

The Role of the Church in Today's Society

Ephesians 3:10

INTRODUCTION:

A. Familiar sayings in threes . . .

1. Ready . . . Set . . . Go
2. Hop . . . Skip . . . Jump
3. Stop . . . Look . . . Listen
4. Lights . . . Camera . . . Action
5. Perhaps for the church it should be: Faith . . . Love . . . Action

B. Lesson Texts:

1. **Isaiah 14:24** – “The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, “Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand.”
2. **Isaiah 14:27** – “For the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, And who will turn it back?”
3. **Ephesians 3:10-12** – “To the intent that now **the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,
 - 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,
 - 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.”
 - a. There is the answer to the question, “What is the role of the church in today's society.”
 - b. **The answer is the same today as it was in the first century.**
 1. We may have more gadgets.
 2. We may have more tools.
 3. We may have more modernization.
 4. We may have more ideas and programs.
 5. But . . . We still have the same role as the early church had.
 - d. The role is the same because the needs are the same because . . .
 1. Every society still needs God!
 2. Every society still needs Christ!
 3. Every society still needs the gift of the Holy Spirit!
 4. Every society still needs the Bible!
 5. Every society still needs to be covered by the blood of Christ!
 6. Every society still needs forgiven by their sins.
 7. Every society still needs to be added to the church!
 8. Every society still needs to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus.” **2 Peter 3:18**

- e. Heaven's expectations for the church for society in every age has not changed.
 - f. The Bible unfolds the purposes and plans of God for the world from the beginning to the end of time.
 - g. All through the books of the Bible there runs a golden thread from Adam to Christ and beyond . . . Namely, all that God has planned and purposed, He has provided a way and the means for it to come to pass.
 - h. The same is true with regard to the role of the church and the work that it is to do for His glory.
- B. The church of our Lord began with an active role and should have no less an active role today.
1. **Acts 2:42-47** – “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.
 - 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.
 - 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,
 - 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.
 - 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,
 - 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”
- C. It is inconceivable that any institution as extensive and as costly as the church should exist without some role to play . . . some work to perform . . . some mission to accomplish.
- D. In serving its role to any generation from its establishment to its being taken up to Heaven and presented to the Father, everything the Church has been asked to do can be classified under one of three categories.
1. **Evangelism** – To preach Christ.
 2. **Edification** – To practice Christ.
 3. **Benevolence** – To personify Christ.
- E. Any role the church tries to play that does not fit under one of those categories . . . Well, you need to go back to both the drawing board . . . And the Bible.
1. Every society has its lost that needs to be taught.
 2. Every society has its downtrodden that needs to be lifted up.
 3. Every society has its poor that needs to be helped.
 - a. Jesus said in **Matthew 26:11** – “For you have the poor with you always . . .”
 - b. The expression, “The poor” appears some 135 times in the Bible
 - c. Jeremiah 22:16 tells us that God judges the cause of the poor and

needy. Brethren . . . They need the attention of the church.

d. **Illustration:** Ira North . . . Madison Church of Christ . . . How they grew.

F. **The church is here to change society . . . It is not here to be changed by society.**

G. Some things should never change

1. The Bible is the all-inspired Word of God and should never be altered.
2. The will of God for the church in the 1st century is still the will of God for the Church today.
3. The work of the church in the 1st century is the same work the church is to be doing today.
4. The prescribed way in which the church worshipped God during the 1st century is the prescribed way for the church to worship God today.

H. **Illustration: "I Have No hands but Yours!"**

FOUR KEY WORDS THAT DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN TODAY'S SOCIETY.

1. **FAITH** . . . And with that we think of faithfulness.
 - a. **Faithful to the Word of God and faithful to the God of the Word.**
 - b. Faithful to the mission Christ left for the church to accomplish. **We will have no faith in the mission before us, unless we have faith in the Master behind us!**
 - c. Faithful to go . . . Teach . . . Baptize . . . Teach those baptized to grow. Aren't those the four steps in Matthew's rendering of the Great Commission? Matthew 28:19-20
 - d. Faithful to defend the Bible . . . Its teachings . . . Its eternal truths.
 - e. Faithful to reach out to those in need . . . To minister to . . . To lift up . . . To save them from themselves and the evil one. A lot of people at great speed on a path to self-destruction.
 - f. Faithful to the organization of the Lord's Church so it can be identified when examined in Scripture and compared to the denominations of men.
2. **LOVE** (Appears 385 times in the Bible)
 - a. Listen to God's Word:
 1. **John 15:12** – "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
 2. **Matthew 5:45** – "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?"
 - a. God never set as a condition of our loving others that they love us back.
 - b. The world does not have to love us in order for us to love them.
 - c. The world does not have to love us in order for us to help it.

3. **1 John 5:3** – “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

b. What does love do?

1. Love gives.
2. Love serves.
3. Love seeks the highest good of the object to which it is directed.
4. Love spurs us to action and service.

3. **ACTION**

a. **Matthew 25:21-46** – “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?’

38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?

39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

40 **And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’**

41 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’

45 Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’”

1. Those accepted had exhibited action.
2. Those not accepted had failed to exhibit action.
3. The church (you and me) are to exhibit action.
4. The actions we are to exhibit are those of carrying out the will of Christ.
5. Our actions are service. Our service is our action.
6. Our actions will minister:
 - a. To the homeless.
 - b. To the sick.
 - c. To the parentless or abandoned children.
 - d. To the needy who are unable to work.
5. To the disabled.

4. **RESPONSIBILITY**

a. **As we view both our God and our society, we have a responsibility:**

1. To continue to be the church we read about in the New Testament.
2. To defend the Bible as the all-inspired Word of God
3. To preach the gospel as it is taught in the Bible.
4. To maintain the scriptural organization of the Church so it can function as God planned for it to.
5. To conduct worship services in accordance with Biblical direction.
6. To help provide for the needs of the poor
7. To help provide care for children who are without their parents.
8. To teach God's law about marriage and divorce.
9. To teach God's law about what constitutes marriage. 1 man and 1 woman for 1 lifetime.
 - a. Marriage is not one man and a woman.
 - b. Marriage is not one woman and a man.
10. Maintain its uniqueness . . . Differentiated from the denominations of men.
11. Promote what God is for and oppose what God is against.
12. To prove a safe haven for those on the storm-tossed seas of life.
13. To nourish young people in God's Will for their lives.
14. To do good to all people. **Galatians 6:10** – "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

b. **We can fail in our responsibility . . . If and when:**

1. We look like the world.
2. Think like the world.
3. Talk like the world.
4. Dress like the world
5. Act like the world.
6. Embrace the values of the world.

7. Treat others like the world treats others.

- c. **2 Corinthians 6:17** – “Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”

CONCLUSION:

A. Brethren . . .

1. We are the hands and feet of Christ to our society . . . Yea, to the whole world.
2. In helping the church do not neglect helping the world . . . In helping the world, do not neglect helping the body of Christ – The Church.
 - a. When we build up ourselves, we build up the church.
 - b. When we build up the church, we help build up ourselves.

B. The Role of the Church in our society is to . . .

1. Lift up Christ to a lost and dying world
2. Preach Christ
3. Live Christ
4. Demonstrate Christ

C. Listening friends:

- a. We cannot expect to act on the Word until we react to the Word.
- b. We can't make Christ mean anything to others, until we make Him mean everything to us!
- c. We will have more conversions, when we have more convictions.

D. Brethren, We have:

1. A **preaching** assignment.
2. A **personal** assignment.
3. A **precious** assignment.
4. A **pleasant** assignment.
5. A **possible** assignment

E. We are not responsible for the generations and societies that are past . . . But we are responsible for the one in which we live. As member of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us perform our various roles to the society in which we live.

F. **1 Peter 2:21** – “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

G. To the faithful church at Philadelphia . . . **Revelation 3:8** - “Behold, I have set before thee an open door.”

H. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**