

Bible Doctrine

Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith

Lesson 43: The Purity, Unity, and Purposes of the Church

Chapter 26

October 29, 2023

I. The Purity of the Church.

A. Definition. “The purity of the church is its degree of freedom from wrong doctrine and conduct, and its degree of conformity to God’s revealed will for the church.” Wayne Grudem

B. Examples of churches excelling in purity.

Philippians 1:3-6 - *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 - *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.*

C. Examples of churches lacking in purity.

Galatians 1:6-7 - *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.*

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 - *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*

“There are a number of factors that would indicate that a church is ‘more pure,’ including biblical doctrine, proper use of the sacraments (or ordinances), right use of church discipline, genuine worship, effective prayer, effective witness, personal holiness of life among members, care for the poor, and love for Christ. Of course, churches can be more pure in some areas and less pure in others—a church may have excellent doctrine and sound preaching, for example, yet be a dismal failure in witness to others or in meaningful worship. But the New Testament encourages us to work for the purity of the church in all of these areas.” Wayne Grudem.

II. The Unity of the Church.

A. Definition. “The unity of the church is its degree of freedom from divisions among true Christians.” Wayne Grudem

B. Jesus’ call for unity.

John 17:20-23 - *I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

C. Paul's call for unity.

Ephesians 4:1-6 - *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Philippians 2:1-2 - *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ²fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

D. Exceptions.

1 Corinthians 5:11 - *But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.*

2 John 10-11 - *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.*

III. The Purposes of the Church.

A. Ministry to God: Worship.

Psalms 95:6-7 - *Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. ⁷For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.*

Colossians 3:16 - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

B. Ministry to believers: Nurture.

Ephesians 4:11-15 - *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—*

Hebrews 10:24-25 - *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

C. Ministry to the world: Evangelism and mercy.

Matthew 28:18-20 - *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

1 John 3:17-18 - *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*