

Introduction

▶ *Why are we here?*

✖ Many people ask themselves that very question referring to their own personal life on the earth.

✖ But that is not that to which I am referring this morning.

▶ Nor am I referring to why we're here today—rather, the question we're looking to answer here is:

✖ *Why is the church on the earth?*

✖ *What is its purpose and mission?*

▶ In a *very* general sense, the church's main objective is to **glorify God** (1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; 1 Pet. 4:11).

✖ But what, exactly does that mean?

▶ The purpose of the church is **NOT** merely to “*be*,” and come together once a week to worship God—*not by long shot!*

✖ Nor is its purpose merely to be a “beacon”—“*a city set on a hill*” (cf. Matt. 5:14)—in its community.

▶ Let us take a few minutes this morning to look to the Scriptures, and see the three *basic*—yet *specific*—branches of work, and thus determine **what the Bible teaches about the purpose and mission of Christ's church.**

Discussion

I. **BENEVOLENCE**

A. REFERENCES

1. 1 COR. 3:9—“For we are *God's fellow workers*. You are *God's field, God's building.*”

2. GAL. 6:9—*Let Us Not Grow Weary of Doing Good*

3. GAL. 6:10—*Do Good to All Men, and Especially the Brethren*

4. 1 TIM. 5:8-16—*The Church's Duty of Taking Care of “Widows Indeed”*

5. JAS. 1:27—*Caring for Fatherless & Widows*

6. GAL. 2:10—*Remember the Poor*

7. EPH. 4:28—*Do Honest Work with Hands, to Have Something to Share with Any in Need*

a) “As you did it unto one of the least of these...you did it to ME” (Matt. 25:31-46).

B. EXAMPLES

1. ACTS 6:1-6—*Grecian Widows Supported by the Church*

2. GAL. 6:1ff—*Christians in Galatia had Helped One Another*

3. 2 COR. 8:1-5—*Macedonian Went Above and Beyond to Help Brethren in Judæa*

4. 1 THESS. 1:3—*The Thessalonian Christians had Reputation for “Work of Faith and Labor of Love”*

II. **EVANGELISM**

A. MARK 16:15; MATT. 28:18-20; LUKE 24:46,47

1. God has commanded His people to **GO**.

2. Though He didn't specify *how* we are to go, He did answer the “*for what purpose/to what end?*” aspect:

a) “Go, therefore, and **preach the gospel to the whole creation**” (Mk. 16:15).

- b) "Go, therefore, and **disciple all the nations... teaching them** to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you..." (Matt. 28:19,20a).
 - c) "...*repentance and remission of sins* should be **proclaimed in his name to all nations...**" (Lk. 24:47).
3. The church has an obligation and responsibility to preach the gospel to the whole creation!
- a) Not just *preacher, elders, deacons*—but **every single Christian!**
- B. EPHESIANS 3:6-11
- 1. We pointed out in a previous lesson that the church was God's eternal purpose.
 - 2. But look more closely at what Paul says about that eternal purpose bound up in the church:
 - a) "...so that **through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known... THIS was according to the eternal purpose** that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord..." (10,11).
- C. ROMANS 10:4-14
- 1. "For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to **everyone that believes...**" (4).
 - a) "How then will they call on him *in whom they have not believed?*" (14a).
 - b) "Or *how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?*" (14b).
 - c) "And *how are they to hear without someone preaching [to them]??*" (14c).
- D. 2 TIM. 2:2—"...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.**"
- E. 2 TIM. 4:2—"...**preach the word**; be ready *in season and out of season*; **reprove, rebuke, and exhort**, with all *longsuffering and teaching.*"
- F. ACTS 8:4—"They therefore that were scattered abroad, **went about preaching the word.**"
- 1. This is the difference between Paul's commission to Timothy, and the Lord's commission to the church at large:
 - a) Timothy was **confined to specific location**, where he was to preach and teach, esp. those able to teach **others** (i.e., after Timothy's departure, or **others outside Timothy's reach**);
 - b) But the Christians as a whole "**WENT ABOUT preaching the word**" (cp. Mt. 28:19a; Mk. 16:15a)!

III. EDIFICATION

- A. ROMANS 14:19–15:3
- 1. The word "*edify*" (οἰκοδομή) comes from a root which had reference to **construction**, i.e., "**building up.**"
 - 2. "The admonition of these words demands that a true Christian follow after **a constructive program** of...things that **produce harmony, induce fellowship, and lead to fuller appreciation and love among the brethren.**"¹
- B. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-31
- 1. "...**every action shall also be weighed in the light of its effects upon one's fellow Christians.** The purely selfish person is by definition *non-Christian.*"²

¹ Coffman, James Burton. *Romans*. Abilene: ACU Press, 1973. p. 464. Print.

² Coffman, James Burton. *1 & 2 Corinthians*. Abilene: ACU Press, 1974. p. 159. Print. Emp. added.

2. "Living Letters paraphrases [vv. 29,30] thus: 'But **why, you may ask, must I be guided by what someone else thinks?** If I can thank God for the food and enjoy it, why let someone spoil everything *just because he thinks I am wrong?*' In verse 31, Paul replies, 'Well, I'll tell you why.'"³
3. "The overriding question which must determine all that any Christian does is...whether or not his actions will *build up, edify, strengthen* and *encourage* the church...; and **if any action whatsoever falls short of such utility... then it is forbidden to the child of God.**"⁴

Conclusion

- ▶ HEB. 5:12–6:1—*The Church's Mission in a Nutshell*
 - ✦ To Lead *Lost* Souls **TO** Christ;
 - ✦ To Lead *Found* Souls **CLOSER TO** Christ.
- ▶ EPH. 4:1-16—*The Not-So-Secret Secret Formula to Success*
- ▶ MATT. 6:33—*The Short Version*
 - ✦ "**Seek FIRST the kingdom of God**, and His righteousness..."

³ Metz, Donald S. *Beacon Bible Commentary*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1969. p. 412. Print. Emp. added.

⁴ Coffman. *Ibid.* p. 161. Emp. added.