

**UNDERSTANDING AND DOING GOD'S WILL  
THE LORD'S WILL FOR HIS LOCAL CHURCH-PT 2  
JOHN 17:20-23; ACTS 2-4**

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**Introduction**

Last week we began looking at the **LORD'S WILL** for **HIS LOCAL CHURCHES?** We saw **three main things:**

I. *THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCHES TO BE FILLED WITH POWER!* (Acts 1:8)

II. *THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCHES TO BE INVOLVED IN WITNESSING!* (Acts 1:8)

III. *THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCH TO BE FILLED WITH RIGHT DOCTRINE!*

*Matthew 28:18-20—“...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”*

*Four Things Are Needed For The CHURCH To Be FILLED With RIGHT DOCTRINE:*

A. *RIGHT DOCTRINE Has To Be GIVEN!*  
*(Two methods of Teaching/preaching)*

B. *RIGHT DOCTRINE Has To Be RECEIVED!*  
*Bereans: Acts 17:11—“...that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

*Thessalonians: 1 Thessalonians 2:13—“...when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*

C. *RIGHT DOCTRINE Has To Be PUT INTO PRACTICE!*  
*1 Thessalonians 4:1—“...as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.”*

D. *WRONG DOCTRINE Has To Be AVOIDED!*  
*1 Corinthians 15:33— “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”*

**IV. THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCH TO BE UNIFIED!**  
*(John 17:20-23)*

That's not talking about unity for unity's sake, but unified in the right things— a genuine oneness in the right things!

*Acts 2:46—“And they, continuing daily with one accord...”*

*Acts 2:44—“And all that believed were together,.. .”*

**A. There Should Be UNITY OF HEART AND SOUL!**

*Acts 4:32—“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul:”*

*Matthew 22:36-40—“36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Having a heart that loves the LORD God with all the heart and soul and mind...which spills over into a love for others!

**B. There Should Be UNITY IN PURPOSE!**

*Acts 2:1—“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”*

They were all there for the same **PURPOSE!**

(i.e. Waiting on the **HOLY GHOST** to be endued with **POWER** and carry out what the Christ commanded!)

*Acts 11:23—“23 Who, when he came, [Barnabas] and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that **with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.**”*

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C. **There Should Be UNITY IN OBEDIENCE!**

They were all there in that one place because they had been told to be there!

Think about how powerful it would be for our **CHURCH** and for the cause of **CHRIST** if we all had the same desire to **OBEY THE LORD!**

*2 Thessalonians 3:14—“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”*

D. **There Should Be UNITY IN DOCTRINE!**

*Acts 2:42—“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine . . .”*

The **APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE** came from where? **JESUS!**

E. **There Should Be UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP!**

*Acts 2:42—“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship. . .”*

“Fellowship” = “partnership, that is, (literally) participation.”

How wonderful would it be if every member in this **LOCAL CHURCH** partnered together to fulfil the **LORD’S WILL together?**

F. **There Should Be UNITY IN BREAKING BREAD!**

*Acts 2:42—“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread. . .”*

Observance of the **LORD’S TABLE** as well as what we call **FELLOWSHIP**.

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G. **There Should Be UNITY IN PRAYER!**

*Acts 2:42—“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

It is a sad reality in most **CHURCHES** that most people would rather “*play*” than “*pray!*”

**CHURCHES** can have a “*fellowship*” with food and fun activities and it is well attended, but try to have just a **PRAYER MEETING** and it is hard to get folks to come!

*Isaiah 56:7—“. . .for mine house shall be called an house of prayer. . .”*

**JESUS** quoted this verse when **HE** cleaned the **TEMPLE** out!  
*Matthew 21:13—“And he said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”*

*Matthew 18:19–20—“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*

*e.g. Acts 12 when Herod had killed James the brother of John and then had Peter been arrested and his fate was supposed to be the same.*

*Acts 12:5—“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”*

*In Acts 12:12, after Peter was delivered, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark where many were gathered together praying!*

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H. **There Should Be UNITY IN CARE!**

*Acts 2:44-45*—“44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”

*Acts 4:32*—“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”

*1 John 3:17*—“But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

I. **There Should Be UNITY IN WORSHIP!**

*Hebrews 10:25*—“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.”

*Acts 2:47*—“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

*John 4:23*—“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

Where there is no **SPIRIT, WORSHIP IS DEAD!**

Where there is no **TRUTH, CONFUSION REIGNS!**

*THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCH TO BE UNIFIED! Lastly,*  
**THE LORD INTENDS FOR HIS CHURCH TO BE PURE.**

V. We find that the early **LOCAL CHURCHES** practiced “*Church Discipline.*”

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In the very early stages of the **CHURCH**, the **APOSTLES** were the ones who applied the **DISCIPLINE** against the members of the **CHURCH!** (e.g. *Acts 5—Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Church*)

They both dropped dead at the word of **PETER**. And then the **BIBLE** says,

*Acts 5:11*—“And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things.”

Later on **CHURCHES** were instructed to apply their own **DISCIPLINE** against their members.

(e.g. *In 1 Corinthians 5, there was one in the Church who was having sexual relations with his father's wife. That was something that even the Gentiles looked down on. 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 11*)

**Conclusion**

So, what does the **LORD** want us to glean from all of this?

What are **HIS INTENTS AND PURPOSES** for **HIS CHURCH** today?

Has **HE** changed? **NO!** The **CHURCH** belongs to **CHRIST!**

So let's put it on a personal level:

1. **The LORD Wants Us To Be FILLED WITH HIS POWER! Are we?** It begins with salvation! The Holy Spirit doesn't even move in until that point! (We must be empty of self, sin, and the world!)
2. **The LORD Wants Us To Be WITNESSES FOR HIM! Are we?**
3. **The LORD Wants Us To Be FILLED WITH RIGHT DOCTRINE! Are we?** (Giving Right Doctrine, Receiving Right Doctrine, Practicing Right Doctrine, Avoiding Wrong Doctrine.)
4. **The LORD Wants Us To Be IN UNITY (In The Right Way And In The Right Things)! Are we?** (In Heart and Soul, In Purpose, In Obedience, In Doctrine, In Fellowship, In Breaking of Bread, In Prayer, In Care, In Worship.)

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**5. The LORD Wants Us To Be Pure! Are we?**

Now, we may think we're doing alright.  
But what would **CHRIST** say about it?

Is this **CHURCH** the kind of **CHURCH** that **HE** has in mind as to what a **CHURCH** should be?

Are we fulfilling **HIS** intents and purposes, **HIS** will? We need to be!  
**HE** could come back at any moment and we will stand before **HIM** and give an account!