# What Is a Great Church?

What Are You Doing about It?

#### What a Great Church Is Not!

It may not be growing in <u>numbers</u>!

It may not be growing in <u>buildings</u>!

It may not be growing in <u>programs</u>!

It will not be growing in popularity!

It will not be growing in <u>fashion</u>!

#### 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 <u>not</u> 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 magnifical 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 (Col 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 (1 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 (I 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 (1 Thes 4:1-8; 11 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 (1 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 (1 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 (1 Cor 9:14).
- Careful giving encourages the man of God (II Chr 31:4).

• The harder and better he works, the more (1 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 (1 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 <u>secret societies</u> and pagan cults like Masons.

Women do not speak or teach in the assemblies.

We reject the <u>pagan holy days</u> 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? ... <a href="http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/what-is-a-church-av/sermon.php">http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/what-is-a-church-av/sermon.php</a>.
- Ancient Landmarks ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/remove-not-the-ancient-landmark/sermon.php.
- Exceeding Magnifical ... <a href="http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/exceeding-magnifical/sermon.php">http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/exceeding-magnifical/sermon.php</a>
- Perilous Times ... <a href="http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/perilous-times/sermon.php">http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/perilous-times/sermon.php</a>.
- God Hates Compromise ... <a href="http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/compromise.pdf">http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/compromise.pdf</a>.
- A Preaching Service ... <a href="http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/preaching-service/sermon.php">http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/preaching-service/sermon.php</a>.
- True Worshippers ... <a href="http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/true-worshippers/sermon.php">http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/true-worshippers/sermon.php</a>.
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