

The Church Covenant Part 2

A sermon by Pastor Byron Chesney July 27, 2016 during the PM service.

Ephesians 5:25-27

Our Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of our Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort, to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines, to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger, to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another with brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

This is part 2 of our examination of our Church covenant and how it lines up Scripture. We left off in Part 1 in paragraph 2 discussing **to sustain its worship,**

We talked about how the latest statistics show that there are around 4,000 churches a year in the United States that close their doors permanently due to lack of support from members. And I emphasized the fact that if you belong to this Church then if you are physically and mentally able to be here, that this is the Church you should be attending when services are being held. Not constantly running off to other Churches when your own Church is holding services. That's the same as your family going to eat with the neighbors every night instead of at home with their own family, it just isn't right.

So, we pick up tonight with the next part in paragraph 2 which with the words; **ordinances, discipline and doctrine.** Let's read from the beginning of paragraph two so we have it in its context:

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort, to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines =

Ordinances: As we discussed Sunday night, the Baptist Church has two ordinances that we follow that we believe were commands from the Lord Jesus; baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism: Matthew 28:19-20: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Lord's Supper: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26: For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

We believe these two ordinances are symbolic not literal. In other words, Baptism doesn't save you; it symbolizes your new walk with Christ. It shows that you identify with him and you follow up your conversion with baptism. The Lord's Supper is also symbolic of the Lord's flesh and blood; it is not literally his flesh and blood as some denominations teach.

As a member of this Church you agree that you will strive to maintain the ordinances that we observe and participate in them.

Discipline: 1 Timothy 3:14-16: These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Paul writing to his young son in the faith Timothy, inspired by God wrote those words down. He had been explaining proper order in the Church and the qualifications of pastors and deacons and he concluded it with informing Timothy about proper discipline in the Church. He said, "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The Lord thinks very highly of His Church and he expects it to be run accordingly. God is a God of order and the Church should never be in chaos or turmoil. Paul dealing with the immature Corinthian Church says this: **1 Corinthians 14:40** Let all things be done decently and in order. They had let all kinds of things get out of order and Paul was setting them straight. As members of this Church we agree that we will strive to maintain discipline and order in God's House.

and doctrines = Ephesians 4:11-14: And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 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;

One of the most important ingredients of a solid New Testament Baptist Church is its doctrine. If you are not following sound doctrine you have no business being a Church. In Paul's 2 Epistles to Timothy and Titus, he mentions the doctrine of the Church 16 times. That is more than any other books of the Bible.

1Timothy 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other **doctrine**,

1Timothy 1:10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound **doctrine**;

1Timothy 4:6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good **doctrine**, whereunto thou hast attained.

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

1Timothy 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.

1Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and **doctrine**.

1Timothy 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* **doctrine** be not blasphemed.

1Timothy 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the **doctrine** which is according to godliness;

2 Timothy 3:10 But thou hast fully known my **doctrine**, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for **doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and **doctrine**.

2 Timothy 4:3 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;

Titus 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound **doctrine** both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

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

Titus 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in **doctrine** shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

Titus 2:10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the **doctrine** of God our Saviour in all things.

As a Church we must all adhere to the same doctrine. That is the only way we can be in unity and have all things in common. If we have a mixture of different doctrine among our members then how could we decide what we truly believe?

For example: At Highland Baptist Church we believe in the doctrine of eternal security of the believer. That is what the Bible teaches. So if some members believe that and others do not how could we be in harmony? I know a pastor that told me he once pastored a Church that didn't believe in eternal security and he knew they didn't when he accepted the call to be their pastor. I asked him how he could have possibly pastored a Church like that. He said: "I just avoiding preaching on that subject." Oh how tragic. I would feel like I was being suffocated if I couldn't preach the truth and full council of God.

to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church = 2 Corinthians 9:6-7:But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

One thing that we have never had to worry about at this Church is the willingness of people to give. We have regular tithers the faithfully give their tithes in every week, two weeks, or month. We've took on projects over the past 2 years such as having the parking lot repaved, replacing the heat and air unit that went out, replacing our worn out copying machine and the list goes on.

We have lights that burn, water that runs, and bills to pay. Without the giving of God's people to support the expenses of the Church we wouldn't be able to keep our doors open.

the relief of the poor= We have taken up money to help those in need and folks have given over and above every single time. We have a widows and needy family fund that we have used to help those folks out when they are in need.

and the spread of the Gospel through all nations= Mark 16:15: And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

Nothing brings me more joy than to know that we have people here who care enough about spreading the Gospel that they are willing to give faithfully to support our missionaries and to see that we spread the Gospel. I made a plea for help with mailing out Church flyers with the Gospel message on them not just once but twice for a total of 10,000 flyers and God's people have generously donated their money for this cause. We are mailed out 3,810 of them this morning thanks to those who gave.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; = Deuteronomy 6:5-9: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

God places great importance on families. Churches are made up of families. Some large ones and some small ones. Families do things together; eat together, go places together, live together, go on vacation together, go to Church together, play games together, shouldn't we also study God's Word and have devotions and pray together as well? Families are important and having your family instructed in the Word of God is important because it not only adds strength to your family but it makes you a better Church member.

Secret devotions: = **Matthew 14:23:** And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. == **Mark 1:35:** And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

These are just two of several examples of the Lord Jesus having secret devotions. He would often get away to pray and talk to the Father. If the Lord Jesus needed secret devotion time don't you think we need it even more? We too need to get away from the distractions of the world and talk to the Lord.

to religiously educate our children, = **2 Timothy 3:14-17:** But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

I fully believe anyone that does not religiously educate their children is engaging in child abuse. The greatest thing you can do for your children is to tell them about Jesus. To bring them to Church and Sunday school so they can be educated with God's Word. My wife homeschooled my two daughters using only religious curriculum. They weren't forced to participate and study ungodly things or have homosexuality injected into their school work, or Muslim theology forced upon them.

to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances,= **John 1:35-42:** Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, **What seek ye?** They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39 He saith unto them, **Come and see.** They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 **He first findeth his own brother Simon,** and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Notice that the Bible says that Andrew FIRST findeth his own brother Simon, so he could tell him about Jesus. Sometimes the greatest mission field you will ever be in is your family. If you have a large amount of family members, cousins, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, etc.. you can guarantee that out of all of them, one of them is probably lost, maybe several of them. **Romans 1:16:** For I am not ashamed of the

gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

to walk circumspectly in the world, = **Ephesians 5:15-16:** See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. == That word circumspectly means to be diligent, to be aware of what's going on around you. As a Christian we should be constantly aware of the world and people around us. The only way you can help others is if you know they need help. Christians are to be salt and light in this world, we can't be either if we stay to ourselves and pay no attention to others around us.

to be just in our dealings,= **1 Corinthians 6:7-8:** Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? 8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

If there is anything that gives Christianity a black eye it is those that proclaim to be Christians yet they are not honest in their dealings. I used to know a guy that would buy old cars that were on their last leg and get them running just enough to sell. He would pour sawdust in the oil to keep the rods from knocking, black pepper in the radiator to keep the water from leaking, knock holes in the exhaust to cover up bad sounds in the engine and all sorts of things. Of course he would lie to everyone that came to look at one and tell them things like "oh, it belonged to this little granny that only drove it to Church and to the grocery store." When in reality it was a used up pile of junk that was practically given to him.

faithful in our engagements = **Luke 16:10-12:** He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

In this parable of the unjust steward we see what the Lord thinks about being faithful in our engagements. It is expected that anyone who is a child of God should be faithful in all of their engagements.

and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger, = **1 Timothy 4:12:** Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. == the word "deportment" means "one's behavior or conduct." As Christians we need to know how to behave ourselves in this world. We should live in a way that is pleasing to the Lord, when we do that we can't help but be exemplary in our deportment. As for the "**tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger**":

Colossians 3:12-17: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 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. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.