

Where Do Churches Come From?
Part III – The Heart and Soul
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Good morning, Lighthouse!

Today is part III in our series of messages entitled, “Where do Churches come from?”

I trust that thus far you have learned a lot about where Churches come from; both the real ones and the otherwise.

Understanding what the Bible teaches about planting a new Church and what is the right and Biblical way in which a new Church is born has accomplished much already.

Last week in a special session of business, Lighthouse Baptist Church was able to vote in complete unity to sponsor the birth of what we now know will be called Revolution Baptist Church, under the leadership of Brother Gary Milbourne, in the Pearland area.

Today, most Churches (allow me to preface this by stating that today we will be speaking in regard to true, genuine, real, ‘Baptist by practice’ Churches as opposed to false ones); most Churches have their priorities out of order.

So much of what God teaches us about proper priorities and doctrine and methods are found through the examples and instructions in many passages and places in Scripture.

We don't always get to have everything wrapped up for us in one nice neat passage or verse like John 3:16; proper priorities come from real study and Biblical understanding.

It is pretty much none of our business how other Churches do what they do; but for Lighthouse and for Revolution and to some lesser degree the Missionaries we support, it is very much our business.

Biblical priorities for a real Church are thus:

1. First, Jesus! Everything we do must be “[by Him and for Him](#)” just like Scripture tells us in

Colossians 1:14-18

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the

dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

His glory must stand first above all things and every decision we make must keep it that way.

2. Our second priority is you; why? Because you are the members of His body! Because the Lord has made you His first priority. Because the equipping and nurturing and maturing of those the Lord has saved and placed under our care is essential.

Ephesians 2:19-22

- 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but [1] fellow citizens with the saints, and [2] of the household of God;
 20 And [3] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;
 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord:
 22 In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

We are God's dwelling place here in this world!

Jesus said, Simon do you love me; feed my lambs!

3. Our third priority is winning the lost; reaching the yet unsaved that they might be transformed by the gospel. Without winning souls a Church is simply waiting around to die.

The personality; the heart and soul, if you will, of every Church is influenced greatly by these priorities. When people come to Lighthouse, what they experience here and the degree to which we can be a positive influence in their lives is the cumulative effect of many factors.

Have you ever thought about what we really want our guests to experience here at Lighthouse? How about what Jesus wants His guests to experience here?

Love? Oh, yes; we and the Lord want you to experience love; but not like you might think.

Consider the true need of someone coming here seeking the Lord; whether to be saved or to find a solid Church where they can belong.

They need to feel welcome; they should receive a genuine, 'from the heart' welcome from many of us. They should sense that we really care about them; whatever their station in life may appear to be.

But more than anything, they need to see people who are absolutely in love with Jesus!

They need to see people who worship openly and actively. They need to see people who honor the Lord, who give, who bow before Him; people who avail themselves of every opportunity to demonstrate their genuine

adoration of the One who bought us back from their sins.

I wish all of you could have experienced our young people worshipping the Lord at Youth Camp. They worshipped the Lord just like David of old with all their might, holding nothing back; it was wonderful and amazing.

During especially Jr. Camp; when the preacher said, "Let's all pray," every young person in the place dropped to their knees as one with no hesitation.

We all ought to worship like that every week; if we did, those who walk in here and see it will not leave the same for having experienced it.

Lighthouse, our heart and soul as a Church is great in many ways, but it is small and weak compared to what we could be for Jesus.

I learned a long time ago that no one and surely no Church can be what everybody wants. So I decided that I simply want to be what Jesus wants. Likewise for our Church; we simply want to be what Jesus wants...do I speak for the Church, Lighthouse? Is that truly what we want?

I asked the Lord this week, "Lord, where does that personality; that heart and soul of a Church come from? What is it that causes people who really want the Lord in their lives to want to be here and belong here?"

Here is what He showed me; first of all it comes from:

I. The priorities, the commitment and the example of the leadership.

A. This all starts with the Pastor.

1. The priorities of the Pastor will not automatically become those of the Church, but one thing is sure; unless these priorities are in the Pastor they will never become those of the Body.

2. No one likely will become more committed to the well being of the Body than the Pastor.

3. No one will likely sacrifice more for the benefit of the Church than the Pastor.

4. It is the Pastor that must watch and guard and protect the good name of the Church at any cost.

5. It is the Pastor that must articulate the vision of the Church.

6. It is the Pastor that must deliver, not just a Bible message, but **the** message from the Lord every week!

B. The Pastor's example is usually the highest to which any Church will attain.

1. This is perhaps the saddest fact of all.
2. Few will likely sing louder than I sing.
3. Few will lift up holy hands to the Lord in praise and real worship more than I do.
4. Few will give more or love more or bow their knees in honor to the Lord any more readily than I will.
5. The sad part is that not only my strengths but my weaknesses will also be inherited by the Body.

Thankfully, the heart and soul of our Church also comes from:

II. The Collective contribution of each member.

A. There is a dynamic created by the collective contribution of each member.

1. We are indeed the Body of Christ; yet it is our smile that people see or do not see when they come.
2. We are indeed the Body of Christ; yet it is our arms that either welcome or do not welcome others.

3. We human beings can be fooled; but in time we all have the instinctive ability to tell whether someone really cares about us or not.
4. If our love is not real; sooner or later they will know.
5. If our love comes from within where the Lord abides, it will be real!

B. Learn to contribute something that counts.

1. You cannot greet, get to know and properly share the love of the Lord with every person that comes through our doors.
2. So what do we do? Just give up and mind our own business? (There are plenty of times we should mind our own business.)
3. No, you pick out one; preferably someone not yet being greeted or ministered to and, as they allow, get to know them.
4. I try to greet all our guests but it is up to you to offer them a real and personal welcome.
5. After you introduce yourself and begin to get to know them, introduce them to another member - some of you are doing a really good job of this; all of us can.

C. Do what counts the most. There are two obvious factors that accomplish more than any other:

1. **John 13:35** By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
2. Our love for each other, more than any other factor, causes men and women to believe that we truly are the Lord's disciples.
3. If the Lord has brought them here, we can assume He wants to make them one of us; so we can just start loving them right away!
Amen?
4. That second factor is our open, genuine and obvious love of worshipping our Lord!
5. If you are a believer and more so a member of this Body, why would you come here if not to worship?
6. If you are here to worship, why not give it all you've got?
7. "But they will think I'm weird;" you are weird!
You are trusting in Jesus while the whole rest of the world is all about themselves!
8. We are all sinners; we are never going to fool anybody into thinking we are all holy all the time even though we might want to be.
9. But we can love them; and we can love Jesus!

The right kind of heart and soul of a Church also comes from:

III. A Willingness to Change.

A. How can we demonstrate the heart and soul of Jesus unless we are willing to change?

1. Isn't it sad that the one thing we least like to do is the most necessary of all in order to become what our Lord desires and deserves for us to be!.

2. And to make matters worse; as we get older and more mature we like to change even less!

3. Sometimes when we go to prayer at the beginning of our worship to make sure we are right with the Lord, we sometimes say; "Let's bow together before the Lord as you are comfortable."

4. The truth is that if we are able, we ought to bow before the Lord, if it is comfortable or not.

5. As I have become more willing to change, I am no longer comfortable standing before the Lord like I'm His equal, telling Him what I want Him to do.

6. The Muslims bow to their god, the Hindus bow to their god, the Buddhists bow to their god and the Catholics bow to theirs; I am no longer comfortable letting the subjects of the

Devil give more reverence to Him than I give to Jesus!

7. I am no longer comfortable letting the Charismatics be more excited about a different Jesus and another spirit than I am about the true and genuine Savior of the world that bought me back from my sin!

B. Do you still worship just like you did a year ago; two years ago; five years ago?

1. If so, either you had it down perfectly or you have not grown.

2. Which do you suppose it is?

3. And I don't want to hear any whining about asking you to change. I probably like change less than any of you (except maybe Walt or one or two others) and...I am held accountable to being willing to do so more than any of you. So, no whining!

In Conclusion:

I have actually saved our real text passage for last today:

Ecclesiastes 7:8 Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.

Lighthouse, our best days are ahead of us!

God has big plans for us right here in Dickinson, Texas.

We are in the best position, spiritually, financially, ministerially, in capability of mature, committed members than we have ever been!

Are you committed?

Are you contributing?

Are you willing to step up to the changes required?

I believe you are!