

The Identity and Commission of Church
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

In my last sermon from the Life of Christ series, we examined Matthew 16:13-20. The people were confused about Jesus' identity because they were trying to fit Him into what they already believed. They either did not understand or they refused to believe what He was proclaiming because they loved their sin and wanted to avoid the consequences of the truth. People are still that way today. At the same time, God in His mercy and grace still reveals Himself to humanity, and some will believe as did Simon, who declared on behalf of the twelve that Jesus is "*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

Jesus responded to him saying, "*Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven; and I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.*" Peter became one of the foundation stones along with the other apostles upon which Jesus has built His church (Ephesians 2:20). Peter was the key figure in the early church since he took on the role of being the primary preacher and spokesman for the apostles. In the nearly 2,000 years since then, the gates of Hades - a reference to death - has not prevailed against the church though it has overpowered countless kingdoms and empires in that time. The reason is simple. Jesus is the one that is building it, and He conquered death, so He ever lives to continue His work of building His church.

Over the next month I want to focus on the church. It has been many years since I last spoke on this subject and well over half of the congregation is new since then. What is the church? What is its commission? How does it expand? How is it built up? What is life within it supposed to be like? What is its purpose? Those questions will be answered from the Scriptures over the next five weeks.

The Identity of the Church

The first question is what is the church? What is its identity? What is it supposed to be? Jesus is building it, but what is He building?

The Scriptures give several different analogies to describe the church and its nature. Each adds to our understanding of the identity of the church and what it is supposed to be.

The Temple of God

Both Paul and Peter use the analogy of a building used for the worship of God to describe the church. Paul says in Eph. 2:19-22, "*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*"

1 Peter 2:5 states, "*you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*"

This metaphor describes the Church as a building constructed for the worship God. Its cornerstone is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-11), and its foundation is the Apostles and Prophets who proclaimed the doctrines of God.

The text of 1 Peter 2:5 states we are the "living stones" of the structure. These stones (*λιθοὶ* / *lithos*) are "worked stones" which have been chiseled to a certain shape to fulfill a certain purpose.

These stones are then “*fitted together*” to form the building. We are not just any stones taken from wherever and piled on top of each other. We were living stones which are carefully chosen and crafted to be joined to other stones to build a living, growing building.

Paul states that this building is to be a “*holy temple in the Lord,*” “*being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*” Christians exist to bring glory and honor to God. We exist to serve Him and not ourselves. When people look at us - the church - they should see us as a community where the Spirit of God dwells and the worship of God takes place. If each of us is fulfilling our role, we will inspire others to come and worship with us. If we are not, we will be unstable and others will be hesitant to join us lest the walls fall in on them.

A Royal Priesthood

The second metaphor used for the church flows out of the analogy of the church as the Temple of God. We are a royal priesthood. 1 Peter 2:9-10 states, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

God extends His mercy to sinners and calls us out of darkness and into His wonderful light so that we might be His own people. Just as Israel was chosen and set apart from among all the nations to be His own people - and they still are - so Christians are also chosen out from all nations to be grafted in (Romans 11) to be God's own people. We are to be a “*holy nation*” and a “*royal priesthood.*” To be holy is to be set apart from the world and to God. The priests were the mediators between God and man and performed the rituals of worship. As we have already seen from verse 5, Christians are to be a *holy priesthood* who *offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* As Romans 12:1 points out, we are to be “*living sacrifices.*” As mediators, we proclaim the light of the Lord to those still in darkness and pray for the Lord's mercy upon them.

These two metaphors speak to the purpose of the church in the worship of God and evangelism of the lost. The next metaphor speaks of our relationship to Christ.

The Bride of Christ.

This analogy is referred to in several different passages in several different manners and is a continuation of the metaphor used of God and Israel. Revelation 19:7-10 foretells the future marriage of the Lamb and the Bride - Christ and the Church - which will be held just prior to Christ's second coming. Paul infers the bridal analogy in Ephesians 5 in describing the relationship and responsibilities of the husband and wife and then adding in verse 32, “*This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*” Just as Christ loves the church, so the husband is to love his wife. Just as the church submits to and respects Christ, so the wife also to her husband.

Miscellaneous Metaphors.

An agricultural analogy is used of the church in John 15 and Romans 11. In John 15 we are branches which draw our lives from the vine. In Romans 11 we are wild olive branches grafted into the cultivated Olive tree of Israel. Both analogies emphasize that we draw our lives from Christ, and without Him we perish. Feeling shriveled up as a Christian? Perhaps you need to check and make sure you are drawing your life from Christ and not some other source.

Another metaphor is that of Shepherd and sheep. Jesus is referenced as a shepherd (John 10:11) and those who believe in Him are called His flock (1 Peter 5:2). Christ is the chief shepherd (John 10:4), and He has given the flock undershepherds - Elders - to carry out His work to lead, feed, guard and protect the sheep. Paul charged the Elders at Ephesus to shepherd the flock over which “*the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,*” (Acts 20:28). Peter states the same thing in 1 Peter 5:2, “*shepherd the flock of*

God among you.” The term “*pastor*” (Ephesians 4:11) is simply the Latin word for “*shepherd*.” The church is seen as sheep who need shepherds.

The Body of Christ.

This analogy is used by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1 & 4 and Colossians 1 & 2. I believe this is the most important metaphor for the church, but I am not going to discuss this in great detail today because I will be doing that later in this series. But I do want to point out some of the important points this analogy gives to us in understanding the identity of the church.

First, from Colossians 1:18 and 2:19, Jesus Christ is the head of the body and He supplies what the body needs to grow. Interesting enough, even in biology, the hormone that stimulates growth comes from the pituitary gland which is located in the head!

Second, every true Christian is an individual part that is connected to all the other parts that make up the whole body. As Paul states in Romans 12:4-5, “*For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*”

Third, whatever part, role and ability you have within the body is determined by God and is for the benefit of the entire body. That is the point of 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. There are a variety of gifts, ministries and effects, but it is the same Spirit, Lord and God who works all things in all, and He distributes these “*to each one individually just as He wills*” for “*the common good*” of the entire body.

Fourth, every part is needed for the body to be healthy and function properly. Paul points this out in 1 Corinthians 12:14-26. No part can make it on its own, and though some parts receive more attention than others, often those parts which receive little attention are more important.

The body analogy is a fitting description of the Church because the diversity and yet unity of the physical body is something that all of us easily recognize. The body has all sorts of parts to it both external and internal: arms & legs, hands & feet, torso and head with its eyes, ears, nose and mouth; but also heart, arteries and veins, lungs, liver, gut, kidneys, bladder, muscles, tendons and bones to name a few. Yet all of these parts together make up one functioning entity - a body. The external parts tend to get more attention, but the internal parts which may not even be thought about are more important to its vitality.

The church is the body of Christ, the visible manifestation of Christ in the world. It is one entity, yet is made of up many different parts. Just as the head isn't attached directly to the feet, so the people who make up the church live in different places and yet all are connected together. Just as each body part serves a different function, so God gives believers different gifts. And just as you can do more with one of your hands than the other, so God gives different ministries and different power to the saints that make up the church. Though there is all this great diversity, the church is still just one entity - the Body of Christ.

These various analogies - A temple of God; A royal priesthood; The bride of Christ; A vine; Sheep; The body of Christ - give us an understanding of the identity and nature of the church. Matthew 28:16-20 gives us the commission of Church.

The Commission of the Church - Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ *But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.* ¹⁷ *When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.* ¹⁸ *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.* ¹⁹ *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

This passage is often referred to as the Great Commission because it clearly states the primary task of the church in being able to fulfill its primary purpose. Contrary to the common idea that Jesus came to save people from eternal Hell, that is not why Jesus left the glories of heaven to become a man, live a sinless life, die on the cross for our sins, and then be resurrected from the dead. While it is true that Jesus gave many warnings about Hell and that He came to “*seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10), that is a means to the purpose and not the purpose itself. We have already seen from some of the analogies of the church that its purpose is the worship and glory of God. Paul makes this more clear in Ephesians 1 in which he states that God “*chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him,*” and that His adopting us as sons through Jesus Christ “*was to the praise of the glory of His grace,*” and that the inheritance we have received in Christ *should be to the praise of His glory.*”

Salvation from sin is God redeeming man to Himself that man may again accomplish the purpose for which he was created in the first place, which is to bring glory to God. Salvation is centered in God’s glory, not man’s escape from Hell. For that reason, the Great Commission is not optional for a true Christian. Being and making disciples of Jesus Christ is central to the very purpose of salvation. That is why the purpose statement for this local church is *Glorifying God by Making Disciples of Jesus Christ*. Discipleship is not some secondary step within Christianity as some erroneously try to make it. That very idea is absurd as we shall in our study this morning.

I want to first look at the authority and command given in verses 18-20, and then come back to verses 16-17 which describe the characteristics needed to carry out the commission.

Jesus’ Authority and Command - Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus states in verse 18 that “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*” Authority refers to the right, power and freedom to act and command. Jesus claims here that the Father has given Him unlimited authority for the word “*all,*” and the phrase, “*heaven and earth,*” reinforce each other in expressing the idea that Jesus has authority over everything that exists.

The grammar of verse 19 makes it clear that Jesus gives one command which is accomplished in three elements. There is only one verb accompanied by three subordinate participles. The verb is the command to “*make disciples.*” The participles “*going,*” “*baptizing,*” and “*teaching*” give the means to accomplish the command. We are to “*make disciples*” by “*going,*” “*baptizing*” and “*teaching.*”

Notice that the command begins with “*therefore*” which brings back into focus Jesus’ authority upon which the command is made. You can fulfill the command to make disciples because Jesus has the authority to send you and the power to accomplish His work through you. It is His authority, not your ability, that enables this to happen.

The Great Commission is to make disciples. Whatever else the church does, the center of its focus needs to be in making disciples. Our outreach, our ministries, our fellowship and even our worship all revolve around being and making disciples.

Defining Disciple

What is a disciple? A disciple is simply someone who follows the teachings of another. They learn from the teacher. They identify with the teacher. They seek to be like the teacher. Luke 6:40 gives a good description stating that “*A pupil [disciple] is not above his teacher, but everyone, after he has been fully trained will be like his teacher.*” Paul tells us in Romans 8:29 that all those that will be saved are “*predestined to be conformed to the image of [Jesus].*”

If you claim to be a Christian, then being a disciple of Christ is not optional. Even the term, “*Christian,*” speaks of discipleship since Acts 11:26 states it was the “*disciples*” that were first called “*Christians*” in Antioch. The term itself means to be “*a little Christ.*” A true Christian then is someone who by definition is a follower of the teachings of Christ and is striving to be like Him. If you are saved,

someone who has placed their faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, then you are also a Christian, a disciple of Christ. It is absurd to try to make discipleship something subsequent to and secondary to salvation. Jesus is Lord, and salvation requires recognition of that fact (Romans 10:9-10).

The command is to make disciples of Jesus, and to do that you must first be His disciple yourself. We make disciples of Christ the same way that the apostle Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 11:1 when he said, *“be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ.”* We call people to follow us as we follow Christ. If others became like you, would they also be becoming like Christ? That, in a nut shell, is what making a disciple is all about. People begin to pattern their life after you, and since you have patterned your life after Jesus, they in turn are also becoming like Christ.

Jesus’ command to make disciples is accomplished by doing the three participles of the command - Going, Baptizing and Teaching.

Going

Going is first. This encompasses evangelism and missions, and notice that we are supposed to do the going in order to start the process of making non-Christians into disciples of Christ. We are the ones that are to make the effort, be inconvenienced, go to places that are uncomfortable, and expend our time and money in the endeavor. The sign above the doors as you go out of this building reflect this - *“You are now entering the mission field.”* This building is not the church and it cannot do the Lord’s work. It cannot go out, and it cannot make disciples. It is only a building. You are the church, the body of Christ, and only you can fulfill Jesus’ command to go. This building can only help facilitate the baptizing and teaching disciples to observe all that the Lord commanded.

Notice as well that we are to make disciples of *“all nations.”* There is no room for prejudice in the Church. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek nor black, white, red or yellow. The modern idea of “race” comes from evolutionary thought. God made only one race, the human race, in all its morphological variations. God separated the human race into various “nations” and we are to go out to those nations and make disciples for Christ.

Making disciples of all nations also shows the importance of missions as part of the commission. We have to leave our comfort zone to reach out to people who are different from us. They may have different physical characteristics such as size, skin color, eyes, hair, noses and toes. They may have customs you do not understand like putting jewelry in odd parts of their bodies and wear funny looking clothes. They may eat food you consider unusual such as snails, bugs, reptiles, amphibians, and even coagulated blood, as missionary we once had in Thailand found out. You may not know their language. They may live elsewhere. But whether they are around the block or a distant country, the command is for Christians to go to them in the effort to make them disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first aspect of making disciples is going, and evangelism and missions always starts locally and expands outward. The Apostles started in Jerusalem, then expanded to Judea, then Samaria and then the uttermost parts of the world. Learn to proclaim the gospel to people with whom you normally interact and then expand to those you will have to purposely go out of your way to communicate with whether it is verbal or written. The evangelism crash course on January 16 can help you with this. Move further out of your comfort zone by becoming involved in cross cultural and distant missions whether it is short term or longer. Be involved with the missions committee. Learn another language to target a specific group of people. I will talk more about evangelism and missions next week.

Baptizing

As the gospel goes out there will be those that respond to it in repentance, and that brings up baptism, the second element in making disciples. While Acts has some vague references to everyone in a “household” being baptized (Acts 16:15, 33), every clear example of baptism is only of those who

believe. In addition, baptism is an act of faithful obedience in public witness of personal identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ according to Romans 6. It should be one of the first steps in a new believer's walk of faith, and while baptism neither saves or contributes to salvation, there is good reason to question the genuineness of a person's profession of faith if they unnecessarily delay getting baptized. That is why I recommend that communion be served only to baptized believers.

Baptism is to be done in "*the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*" but please note that "name" here is singular. That is why we only immerse once instead of three times as some other groups do. The singular "name" signifies the unity of the Trinity. It is one God in three persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

More information about what the Bible teaches about Baptism is available in the study paper in the rack at the back of the church. If you have not been baptized by immersion since you have professed faith in Jesus Christ, please read the paper on Baptism and then let me know so that I can arrange for your baptism as soon as possible.

Teaching

The third aspect of making disciples is "*teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.*" While there are those within the church that are especially gifted to teach, this command is given to all. Parents teach their children. More mature believers teach new and less mature believers. Teaching is more than just imparting knowledge. It includes encouragement, correction and admonishment in the quest to enable a person to live for Christ. It includes the modeling that is part of lives that interact with one another. Teaching only requires that you know the Lord and are willing to share with others what you have learned.

This aspect of making disciples is a two way street. For the rest of your life, you will be in relationships in which you will be helping others to learn and obey Christ's commands, and others will be doing the same for you. God is busy conforming every believer to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29), and this aspect of discipleship is critical to fulfilling that purpose. Every believer should be involved in some type of personal discipleship relationship of this nature. We do have a ministry to help facilitate that. If you are a new believer or just think you need better grounding in what it means to live the Christian life, or if you would like to help such people, then talk with me after the service and I will put you in contact with those who can help arrange this for you.

Jesus' Promise

Jesus concludes His command with a promise in verse 20, "*And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" This is an emphatic statement with a direct translation of "*I will be with you, even I, all the days, even to the conclusion of the age.*" It is a precious promise that Jesus makes that He will be present with the believer every day of his or her life. That is why a Christian can be confident of being able to fulfill the command of this commission. Jesus is present and able to help you each step of the way. You only need to have the three characteristics seen in the disciples in the verses preceding the command.

People God Can Use - Matthew 28:16-18

The gospels reveal the disciples to be ordinary men with common failings. They were often proud, boastful and selfish and even bickered about which one was the greatest. They could be fearful and lacked faith at times even being hesitant to believe. Yet God used these very ordinary men to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). God used these ordinary men because they made themselves available to Him, they were worshipful to Jesus and they submitted to Him. He can do the same with you if you develop these character traits in your own life.

1) **Available:** Jesus told the disciples to meet Him in Galilee (Matthew 28:10). Verse 16 states, “*but the eleven proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.*” They made themselves available for whatever the Master had planned for them. That was true throughout their lives though they often did not know what Jesus had planned. They desired to learn from Jesus whatever He would teach them, and they desired to serve Jesus in whatever He asked of them. They made themselves available.

Are you available? I believe a major reason many Christians are not used much by the Lord is simply the lack of availability. Too many professing believers are too entrapped in what the world values and so are unavailable to learn, grow or serve the Lord. What soaks up your time, energy and money? Could you take advantage of the opportunities the Lord presents to you even if you would like to do so. If you are running the maze of the rat race, you will not be able to see the hand of God offering you a way out to a different kind of life.

2) **Worshipful:** Matthew 28:17 states, “*When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.*” Even though some still had some degree of uncertainty about what they were seeing, they all worshiped Jesus because they understood who Jesus is and who they were in relationship to Him. If that thought alone does not make you fall down before Him, then you think too highly of yourself and too low of Him. You are simply one of the things He has created. You deserve nothing but punishment because of your sin, yet He has chosen to love you and give you everything. Worship of the Lord Jesus Christ is at the heart of the true Christian. Is that true of you?

Ministry done without a heart of worship is always done in the flesh without the Spirit’s power. It also always becomes that person’s personal source of pride and/or power. Such supposed ministry is not unto the Lord for His sake and it is what makes elders into wolves who draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:29-30).

3) **Submissive:** Verse 18 records that Jesus came up and spoke to them which would help remove the doubts that some had that it was really Him. Jesus declared that all authority in heaven and earth had been given to Him, and then He gave them the command of their commission to make disciples of all nations. The book of Acts records that they submitted to that command, and starting from Jerusalem, they expanded to make disciples of people from all the nations.

They were ordinary men who were used mightily of God because they were available, worshipful and submissive. God is faithful to do His part. Jesus has promised to be with you always. If you want your life to count for eternity by being used by Him in fulfilling the Great Commission, then your part is to follow the example of the apostles in making yourself available, being worshipful, and submitting to the Lord’s will.

Sermon Notes: *The Identity and Commission of Church*
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

The Identity of the Church

The Temple of God - Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5

The church is a building constructed of living stones whose purpose is the _____ of God

The church is a community in which the Spirit of God _____ and in which God is worshiped

A Royal Priesthood - 1 Peter 2:9-10

God extends mercy and grace to sinners to call them out of darkness into His light and _____

Holy - to be _____ from the world and to God

Priests - mediators between God and man and performed the rituals of worship - we are _____ sacrifices

The Bride of Christ - Revelation 19:7-10; Ephesians 5:20-34

An analogy of the _____ between the church and the Lord Jesus Christ

Branches of the Vine (John 15); grafted into the Olive tree (Romans 11)

Sheep - John 10:4-11; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2

The Body of Christ - Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1 & 4; Colossians 1 & 2

Jesus is the _____ of the body and supplies what the body needs to grow

Every true Christian is an individual part that is _____ to all the other parts that make up the whole body

Whatever part, role & ability you have in the body is decided by _____ & is for the benefit of the entire body

_____ part is needed for the body to be healthy and function properly

The body analogy reflects both the diversity & unity of the church, and the _____ of each member

The Commission of the Church - Matthew 28:16-20

The Great Commission clearly states the _____ task of the church in fulfilling its primary purpose

The primary _____ of the redemption of man is glory of God - Ephesians 1

The Great Commission is _____ optional for a true Christian - discipleship is _____ a secondary step

Jesus' Authority and Command - Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus has _____ authority - the emphasis of "*all*" and "*heaven and earth*"

_____ verb / command - *make disciples*; 3 participles to fulfill the command: *going, baptizing and teaching*

The "*therefore*" ensures the commission can be fulfilled because it is based on Jesus' _____

Whatever else the church does, its center of _____ is to be making disciples

A disciple is simply someone who _____ the teachings of another - in a quest to be like him - Luke 6:40

A "*Christian*" by definition is a "little Christ" and so is a _____ of Christ - Acts 11:26

You must first be a _____ of Christ yourself before you can teach others to follow Him - 1 Cor. 11:1

“**Going**” encompasses _____ and missions and involves local, cross cultural and foreign ministry

“*All nations*” means there is no room for _____ in the church - and we reach out to other peoples

“*Going*” starts locally with what you know and then _____ outward to what you do not know yet

“**Baptizing**” - a ritual of public identification with Jesus by those who respond to the Gospel and _____

It is “*the name (singular) of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*” - signifies the _____ of the Trinity

“**Teaching**” - a lifelong responsibility of _____ Christians in helping one another walk in obedience to Christ

Jesus’ Promise - an emphatic statement which gives confidence _____ will enable us to fulfill the commission

People God Can Use - Matthew 28:16-18

God used _____ men to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6) because they had three characteristics

1) _____: they desired to learn whatever Jesus taught them and serve Jesus in whatever He asked of them

2) _____: the proper response of understanding Jesus’ identity and your actual relationship to Him

Ministry done without a heart of worship is fleshy and feeds pride - and can turn elders into wolves

3) _____: Jesus has all authority & He commanded them to go and make disciples - & they did!

God is faithful to do His part & if these characteristics mark your life, you will _____ the Great Commission

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do the following: 1) Count how many times “church” is mentioned. 2)

Discuss with your parents the nature of the church and why discipleship is so important in church life

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Jesus states in Matthew 16:13-20 that He will build His church - why can’t the gates of Hades prevail against it? What do you learn about the nature of the church from the analogy of it as the temple of God in Ephesians 2:19-22 and 1 Peter 2:5? What do you learn about the nature of the church from the analogy of it as a chosen race, a holy nation and a royal priesthood in 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10? How does Romans 12:1 fit with that analogy? What do you learn about the nature of the church from the analogy of it as the bride of Christ in Revelation 19:7-10 and Ephesians 5:20-34? What do you learn about the nature of the church from the analogy of it as a branch in John 15 and Romans 11? What do you learn about the nature of the church from the analogy of it as sheep / the flock of God in John 10:4-11. What role do elders have among the sheep - 1 Peter 5:2; Ephesians 4:11; Acts 20:28? What do you learn about the nature of the church from the analogy of it as the body of Christ in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1 & 4 and Colossians 1 & 2? Why is it important that Jesus is the head of the body? What is the relationship of the various members of the body to one another? What is the source of the part, role and ability you will have within the body? What is the purpose of your part, role and ability within the body? The body is both diverse and unified - what happens to the body if an individual member does not fulfill its function? What is the primary purpose of God in redeeming sinners? What is the command in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20? By what three means is that command to be carried out? What is a disciple? What is a Christian (1 Cor. 11:1)? Why is the idea absurd that discipleship is subsequent to and secondary to salvation? How do you make a disciple? What does “going” encompass in the effort to make disciples? What is baptism and why is it important in making a disciple? Whose responsibility is it to teach Christians to know and obey the commands of the Lord? How does Jesus’ promise to be with believers help in making disciples? The apostles were available, worshipful and submissive to the Lord - explain how well these characteristics mark your life & any changes you need to make.