

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
Wednesday Bible Study
“When the Church Harms God’s People”
Introduction and Chapters 1-2
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INTRODUCTION

What is Church?

Church is **Ekklêsia** – a called-out **assembly**.

The church consists of **people** not **buildings**.

The identity and the work are all conducted by people, not buildings. Church structures facilitate the role of God’s people, but they do not fulfill it.

What is the Purpose of Church?

Great **Commandment** and Great **Commission**

Matthew 22:36-40 (KJV) *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 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. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV) *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

“Our true calling...is to bear the character of Jesus Christ in our own flesh and blood, to call human beings to his light, truth, and abounding love.” (p. 2)

The church is like a hospital.

What is church hurt?

“Church” refers to a local, **visible** group of believers **claiming** to follow **Christ**.

“Hurt” refers to the pain of abuse, misuse of power, and unrepentant sin which leadership refuses to address.

To be clear, church hurt is NOT:

- A. A church leader humbly corrects or confronts a congregant about a behavior or attitude.
- B. A church member or leader charitably disagrees on minor issues
- C. Warranted / necessary church discipline
- D. When someone sins or messes up and is repentant
- E. Someone’s feelings are hurt because they could not do what they wanted, something occurred they personally do not like. (didn’t get voted in as a deacon, don’t like 5pm communion, someone else led their song, pastor forgot to make my announcement during service)

Church Hurt is **damage** caused by the church or its leaders, not mere **disappointment**.

CHAPTER 1: ENCOUNTERING SICKNESS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

I. A Body that does not follow it's head is sick.

Ephesians 1:19-23 (KJV) *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

A. **Jesus Christ** is the head of our church, so when we do not follow him we too are sick.

Sick bodies struggle with disbelief, anger, cynicism, judgment, pride, superiority, and unity.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (KJV) *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

B. Jesus left under-shepherds to **lead and guide** based on HIS headship to become like Christ, not like the under-shepherd.

Ephesians 4:14-16 (KJV) *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

C. Following leaders who follow Jesus keep the body **functioning** properly and works to **heal** it when it is broken.

D. **Members** of the church body have a responsibility to follow the church leader when that church leader is following Christ!

II. A broken head harms the body it is meant to lead.

Matthew 7:15 (NASB) *"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*

A. **Fake** spiritual leadership exposes the church to greater harm.

Matthew 7:16 (NASB) *"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?*

B. **Authentic** leadership is revealed over time by action and results.

You can fool some people all the time, you can fool all people some of the times, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.

1 Timothy 4:1-5 (KJV) *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

C. Being absolutely convinced of a lie does not make it truth.

CHAPTER 2 – WHAT THE CHURCH IS CALLED TO BE

“Anything that does not look like Christ is NOT the church.”

I. The church is called to reflect the image of Jesus.

“Beware of anything that competes with loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for him.” Oswald Chambers warns that Christians often engage in activities “for God” but look nothing like him.” (pp.17-18)

Matthew 25:40 (KJV) *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Matthew 25:45 (KJV) *Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*

A. Our individual and collective actions towards others are our actions towards Jesus himself.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (KJV) *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

B. How we do what we do is as important as what we actually do!

II. The church is called to build the kingdom of Jesus.

Building a worldly kingdom is not the goal of the church. Love of money even if the money is meant to serve the church can run counter to God’s intent for our lives.(p. 18)

Matthew 6:24 (NASB) *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

Worldly success is addictive and can cause distractions to the church.

Chasing growth and success can cause us to overlook, hide, or even create abusive situations in our church.

III. The church is called to lead the world to accept the love of Jesus.

1 John 4:7-11 (KJV) *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love...*

IV. How a church should respond to Abuse

- A. Pastors and ministry leaders must be vocal and demonstrative in disapproval of abuse and abusive behaviors.
- B. We must be honest about the fact that it happens in the church not just out “in the world.”
- C. When abuse is alleged or exposed we must take it seriously.
- D. We should protect the heart of the victim over that of the abuser.

NEXT WEEK ENJOY THANKSGIVING