

The Church

October 20, 2024

I. Introduction

- A. Most, maybe all of the sermon you have heard before.
- B. You can blame Peter
 - 1. II Peter 1:12, 13
 - 1. I will leave out verse 14 for now

II. Biblical truths about the church

- A. Name
 - 1. Greek=Ekklesia (114 times) – Strong’s #1577
 - a. Church (74 times); Churches (35 times); Assembly (3 times); Congregation (2 times)
 - 2. Other names
 - a. Body of Christ – I Corinthians 12:27, 28; Bride of Christ – Revelation 21:9
- B. Purpose
 - 1. While gathered: Edification, the building up of believers. This is best done:
 - a. Through a relationship. “Truth is best taught in the context of a relationship. You can impress people from a distance but only impact them from up close.” – Howard Hendricks
 - b. Our God given tools are the Word of God in prayer
 - i. II Timothy 3:16, 17; Hebrews 4:14-16
 - c. Also see Acts 2:42-47 (Insert)
 - 2. While scattered: Evangelism
 - a. This is most effectively done one on one. My job is to personally present the gospel and/or get my family member or friend to a place they will hear the gospel.
 - 3. A helpful diagram Winning, Building, Equipping, Multiplying (insert)
- C. History
 - 1. The Church started with a bang!
 - a. Acts 2, the day of Pentecost – “So then, those who had received his (Peter’s) word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” – v. 41
 - i. See also Acts 2:47
 - 2. Things would slow down in Chapters 3-7 as the church grew comfortable in Jerusalem. God’s solution? Persecution – Acts 8:1
 - 3. Even literal interpretations of the book of Revelation, as I am doing, see history and types in the seven

churches of Chapters 2 and 3 (refer to outline found in Revelation 1:19).

- a. Ephesus: 33-100 AD
- b. Smyrna: 100-300 AD
- c. Pergamum: 300-500 AD
- d. Thyatira: 500-1500 AD
- e. Sardis: 1500-1700 AD
- f. Philadelphia: 1700-1900 AD
- g. Laodicea: 1900 - present
- 4. A closer look at Ephesus and Laodicea
 - a. Ephesus – vs. 2:1-7
 - i. They lose their first love. A shift from the Person of Christ to the work of Christ. They love the Lord’s work but not the Lord!
 - b. Laodicea – vs, 3:14-22
 - i. They love their passion. It seems like they wanted to stay neutral on things.

III. Three interesting charts

- A. Why the mini church is the latest trend in American religion
- B. Churches in the United States: Sunlife Ministries: Pastoral Seminar
 - 1. 85% of all churches are not growing or are in decline
 - 2. 15% are growing (13% by transfers, 2% by conversion growth)
- C. The life cycle of a church: Conservative Baptist Association of America
 - 1. Birth (1-20 years)
 - 2. Development (1-20 years)
 - 3. Maturity (20 years)
 - 4. Decline (25-40 years)
 - 5. Death or development
- D. Characteristics of Different Size Churches by Dr. Gary McIntosh

IV. Our Sources of Growth

- A. The unsaved: our responsibility
 - 1. To tell them ourselves
 - 2. To get them to a place they will hear the gospel
 - 3. To financially and prayerfully supports others, i.e. missionaries
- B. The saved but unchurched
 - 1. The carnal believer
 - 2. The unchurched believer