

“The Presbyterian Church”

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

Scripture Lesson: Romans 11:26-36

Text: Romans 11:36

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday, preached on Protestantism
2. Only once before this preached on Presbyterian Church
 - a. Not because I am not proud
 - b. But feel should preach most of time about Christ and His Church – not any one branch
 - c. But perhaps should give you more instructions about own church
3. Something of history of our church
 - a. John Calvin in Geneva
 - b. John Knox in Scotland
 - c. Immigrants to America
 1. Scotch and Scotch-Irish settled in America
 2. New Jersey and Pennsylvania, then Maryland, Virginia, and Carolinas
 - d. Presbyterian Church indigenous to America
 1. No missionaries sent from old countries
 - e. First Church – Stockholm, Long Island – 1640
 - f. First Presbytery – 1706 (Philadelphia)
 - g. First Synod – 1716 (Pennsylvania)
 1. 1729 – adopted Presbyterian standards; slight changes
 - h. First General Assembly in Philadelphia – 1789
 - i. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church – 1810
 1. Grow out of revival in Cumberland Mountains
 - j. 1861 – The Presbyterian Church in the United States
 1. Civil War
 2. Spring Resolution
 3. Dr. Hodge’s Protest
 4. Southern members met in First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, on December 4, 1861, and organized Presbyterian Church in Confederate States of America. Name changed to Presbyterian Church in the United States – generally referred to as Southern Presbyterian Church.
 - k. 1906 or 1907 – Cumberland and U.S.A. Churches united.
4. Think briefly of some of the distinctive features of the Presbyterian Church.

I. Separation of Church and State

1. Has always maintained this position
 - a. Especially those of us in the South
 - b. No political questions
 - c. No political statements
2. Some have accused of leaning back too far
 - a. Perhaps we did do so for a time

b. Have now swung too far other way to suit some of us

II. Breadth of Presbyterian Church

1. Perhaps more widely scattered than any other church
2. Probably made less distinction between laity and ministry than any other church.
 - a. Pulpit open to laymen
3. Thoroughly Protestant in relationship to other beliefs
 - a. Minister of another church welcomed to our pulpits
 - b. Communion
 1. Every Christian invited
 - c. How unite with our church
 1. Simple confession of faith
 2. Move from other church – nothing new
4. Support of interdenominational enterprises
 - a. Always find Presbyterians on boards
 - b. Mr. Moody said that whenever he was raising money for any interdenominational causes, he expected 65% to 70% of it to come from the Presbyterians.
 - c. This is both good and bad.

III. Form of Government

1. Other forms
 - a. Hierarchical – by clergy
 1. Catholic
 2. Methodist
 3. Episcopal
 - b. Congregational
 1. Baptist
2. Representative – Presbyterian
 - a. U.S. Senator in elder's home in California once remarked, after reading through our Book of Church Order that Presbyterian Church based on U.S. government; elder replied that it was the other way around. The Westminster Confession appeared in 1648.
 - b. Each congregation elects its own officers without regard to any higher authority.
 - c. Elders elect representatives to Presbytery and Synod
 - d. Presbytery elects to General Assembly

IV. Doctrines

1. Are distinctly a doctrinal church
 - a. Believe in the Bible
 - b. Creed interprets the Bible
 - c. Acceptance of this interpretation required of ministers and officers only
2. Calvinistic doctrine vs. Armenianism
 - a. Armenianism emphasizes free will of man
 - b. Calvinism emphasizes the sovereignty of God

3. Sovereignty of God
 - a. In creation
 1. Presbyterian might not argue with you how, but would contend that God did it in way He wished to.
 - b. In providence
 1. God has a plan
 2. He is going to carry out this plan regardless of man or Satan
 - c. In redemption
 1. All of God
 2. Invitation to all – special providence to some
 3. Outside door to heaven – “Whosoever will;” inside – “Chosen of God.”
4. Leads to our only peculiar doctrine
 - a. Preservation or perseverance of saints
 - b. God’s sovereignty leads to this
 1. If He determines one is going to be saved and calls them, then they will be saved.

Conclusion:

Produced great characters.