of grace.

The covenant of grace is one of two fundamental covenants in covenant theology. It structures God’s post-fall relationship to mankind; pre-fall, God structured His relationship by the covenant of works. The covenant of grace is best understood in relation to the covenant of works.

The covenant of works, instituted in the Garden of Eden, was the promise that perfect obedience would be rewarded with eternal life. Adam was created sinless but with the capability of falling into sin. Had he remained faithful in the time of temptation in the Garden (the “probationary period”), he would have been made incapable of sinning and secured in an eternal and unbreakable right standing with God.

But Adam sinned and broke the covenant, and thereby subjected himself and all his descendants to the penalty for covenant-breaking, condemnation. God in His mercy therefore instituted the “covenant of grace,” which is the promise of redemption and eternal life to those who would believe in the (coming) redeemer. The requirement of perfect obedience for eternal life is not annulled by the covenant of grace, but is rather fulfilled by Christ on behalf of His people, since now that all are sinners no one can meet the condition of perfect obedience by his own performance. The covenant of grace, then, does not set aside the covenant of works but rather fulfills it.

As mentioned above, covenant theology emphasizes that there is only one covenant of grace, and that all of the various redemptive covenants that we read of in the Scripture are simply differing administrations of this one covenant. In support, it is pointed out that a covenant is in essence simply a sovereignly given promise (usually with stipulations), and since there is only one promise of salvation (namely, by grace through faith), it follows that there is therefore only one covenant of grace. All of the specific redemptive covenants we read of

(the Abrahamic, Mosaic, etc.) are various and culminating expressions of the covenant of grace.

- New Covenant Theology

New covenant theology typically does not hold to a covenant of works or one overarching covenant of grace (although they would still argue for only one way of salvation). The essential difference between New Covenant Theology (hereafter NCT) and Covenant Theology (CT), however, concerns the Mosaic Law. CT holds that the Mosaic Law can be divided into three groups of laws – those regulating the government of Israel (civil laws), ceremonial laws, and moral laws. The ceremonial law and civil law are no longer in force because the former was fulfilled in Christ and the latter only applied to Israel's theocracy, which is now defunct. But the moral law continues.

NCT argues that one cannot divide the law up in that way, as though part of the Mosaic Law can be abrogated while the rest remains in force. The Mosaic Law is a unity, they say, and so if part of it is canceled, all of it must be canceled. On top of this, they say that the New Testament clearly teaches that the Mosaic Law as a whole is superseded in Christ. It is, in other words, no longer our direct and immediate source of guidance. The Mosaic Law, as a law, is no longer binding on the believer.

Does this mean that believers are not bound by any divine law? No, because the Mosaic Law has been replaced by the law of Christ. NCT makes a distinction between the eternal moral law of God and the code in which God expresses that law to us. The Mosaic Law is an expression of God's eternal moral law as a particular code which also contains positive regulations pertinent to the code's particular temporal purpose, and therefore the cancellation of the Mosaic Law does not mean that the eternal moral law is itself canceled. Rather, upon canceling the Mosaic Law, God gave us a different expression of his eternal moral law – namely, the Law of Christ, consisting in the moral instructions of Christ's teaching and the New Testament. The key issue that NCT seeks to raise is: Where do we look to see the expression of God's eternal moral law today – do we look to Moses, or to Christ? NCT says we look to Christ.

There are many similarities between the Law of Christ and Mosaic Law, but that does not change the fact that the Mosaic Law has been canceled and that, therefore, we are not to look to it for direct guidance but rather to the New Testament. For example, England and the US have many similar laws (for example, murder is illegal in both countries). Nonetheless, the English are not under the laws of America, but of England. If an English citizen murders

in England, he is held accountable for breaking England's law against murder, not America's law against murder.

The benefit of NCT, its advocates argue, is that it solves the difficulty of trying to figure out which of the Mosaic laws apply to us today. On their understanding, since the Mosaic Law is no longer a direct and immediate source of guidance, we look to the Law of Christ for our direct guidance. Although the Mosaic Law is no longer a binding law code in the NT era, it still has the authority, not of law, but of prophetic witness. As such, it fills out and explains certain concepts in both the old and new covenant law.

- Wayne Grudem, in our text, *Systematic Theology*, boils the essence of dispensationalism and non-dispensationalism down this way:
 - *Dispensationalists* believe that the Church and Israel are two separate groups, where God's purposes and promises are fulfilled to the Church in heaven and where God's purposes and promises are fulfilled to ethnic Israel on the earth.
 - *Non-dispensationalists* believe that the Church has replaced Israel in the purposes and promises of God and that the Church is the new recipient for the fulfillment of those purposes and promises.
- The Church and the Kingdom of God
 - Grudem argues that the Kingdom of God and the Church are _____
_____. Rather, they are separate concepts/entities that are in relationship with one another.
 - "The Kingdom is primarily the dynamic reign or kingly rule of God, and, derivatively, the sphere in which the rule is experienced. In biblical idiom, the Kingdom is not identified with its subjects. They are the people of God's rule who enter it, live under it, and are governed by it. The church is the community of the Kingdom but never the Kingdom itself." (George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, p. 111)

The Marks of the Church

- There are _____ and _____ Churches
 - Churches that deviate from or deny sound biblical doctrine cannot be considered true churches.
 - “When there is an assembly of people who take the name “Christian” but consistently teach that people cannot believe their Bibles--indeed a church whose pastor and congregation seldom read their bibles or pray in any meaningful way, and do not believe or perhaps even understand the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ alone, then how can we say that this is a true church?” (Grudem 867)

*Would you consider the church that you are now in to be a true church?
Have you ever been a member of a church that you would think to be a false church?

The Purposes of the Church

- Ministry to God: _____
 - *“Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”* (Col. 3:16)
 - *“Live for the praise of his glory”* (Eph. 1:12)
 - *“Make the most of the time...singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart”* (Eph. 5:16-19)
- Ministry to Believers: _____
 - *“Present every man mature in Christ”* (Col. 1:28)
 - *“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 full stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Eph. 4:12-13)
- Ministry to the World: _____ and _____
 - *“Go and make disciples of all nations”* (Matt. 28:19)
 - *“Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the*

ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:35-36)

- Keeping These Purposes in _____
 - Is one of the three purposes listed above more important than the others?
Why or why not?

The Means of Grace within the Church (Ministry to Believers)

- Definition of the “Means of Grace”: *The means of grace are any _____ within the fellowship of the church that God uses to give more grace to Christians.* (Grudem 950)
 - In other words, when we participate in the following scriptural directives, we come under the fountain of the blessing of God the Father poured out by the Holy Spirit on the Bride of Christ.

- Specific Means of Grace: A Non-Exhaustive List

Ideas...

○ _____(Pastor Mike's Pillar #1)

■ Helps us by:

○ _____(Pastor Mike's Pillar #2)

■ Helps us by:

○ _____(Pastor Mike's Pillar #3)

■ Helps us by:

○ _____(Pastor Mike's Pillar #4)

■ Helps us by:

○ _____(Pastor Mike's Pillar #5)

■ Helps us by:

○ _____

■ Helps us by:

○ _____

■ Helps us by:

○ _____

■ Helps us by:

○ _____

■ Helps us by:

○ _____

■ Helps us by:

○ _____

■ Helps us by:

The Church's One Foundation

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord
She is His new creation
By water and the Word
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died

Elect from every nation
Yet one o'er all the earth
Her charter of salvation
One Lord one faith one birth
One holy name she blesses
Partakes one holy food
And to one hope she presses
With every grace endued

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed
By schisms rent asunder
By heresies distressed
Yet saints their watch are keeping
Their cry goes up how long
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song

'Mid toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won
O happy ones and holy
Lord give us grace that we
Like them the meek and lowly
On high may dwell with Thee

--Samuel John Stone, 1866

Build Your Kingdom Here

Come set Your rule and reign
In our hearts again
Increase in us we pray
Unveil why we're made
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope
Like wildfire in our very souls
Holy Spirit come invade us now
We are Your church
We need Your pow'r in us

We seek Your kingdom first
We hunger and we thirst
Refuse to waste our lives
For You're our joy and prize
To see the captives' hearts released
The hurt the sick the poor at peace
We lay down our lives for heaven's cause
We are Your church
We pray revive this earth

Build Your kingdom here
Let the darkness fear
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land
Set Your church on fire
Win this nation back
Change the atmosphere
Build Your kingdom here we pray

Unleash Your kingdom's pow'r
Reaching the near and far
No force of hell can stop
Your beauty changing hearts
You made us for much more than this
Awake the kingdom seed in us
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ
We are Your church
We are the hope on earth

--Rend Collective, 2011