

The Lord's Day Morning

September 24, 1944

"The Church"

Scripture Lesson – Ephesians 4:1-16

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Introduction

1. Church is a necessity from Christ's teaching
 - a. Some question whether He ever used term Church as we understand it today.
 - b. But His whole teaching would demand such an organization even if He never used the term.
2. Reasons for Church
 - a. Fellowship
 1. People of like mind to meet and help one another
 - b. Worship
 1. Meet together for worship
 - c. Study
 1. To learn all could about Christ and His teachings on the way of life.
 - d. Spread teachings of Christ
 1. Send out representatives to tell of Christ
3. Church did so come into being
 - a. Groups met for mutual helpfulness
 - b. Sent others to preach
 1. Paul
 2. Silas
 3. Barnabas
 4. Luke
 5. Mark
4. Church has had countless periods of discouragement and despair
 - a. A favorite pastime of her critics has been to pronounce her dead
 - b. Some even would do so today
 1. Barbara was in Memphis visiting some time ago when she met a young man who said he did not believe in God. That he was a scientist and that he could see no use for religion. That science had made such rapid strides in last few years that it had been able to furnish man all he needed. He said there was one exception, and that was that science had not yet been able to give to man a moral and religious way of life, but that in 20 years it would be able to do so and that then her Daddy would be out of a job. They agreed to meet in 20 years and renew discussion. Of course, no one who knew history and had had time to observe life very thoroughly would make such a statement.
 2. It is not new because men have been pronouncing church dead for ages.
5. Yet church has continued to exist and influence and serve mankind.

- a. It has begun most, if not all, of the great humanitarian services to the world.
 - 1. Hospitals
 - 2. Orphan's homes
 - 3. Schools
- b. Dr. Sweets told some of us of a man who said he would not give any of his money to the church because it was not influencing the world and doing very little good. He was going to give his money to hospitals.
 - 1. But with few exceptions the church owns the great hospitals and if today there were none the church would start them.
- 6. But we all recognize the church has never taken its place in world as it should have.
 - a. In many ways we have been impotent
 - b. At times our program has been obscure and inadequate
- 7. Today there comes a great challenge to advance
 - a. To train Christian people
 - b. To lead others to Christ
- 8. Today we face a great opportunity
 - a. A suffering world
 - b. A disillusioned world
 - 1. Have seen failure of our economic, productive, inventive and social structure to produce a proper ordering of human lives either individually, nationally or internationally.
 - 2. The world has come tumbling down around our heads and men are saying more frankly than for generations that we have not found a solution.
 - 3. They are more open to have presented to them a way of life
 - c. A widespread groping for God
 - 1. Men in armed forces are groping out for a greater conception of God
 - 2. Families who have been bereaved are groping, too
 - 3. Statesmen
 - 4. News commentators
 - d. So church faces a great opportunity today
 - 1. The Church must advance now
- 9. We might think of this coming of this advance from a church-wide viewpoint, but I prefer this morning to think of it from a local church point of view.
 - a. The whole Church can advance only as each church unit advances
 - b. So I ask you to consider what our local church is striving to do to make the church serve the purpose Christ intended it should serve

I. Look at our program: We did not sit down and try to find things to do; honestly we tried to take out everything we could and leave only most important.

- 1. Visitation Day
 - a. Show our interest in every member of this church
 - b. Talk with those who have become indifferent about returning to an active participation in the church worship and activities
- 2. Church family night next Wednesday
- 3. Rally Day

- a. We are hoping the teachers of our Sunday School will go out and visit all the children of their classes and children they know who are not attending Sunday School and interest them in enrolling in Sunday School. We hope we can have the largest attendance we have ever had – not just to have it, but to touch those who come with Christian teaching.
- 4. Worldwide Communion Sunday
 - a. We are asking all of our people to come and unite together with other Christians around the world in the table of the Lord as we call to remembrance His death, resurrection and return.
- 5. Home Mission Season
 - a. We are going to try and do two things during this season
 - 1. Furnish some really Christian fellowship by asking whole family groups to come to the church and we will have dinner together four evenings
 - 2. Teach something of the work our church is doing in its great home mission endeavor
 - b. Program:
 - Wednesday, October 11 – Dr. J. N. Blackburn (French-speaking people)
 - Wednesday, October 18 – Dr. J. C. Crane (defense work)
 - Wednesday, October 25 – Mr. A. L. Jackson, Stillman Institute
 - Friday, November 3 – Dr. Claude Pritchard
 - Sunday, November 5 – Offering for Home Missions (Dr. Pritchard)
- 6. Evangelistic Meeting – November 19-26
 - a. Dr. Gutzke
 - b. Will teach Bible in the morning
 - 1. You cannot hear Dr. Gutzke teach Word of God without becoming a more intelligent Christian
 - c. Will preach evangelistic sermons at night
 - 1. We are going to endeavor to win the unsaved to Christ
- 7. Communicants Class
 - a. I will endeavor to teach what it means to become a member of the church
- 8. Foreign mission season
 - a. January – February
 - b. Try and learn something of great worldwide program of one church
- 9. Season of evangelism in March and April
 - a. At that time will endeavor to make personal contact with those unsaved and non-church members
- 10. So church can do all things Christ would have it do
 - a. Furnish fellowship (Christian fellowship)
 - b. Instruct those who are members of Church in their duties
 - c. Reach out and touch others for Christ

II. This is a program worthy of the best efforts of any church

- 1. As our church performs its task we then can make our contribution to total impact of church upon the world
- 2 We will carry out this program
 - a. That depends

1. Upon me
 2. Upon Miss Lewman and Miss Moling
 3. Upon committees in charge
 4. Upon each of you individually
- b. What are you going to do about it?

Conclusion:

1. Article sent in by Major Wells – “Don’t Let the Boys Know at Guadalcanal”

“A few weeks ago, according to “The Word and Way,” a soldier returned to his Memphis home, from Guadalcanal. His parents met him at the station at 10:15 Sunday morning.

Immediately, after the exchange of sacred greetings, the mother said, ‘Son, let’s hurry home; I cooked for you the best chicken dinner you ever tasted.’

‘But, Mother,’ he said, ‘this is Sunday and it is almost time for service.’

‘Why, yes,’ replied the mother, ‘but I did not think you would want to go today. You have just returned from the battle front, you are tired, you will need a bath and rest, and I thought you would like to call in some of your friends for a visit and to share the Sunday dinner.’

‘Mother,’ said the boy with deep feeling, ‘I had rather go to the service today than any place in the world.’

To the church they went. The boy was moved deeply – mostly because of what he did not find at the service. After the benediction, he went quickly to the pastor. His first words were, ‘Pastor, what is wrong? They have been telling us in Guadalcanal that all of the churches at home are filled with praying people, agonizing for the boys on the battle fronts, and praying for a spiritual victory. The church is not full, and I have not heard any agonizing prayers for the dying and suffering boys.’

As the pastor turned away, the soldier was heard to say with deep feeling, ‘Oh, God, don’t let the boys at Guadalcanal find out about it.’

Whether or not the boys at Guadalcanal know, the Lord knows exactly how often we attend services and how often we pray fervently for the dying and suffering boys.

It is a grand thing to pray personally and privately, but the exhortations still read:

‘Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.’ (Hebrews 10:25)

‘Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.’ (2 Timothy 2:22)

2. Will you not promise yourself to help your Church whether it be this one or some other to advance for Christ?