

# What Is a *Great* Church?

What Are You Doing about It?

# What a *Great* Church Is Not!

- It may not be growing in numbers!
- It may not be growing in buildings!
- It may not be growing in programs!
- It will not be growing in popularity!
- It will not be growing in fashion!

# What Is a *Great* Church?

- On December 21, 2011 we studied what a church is!
- We thank God for all the blessings of a local church!
- If a church is all we know it is, we should be the best!
- Why would we ever give Jesus Christ second best?
- What are you doing to make our church the best?

# Why Have a *Great* Church?

- It is certainly not for our glory in any way whatsoever.
- It is for the glory of God and His Son Jesus Christ!
- It is for the profit of all members to grow in grace!
- It is for profit of others by sounding out the word!
- To give God a temple *exceeding magnificent* like David.

# What Is a *Great* Church?

- It is a church that is modeled after apostolic doctrine.
- It is a church that does not move from apostolic faith.
- It is a church that does everything right with passion.
- Let us review what the best N.T. churches did well.
- Let each member consider what he or she is doing.

# ChristCentric

- A great church is centered around Jesus Christ!
- In all things He should be preeminent (Col 1:18; I Cor 16:22).
- All content is toward Jesus crucified (I Cor 2:2; Gal 6:14).
- This is the great mystery of godliness (I Tim 1:15; 3:16).
- What are you doing? Is your life notably Christcentric?

# First Love – Hot

- Jesus is severe to churches losing first love (Rev 2:4-5).
- Jesus is severe to lukewarm churches (Rev 3:15-19).
- Minding earthly things is belly worship (Phil 3:18-19).
- Great churches provoke one another to love Christ.
- What are you doing? Are you renewing your first love?

# Regenerated Membership

- We reject infant baptism as devilish heresy (1 Pet 3:21).
- We avoid quasi-infant baptism of dipping children.
- We want to see a work of grace, not correct answers.
- The unregenerate should not be comfortable here.
- What are you doing? Is your life visibly regenerate?

# Spirit-Filled

- It is a command to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18).
- The greatest church was filled with the Spirit (Ac 2:38-47).
- You should pray for this great blessing (Eph 1:17; 3:14-19).
- We should live and walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:13-26; Ep 5:8-10).
- What are you doing? Do not grieve or quench Him.

# Doctrinal Dogmatism

- Great churches fight for doctrinal integrity (Jude 1:3).
- False teachers are marked and avoided (Rom 16:17-18).
- Heretics are rejected (Gal 1:6-9; II Tim 3:5; Titus 3:10-11).
- False doctrine is hated, truth exalted (Ps 119:128; I Ti 3:15).
- What are you doing? Do you know and defend truth?

# Preaching Emphasis

- The Bible emphasizes preaching over anything else.
- All things are done for edification, not entertainment.
- Paul preached to midnight, no praise bands present.
- Growth in faith is by God's word (Rom 10:17; I Pet 2:2).
- What are you doing? Prepare passionately to hear.

# Due-Order Details

- Great churches care about details, because God does.
- Ask Cain, Nadab, Moses, Uzzah, Uzziah, Ananias, etc.
- The argument from silence is invalid for God's worship.
- We reject steeples, drums, dry-pastor baptisteries, etc.
- What are you doing? Do you appreciate and defend?

# Perilous Times

- Alert churches see the prophecy fulfilling (II Ti 3:1 – 4:4).
- They know this is the greatest danger the church faces.
- They studiously obey its warnings against all foes.
- They hold to the old paths as directed (Jer 6:16; Jude 1:3).
- What are you doing? Observe and despise trends.

# Praying

- The most powerful thing any church can do is pray.
- Effectual fervent prayers by the righteous avail much.
- The early church was a praying church (Acts 2:42; 12:5).
- The armor of God is worn by prayer warriors (Ep 6:10-19).
- What are you doing? Do you pray for church daily?

# Brotherly Love

- Jesus said to be known by brotherly love (John 13:34-35).
- This is love within the church, not social programs.
- This is sacrificial, selfless efforts to perfect the body.
- This is other-oriented keeping of *one another* duties.
- What are you doing? Are you mainly giving, not taking.

# Forgiving

- To be a great church, we must forgive one another.
- We should forgive as we have been forgiven (Ep 4:31-32).
- God and Christ forgave far more than you ever can!
- We need God's forgiveness, so we must gladly give it.
- What are you doing? Love to forgive fully, freely, now!

# Peaceful

- Jesus Christ loves a peaceful church (I Thess 5:13; Eph 4:3).
- Jesus Christ loves peacemakers (Matt 5:9; James 3:17-18).
- Churches with division are not great (I Cor 3:1-3; 1:10-13).
- Peace takes sacrificial compromise (I Cor 6:7-8; Pr 19:11).
- What are you doing? Always sooth, never strive!

# Unity

- A church should have one mind and mouth (1 Cor 1:10).
- This unity of worship is to glorify God (Ro 15:6; Ps 133:1-3).
- All must endeavor to keep our common union (Ep 4:3).
- We pray and labor against strange children (Ps 144:11-14).
- What are you doing? Avoid any cliques, debates, etc.

# Self-Correcting

- Church members are to correct one another (I Thes 5:14).
- Great churches have many soul winners (James 5:19-20).
- The spiritual members must do their duty (Gal 6:1-2).
- Offences can be resolved two ways (Matt 5:21-26; 18:15-18).
- What are you doing? You are your brother's keeper.

# Disciplining

- Great churches discipline their membership (I Cor 5:1-13).
- They exclude and shun public sinners (II Thess 3:6,14).
- Discipline is sad, but it is also necessary to be great.
- The holiness of God and Jesus Christ's Table is at stake.
- What are you doing? Fully agree and cooperate in it.

# Holiness

- God is holy, and His churches should be (I Pet 1:13-17).
- Pleasing God requires sanctification (I Thes 4:1-8; II Cor 7:1).
- Holiness is unpopular, but so what – perilous times.
- We exalt beauty of holiness, not holiness of beauty.
- What are you doing? Are you living a truly holy life?

# Reverent Worship

- It is more than being old-fashioned; it is being holy.
- God hates casual worship, even in N.T. (Heb 12:28-29).
- Gravity and sobriety are proper (Titus 2:2,6; I Pet 2:17).
- The Bible suggests dressing up (Gen 35:2; Ex 19:10,14).
- What are you doing? Grasp and love our worship.

# Zeal

- Zeal is good when affected in a good thing (Gal 4:18).
- God was zealous to save you by Jesus (Isaiah 9:6-7).
- Jesus' zeal ate Him up regarding God's house (Jn 2:17).
- Paul worked harder than all other apostles (I Cor 15:10).
- What are you doing? Do you laboriously serve Christ?

# Attendance

- Church attendance is not Christian liberty (He 10:23-25).
- Church duties need the whole church (1 Cor 14:23; 11:18).
- God is to be worshipped this way (Ps 122:1-9; Acts 2:41-47).
- Attendance is important for our duties (Heb 3:12-13).
- What are you doing? In what quartile do you fall?

# Every Joint

- The breadth of a church is as important as its depth.
- To get a “team bonus” from Christ, all must partake.
- Every joint and part is for maximum increase (Ep 4:16).
- In body dynamics, all members are part (I Cor 12:13-27).
- What are you doing? Push and pray for all members.

# Thanksgiving

- In public and in private Christians should give thanks.
- We must always give thanks to God (II Thes 2:13; Heb 13:15).
- Complaining or whining is unacceptable before God.
- We should be more thankful for abundance (Deut 28:47).
- What are you doing? Are you verbally thankful always?

# Evangelism

- The church at Thessalonica sounded out (I Thess 1:8-10).
- We want to be fellow-helpers to the truth (III John 1:8).
- Pastors must do the work of an evangelist (II Tim 4:5).
- We should pray and pay to save God's elect (Rom 10:1).
- What are you doing? Matching Andrew and Philip?

# Civil Obedience

- Civil rulers are God's ministers for good (Rom 13:1-7).
- We are to obey them for the Lord's sake (I Pet 2:13-17).
- We pray for them and honor them (I Tim 2:1-3; Pr 24:21-22).
- Patriotism in any nation is not a branch of Christianity.
- What are you doing? Honor and obey them gladly.

# Christian Liberty

- We do not require what the N.T. does not require.
- We do not condemn what the N.T. does not condemn.
- We allow liberty of conscience & personal preference.
- Romans 14 exalts righteousness, peace, and joy.
- What are you doing? Do you keep rules of liberty?

# Passionate

- One way to distinguish ourselves is by our passion.
- David and Paul are two great examples serving God.
- Our love of God and Christ should consume our lives.
- Copy David's love of God's house (Ps 26:8; 27:4; 84:1-2,10).
- What are you doing? Is your passion known by all?

# Joyful

- Joy is not an option or unreasonable for a Christian.
- With our doctrine, most cannot imagine any joy.
- But our doctrine is for great joy in God and Christ.
- Our services should be visibly and audibly joyful.
- What are you doing? How joyful are you in Christ?

# Hospitable & Entertaining

- Christians are to be given to hospitality (Rom 12:13).
- Christians are to provide entertainment (Heb 13:2).
- Even widows are measured by these rules (I Tim 5:10).
- True friends and hosts will be remembered (Heb 6:10).
- What are you doing? Hoping someone will invite you?

# Welfare

- We take care of our own according to Bible rules.
- From weekly feasts of charity to private kindnesses.
- From bridge building to moving to clear acts of God.
- Your thought should be giving, not getting (James 1:27).
- What are you doing? Consider and help the poor.

# Work Ethic

- Christians are energetic, hard working, productive.
- They know diligence is a Christian virtue (Rom 12:11).
- Lazy souls should be excluded and starved (II Thes 3:10).
- Work mightily as to the Lord Christ (Ec 9:10; Col 3:22-25).
- What are you doing? Outwork everyone you know.

# Liberal

- Liberality is a synonym for generosity – a great trait.
- No one is more liberal than God has been to you.
- The liberal soul shall be made fat – scattering works.
- Men will be blessed or judged by liberality (Isaiah 32:8).
- What are you doing? Are you liberal nearly to a fault?

# Pastoral Support

- They that preach the gospel are to live by it (I Cor 9:14).
- Careful giving encourages the man of God (II Chr 31:4).
- The harder and better he works, the more (I Tim 5:17).
- Without a focused ox ... little increase (Pr 14:4; I Cor 9:8-11).
- What are you doing? Do you help or hurt the giving?

# Ancient Landmarks (#1)

- There are many more things Jesus Christ looks for.
- Our women should wear modest clothing (I Tim 2:9-10).
- Women should have long hair, men short (I Co 11:14-16).
- Closed communion is to avoid any leaven (I Cor 5:9-11).
- We deny apostolic gifts e.g. tongues after 70 A.D.

# Ancient Landmarks (#2)

- We use wine and unleavened bread in communion.
- We hate Roman Catholicism as the antichrist religion.
- We reject secret societies and pagan cults like Masons.
- Women do not speak or teach in the assemblies.
- We reject the pagan holy days of Roman Catholicism.

# Ancient Landmarks (#3)

- We only allow marriage in the Lord to the same faith.
- Children are trained the Bible way to honor parents.
- Authority in five spheres is exalted and expounded.
- Cremation is a pagan rite adopted from dark nations.
- Marriages must be kept carefully to please God.

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# For Further Study

- **What Is a Church?** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/what-is-a-church-av/sermon.php>.
- **Ancient Landmarks** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/remove-not-the-ancient-landmark/sermon.php>.
- **Exceeding Magnifical** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/exceeding-magnifical/sermon.php>
- **Perilous Times** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/perilous-times/sermon.php>.
- **God Hates Compromise** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/compromise.pdf>.
- **A Preaching Service** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/preaching-service/sermon.php>.
- **True Worshippers** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/true-worshippers/sermon.php>.
- **Where Is Your Tent?** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/where-is-your-tent.pdf>.
- **Every Joint** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/where-is-your-tent.pdf>.
- **One Another** ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/one-another/sermon.php>.

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