

**UNDERSTANDING AND DOING GOD'S WILL
THE LORD'S WILL FOR HIS LOCAL CHURCH-PT 1
ACTS 1:8; 2:41-47; 4:31, 33**

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Introduction

Do you ever wonder how the **LORD** sees and views local **CHURCHES** of our day and time, including this **CHURCH**?

If we honestly look at **what SCRIPTURE** has to say both **ABOUT the CHURCH as a whole and LOCAL CHURCHES in particular and TO the CHURCH as a whole and LOCAL CHURCHES in particular**, it is clear that even many *“independent, fundamental, Bible believing, Baptist Churches”* are falling short of what the **LORD** intends for them to be!

Even a casual reading of **CHRIST'S** messages to the seven **CHURCHES** in Asia in *Revelation 2-3* reveals some things we need to consider:

1. **CHRIST KNEW THEIR WORKS! (Each Church was different!)**
2. **CHRIST KNEW THEIR LABOR! (Each Church was different!)**
3. **CHRIST KNEW THEIR STRENGTHS! (Where they excelled!)**
4. **CHRIST KNEW THEIR WEAKNESSES AND PROBLEMS! (Where they were lacking! And many we can see in some of them some of the same problems that we see in our day!**
5. **CHRIST GAVE THEM PRAISE FOR WHAT THEY HAD RIGHT!**
6. **CHRIST GAVE THEM ADMONISHMENT AND CORRECTION FOR WHAT THEY HAD WRONG!**

The point I want to make is that **WE** would do well to heed **CHRIST'S** warnings to them and **HIS** repeated admonition to others...especially the one where **HE** says, *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.”*

We can also read the **EPISTLES** written to **LOCAL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES** and even **PASTOR TIMOTHY** and **TITUS** and learn much!

WHEN WE TAKE TIME TO DO THAT, SOME THINGS WILL BE COME CLEAR:

We Can See That Many CHURCHES Have Lost Their PURPOSE!

1. The **GREAT COMMISSION** has been cast aside as some **CHURCHES** have become no more than just a place for social events. (Nowhere do we see in **SCRIPTURE** where **CHRIST** intended for **HIS CHURCH** to be just a social club!)
2. Many people come to **CHURCH** to **SIT AND BE SERVED** rather than to **STAND AND SERVE!** (I call it the *“Bless me if you can!”* mentality! I wish you could field the calls that I field of folks looking for a **CHURCH** and you would understand why I say that.)

In too many **CHURCHES**, *“the work of the ministry”* is largely left to the **MAN OF GOD** and his wife and a few others! But that is not what **CHRIST** intended either! He wants each member to be active in the **BODY!** That's why the **HOLY SPIRIT** has gifted each member!

3. Some **CHURCHES** have become no more than a place for folks to come and sooth their conscience that they are doing *“OK,”* instead of being places of **CONVICTION** to **STIR THEM TO OBEDIENCE!**

If **CONVICTION** does come, some will find somewhere else to go where they don't feel that **CONVICTION**, some may just quit **CHURCH** altogether, and some just harden their hearts until their heart callouses and they don't feel the **CONVICTION** anymore!

The APOSTLE PAUL nailed it in *2 Timothy 4:1-4.*

We Can See That Many CHURCHES Have Lost Their POWER!

1. **There seems to be so few that are truly being converted!** (Now, while some Churches may have many *“professions of faith,”* the lack of any change on the part of the converts point to few in possession!)

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2 Corinthians 5:17—“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

2. **There are too many MEMBERS who have lost their testimony!**

(i.e. They are a lot like Lot! Remember lot and his sons-in-law?)

Genesis 19:14—“And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.”

When Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, the influence of Sodom destroyed both his testimony and his family!

3. **There seems to be little fear of GOD among many who profess salvation!**

The absence of the **FEAR OF GOD** is supposed to be characteristic of those who are **LOST, NOT** those who claim to be **SAVED!**

Many CHURCHES Have Lost Their PURPOSE! Their POWER!

We Can See Many CHURCHES Have Lost Their PURITY!

1. Some have become havens for **UNREPENTANT SINNERS!**
2. Some have adopted **WORLDLY STANDARDS and PRACTICES** forsaking the **HOLY STANDARDS** of the **HOLY GOD!**

What is the **LORD'S WILL** for **HIS LOCAL CHURCHES**? Or we could ask it this way... **What Are the LORD'S INTENTS And PURPOSES** for **HIS LOCAL CHURCHES**?

I. **THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCHES TO BE FILLED WITH POWER!**

Acts 1:8—“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

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We are only **FILLED WITH POWER** when we are **FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST!**

Ephesians 5:18—“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; **but be filled with the Spirit;**”

One reason so many are not **FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST** is because they are filled with something else and there is no room for the **HOLY GHOST** to fill their lives! Here are a few things to consider...

* We can't be full of **SELF** and the **HOLY SPIRIT** at the same time! (i.e. If our **LIFE** is **SELF-CENTERED**, then it is not **CHRIST-CENTERED!**)

* We can't be full of **SIN** and the **HOLY SPIRIT** at the same time! (i.e. The **HOLY SPIRIT** is not going to **FILL** a dirty vessel!)

* We can't be full of the **WORLD** and the **HOLY SPIRIT** at the same time! (We are not to be pressed into the mold of the **WORLD!**
Romans 12:1-2)

THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCHES TO BE FILLED WITH POWER!

II. **THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCHES TO BE INVOLVED IN WITNESSING!**

Acts 1:8—“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

The early **CHURCH** was filled with **HOLY SPIRIT POWER** and we see the result in **Acts 4:31**

Acts 4:31—“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and **they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.**”

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Acts 4:33—“**And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.**”

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (For the **Word of God** to be received it first had to be proclaimed!)

Acts 2:47b—“**And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**” (When there is no witnessing, there is no addition!)

THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCH –TO BE FILLED WITH POWER, TO BE INVOLVED IN WITNESSING! . . .

III. THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCH TO BE FILLED WITH RIGHT DOCTRINE!

Acts 2:42—“**And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine...**”

The **GREAT COMMISSION** has three parts!

(**THE GOSPEL, BELIEVERS BAPTISM, RIGHT DOCTRINE!**)

Matthew 28:18-20—“**. . .Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: . . .**”

2 Timothy 4:2-4—“**. . .reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 **And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.**”**

Four Things Are Needed For The CHURCH To Be FILLED With RIGHT DOCTRINE:

A. **RIGHT DOCTRINE Has To Be GIVEN!**

(Two methods of Teaching/preaching)

1 Timothy 4:13—“**Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.**”

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1 Timothy 4:16—“**Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**”

Titus 2:1—“**But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:**”

B. **RIGHT DOCTRINE Has To Be RECEIVED!**

Paul said of the Bereans: *Acts 17:11*—“**. . .that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**”

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7—“**6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.**”

1 Thessalonians 2:13—“**13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.**”

C. **RIGHT DOCTRINE Has To Be PUT INTO PRACTICE!**

Too many want **RIGHT DOCTRINE** taught, but they don't want to live it!

1 Thessalonians 4:1—“**1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.**”

2 Thessalonians 3:6-7—“**6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us:”**

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RIGHT DOCTRINE Has To Be TAUGHT, RECEIVED PUT INTO PRACTICE...

D. WRONG DOCTRINE Has To Be AVOIDED!

Romans 16:17—“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.**”

Ephesians 4:14—“**That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;**”

Titus 3:10—“**A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;**”

THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCH –TO BE FILLED WITH POWER, TO BE INVOLVED IN WITNESSING, TO BE FILLED WITH RIGHT DOCTRINE! . . .

Conclusion

So, what does the **LORD** want us to glean from all of this?
What are **HIS INTENTS AND PURPOSES** for **HIS CHURCH** today?
Has **HE** changed? **NO!** The **CHURCH** belongs to **CHRIST!**

So let's put it on a personal level:

1. **The LORD Wants Us To Be FILLED WITH HIS POWER!**
Are we? It begins with salvation! The Holy Spirit doesn't even move in until that point! (We must be empty of self, sin, and the world!)
2. **The LORD Wants Us To Be WITNESSES FOR HIM! Are we?**
3. **The LORD Wants Us To Be FILLED WITH RIGHT DOCTRINE! Are we?** (Giving Right Doctrine, Receiving Right Doctrine, Practicing Right Doctrine, Avoiding Wrong Doctrine.)