

# YOUR SPIRITUAL FAMILY

The Doctrine of the Church

64 Days of Truth  
Days 43-49  
Heritage Bible Church

*64 Days of Truth* is designed to help Christians understand the great doctrines of the Bible. As you spend the rest of your life feasting on the word of God (the Bible), you should forever expand and deepen your knowledge of these things.

During the 64 Days, listen to the weekly messages with an open heart and an open Bible . . . Spend a few minutes each day to study on your own, using the devotional guides in this booklet . . . Spend an hour or so each week with a discussion group, talking about the importance of what you learn.

Most of all, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

DAY 43: Wednesday Message, "Your Spiritual Family"

If you can, take notes, and pay special attention to these key points. (When you get to your discussion group, compare notes to help each other get it all.)

What metaphor is used only for the Church (never used for Israel in the Old Testament)?

What is the 4-word summary of how the church works?

It is \_\_\_\_\_ composed of \_\_\_\_\_ working in \_\_\_\_\_, designed by the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

What is the basis of true spiritual unity?

What is a spiritual gift?

Who possesses a spiritual gift?

Who do spiritual gifts benefit?

Begin memorizing 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.*

DAY 44: Thursday. Do You Know What You Belong To?

The church is a *body*. God designs for us to work together as a unit. Our job is not to *create* unity; it is to *preserve* the unity which God creates. Read Ephesians 4:1-3.

How many "ones" are in Ephesians 4:4-6? You cannot create any of those things—they are all God's work. Notice "Spirit . . . Lord . . . God and Father." The example of unity is the Trinity. All are equal, yet all fulfill different roles. That's how it should be in the church as we preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

How do we stay on track so that we maintain unity? It isn't hard to see the basis of our oneness.

How are we sanctified (John 17:17)? What did Jesus pray for next (17:21)?

What sets us free (John 8:32)?

What delights spiritual leaders (3 John 3-4)?

True unity (the unity of the Spirit) is unity of people who *walk in the truth of Scripture*. Unity which sets aside doctrine is counterfeit unity.

Fill in the blanks: \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

DAY 45: Friday. You're Different!

The unity we are called to preserve is unity which is composed of great diversity. The analogy of the body of Christ comes from your physical body, with different parts all working as a unit. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11. Some have gifts that involve *speaking*; others have gifts that involve primarily *servicing*. Which category do you think you belong to?

How are you serving in the church? List things you do.

If you're satisfied with your previous answer, skip to the memory work for today. If not, continue on . . .

What task(s) in the church could you be doing or helping others do?

Do you see a need or an opportunity our church is not meeting? Is there anything you could do about it?

The most important part of serving the Lord in His church is getting started. If you need suggestions, see an elder.

Fill in the blanks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

DAY 46: Saturday. Are You In Tune?

The *unity* of the church, the body of Christ, is composed of great *diversity* of the members working in *harmony*.

An heirloom in our family is the piano built in 1884. I love to hear my wife play (and our dog "sings" along!), and I love the harmony of the notes working together. But when one of the keys went dead, it didn't sound right. All 88 keys need to be functioning for the pianist to make good music.

If one member of the church "goes dead" by not attending, or not serving, or complaining about being a "G" key instead of "C-sharp," we can't produce the kind of unity God wants because our diversity isn't working in harmony. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 again today.

Who are you "harmonizing with" (serving alongside)?

Is there a note you should be playing (a way you can serve), but you've "gone dead?"

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What is the responsibility we have toward each other in the church?

Fill in the blanks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

DAY 47: Sunday. The Church: The Work of the Master

In the church our *unity* (in the truth) is composed of all our *diversity* (different gifts), working in *harmony* (cooperating), by the *sovereignty* of God (the Holy Spirit, who puts the body of Christ together).

If you see the church as a human institution, you'll quickly notice its problems. After all, it includes people like you! But if you realize it is far more than a human institution, you will see that it is God's chosen way to spread the gospel and to help conform us to the image of His Son. He has been working through His church for almost 2000 years.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11 and 12:18. Who puts together the parts of the body of Christ?

Read Matthew 16:18. Who builds the church? (It's *not* just another human institution!)

Read Ephesians 4:1-3 (again) and 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. In light of those passages, pray for your church and pray about the role(s) you can have in the body of Christ.

Fill in the blanks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, and individually  
members one of another.

DAY 48: Monday. Do You Belong Here?

It's popular these days to minimize "becoming a member" of a church. When you trust Christ to save you, He places you into His body and gives you His Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). No passage says "Join your local church." So, why should you make formal and official your relationship to a local church?

Let's turn the question around . . . In light of what you've learned about God's precious church, why would you withhold any amount of commitment? What does it say about you if you don't want to make a full commitment to the work Christ is doing on earth?

Read Ephesians 4:16. What is your responsibility to the church?

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 (again). Same question.

What would you say to a person who claims to belong to Christ, but does not join and commit to a local church? (Remember, speak the truth in love—Ephesians 4:15.)

Fill in the blanks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ *another*.



DAY 49: Tuesday. Review/Prepare

1. Write out the memory item for this week (as many times as you need to, until you know it by heart).

2. Tomorrow's message is about angels and demons. Can you answer these questions from Scripture?

Where do angels come from?

What do angels do?

Do you have a guardian angel?

Where do demons come from?

Who is Satan?

What do demons do?

Can demons attack Christians?

Should you pray to angels?

Should you rebuke Satan or demons?

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH  
THINGS TO REMEMBER

The Church began on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2.

The Church consists of every believer in Jesus Christ from that day until the rapture of the church.

The Church is distinct from Israel. Both are special creations of God, but they are not the same.

The local church is the "visible" work of Christ on earth.

The local church should have *unity*, composed of the *diversity* of its people, working in *harmony*, orchestrated by the *sovereignty* of God.

Every Christian has a spiritual gift (ability to serve, enabled by the Holy Spirit) which must be used in order for the church to be healthy (Ephesians 4:16).

"Membership" in the local church is not specified in the New Testament, but total commitment to the body of Christ is not negotiable. Make your commitment obvious and lasting.

Romans 12:4-5 (memorized)

Pastor Jim Harris  
Heritage Bible Church  
7071 W. Emerald St.  
Boise, ID 83704  
208-321-4373  
[hbc-boise.org](http://hbc-boise.org)

**Your Spiritual Family**  
*64 Days of Truth, Days 43-49: Ecclesiology*  
**Discussion Guide**

1. What is the significance of each of these descriptions of the church?

1 Timothy 3:15

Romans 12:4-9

Ephesians 1:22-23

2. What "spiritual gifts" are listed in the two lists in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8-10?

3. What verse tells you to identify your spiritual gift?<sup>1</sup>

4. So, what should you do in order to use your spiritual gift?

Hebrews 10:24-25

1 Corinthians 14:12

Romans 15:2

5. As a group, review all your memory verses so far.

---

<sup>1</sup>1 Corinthians 12:31 isn't it. See the explanation of that verse on the back of this sheet.

## 1 Corinthians 12:31

1 Corinthians 12:31 is an interpretive battleground. We know it forms the transition from the content of chapter 12 to the content of chapter 13. But what does it mean, and how should it be applied?

We know that the meaning cannot possibly be "*Seek to obtain the best spiritual gifts you can.*" That meaning would contradict everything else in the chapter. 12:11 and 12:18 are clear that it is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit to give gifts as He chooses. We cannot overrule the plan of God.

The actual meaning can be either of two possibilities, based on the intended meaning of the Greek word *zeloute*, translated "seek." This verb can be either in the indicative mood (a direct statement) or the imperative mood (a command). In this kind of Greek verb, it is impossible to tell which is intended because the forms are identical. Context must determine which it is, but in this context it is difficult to know which interpretation is correct. Here are the possibilities which do not contradict the rest of the passage:

1. As an indicative, it is a sarcastic indictment of the Corinthians. The meaning would be: "You are playing the pseudo-spiritual game of seeking superiority by seeking gifts you believe are superior, and you are seeking them for fleshly reasons. I am going to show you a more excellent way (love, as described in chapter 13)."
2. As an imperative, it is a command to the entire church.<sup>2</sup> It is addressed to the assembled body of believers. Taken this way the meaning is "As an assembled church, when you are gathered together, follow the priorities described in verses 28-30. Seek that which edifies the entire body, not that which pleases your fleshly desire to be the center of attention. I am going to show you a more excellent way (love, as described in chapter 13)."<sup>3</sup>

The grammar and the context do not allow 1 Corinthians 12:31 to mean that you should seek to possess and use certain spiritual gifts. You should seek to serve in whatever ways you can, by the enabling the Holy Spirit gives you. Whatever of service you render, it must always be done in love (chapter 13).

---

<sup>2</sup>The form of the word is plural, so it is not proper to interpret it as a command to individuals. It far better fits the context of addressing the whole church.

<sup>3</sup>The tradition of translating *zeloute* as a command has contributed to misunderstanding because many abuse it by making it into a command to seek out certain gifts. Paying attention to the context refutes that interpretation. It is better to translate it as an indicative in order to better agree with the rest of chapter 12.

**The Truth Shall Set You Free**  
*64 Days of Truth, Days 36-42: Soteriology*  
**Discussion Guide**

1. Observe how each of these passages describes what it takes in order to be saved:

John 3:16 Believe in the only-begotten Son of God.

Romans 10:9-10 Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Believe "the gospel" that Christ died for you sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Acts 16:30-31 Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 20:30-31 Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; trust Him.

Ephesians 2:8-9 Receive the grace of God by faith.

Luke 24:46-47 Repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

2. Observe how each of these passages describes a person who is saved:

Ephesians 2:10 Walks in good works which God prepared beforehand.

John 13:34-35 Loves other believers.

Acts 2:42 Continually devoted to teaching, fellowship, eating together, and praying.

1 John 3:17-18 Helps other believers in need.

Luke 6:46-49 Listens to Christ, obeys His words by acting upon them.

John 8:31-32 Continues to stand on the word of God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Consistent in the fellowship of the church.

3. What should you tell someone who says "How can I be saved?" or "How can I become a Christian?" Tell the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), and ask him or her to turn from their sin, confess it, and put their trust in Jesus Christ.
  
4. What would be your counsel to a person who claims to be a Christian, but does not attend church, doesn't like Christians, and doesn't read the Bible? You should challenge such a person with the Scriptures above. A philosopher once said "Show me your redeemed life, and I may tend to believe in your Redeemer."

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

*Our Father, again we say Thank You for the riches of Your grace. Thank You for this indescribably majestic plan that You have to provide Your Son with a Bride in the form of the Church. Thank You for letting us be part of that Church. Please strengthen our understanding tonight, we pray, that we might more appropriately honor our Bridegroom, in whose name we pray. Amen.*

This is titled: Your Spiritual Family; it is about the Doctrine of the Church. And before we dive into specifics, I need to let you know that there is only one word in the New Testament that is translated "church"—*ekklēsia*—it means "the called-out ones."

That word is used with two different senses in the New Testament. We might call one the "Capital-C Church"—it's also called the "Invisible Church" by many people, because you can't see exactly where it is (2 Tim. 2:19). It is comprised of every single believer (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25-27; Col. 1:18), starting with the Day of Pentecost—recorded in Acts Chapter 2, when the Holy Spirit came in a special way (vs. 4; cf. Jn. 14:17)—it's every believer from there until the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-17). It includes *no one* except true believers (Jn. 6:45), and it includes *every single* true believer (Jn. 6:39).

The other way that the word "church" is used—and I haven't looked this up statistically to see which is more than the other, but it's both, because you can tell that the meanings have a tremendous overlap—there's also the "Local Church," or, the "Local Churches." That is the people in any given place who *profess* to belong to Jesus Christ (e.g., Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rom. 16:1, 4-5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; etc.). That's called the "Visible Church," as opposed to the "Invisible Church." It doesn't mean true believers can't be *seen*; it just means that you can't tell exactly who's who, for sure (2 Cor. 13:5).

The local church is—and the local church always *has been*, and the local church always *will be*—a mixture of true believers *and* people who only *profess* to follow Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:21-23; Titus 1:16; 1 Jn. 2:4), and *counterfeits* planted by Satan for the purpose of poisoning the church (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Cor. 11:13-15, 26; Gal. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:18-19; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 Jn. 4:1; Jude 4, 12-13). *Every* local church is like that—there are *no* exceptions to that. Satan *always* attacks what God does (Lk. 8:11-12; 2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; 1 Thess. 2:18; Rev. 12:10), and there are always people who don't yet understand (Jn. 6:66), or are perhaps just blatantly hypocritical (Ps. 81:15).

The Church—that unified, worldwide, age-long work of God; the "Capital-C Church"—that's perfect (Eph. 5:27). The local church is always a battleground (1 Cor. 5:13; 2 Cor. 11:28). But the local church is *also* God's chosen instrument on Earth in this age, so Satan attacks it via infiltration (2 Cor. 11:13-15), corruption (1 Tim. 1:3; 4:1; Titus 1:10-11), and sometimes through outright persecution (Rev. 2:10).

So, the "local church" is the practical aspect of it, if you will. Remember, Jesus dictated seven letters to seven local churches in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation. Even in the First Century, churches were battlegrounds (1 Cor. 16:9; Jude 3).



Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

So, when you trust Christ to save you, you immediately become part of the "Capital-C Church," which is also "the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12; cf. Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6; 5:23, 30; Col. 1:18, 24). What we're going to talk about tonight is the Church in both of those senses.

So: Your Spiritual Family—the Church. The word is "Ecclesiology," based on that Greek word *ekklēsia*, which is translated "church." A three-point outline, as we've been organizing things all along. This time, Number 1: What is the Church? Secondly: How Does the Church Work? And Thirdly: What Can Go Wrong?

Alright: What is the Church? As I said, the Church was born when the Holy Spirit came in a new way (Jn. 14:17) and He indwelt every believer in Christ (Rom. 8:9)—it's recorded in Acts Chapter 2. Peter preached that day, and 3,000 people believed and were baptized on that first day. The Church consists of every believer in Jesus Christ from that day until the Rapture of the Church. We, in Heaven, could meet people who were there. Wouldn't that be cool?

The Church is *not* a replacement for the nation of Israel (see Jer. 31:35-36). When we get to Eschatology, we'll talk more about that. There is *still* a wonderful future for Israel (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 21:12). God *will* fulfill all of His promises to Israel, and God *will* bring that nation to a point where all Israel—all Israelites who are alive at a certain time in the future—*will* believe in Christ; that's Romans 11:26—"all Israel will be saved" (cf. Zech. 12:10; 13:1). Not every Jew who ever lived (Zech. 13:8-9; cf. Ezek. 20:38), but there *will be a moment* when "all Israel will be saved" (NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

Now, those are some facts about the Church. To give you an idea of what the Church is, I want to use picturesque descriptions of it from the New Testament. There are at least seven prominent metaphors in the New Testament for the Church. A "metaphor" is where you use one word to describe something else. Each metaphor emphasizes some aspect of the relationship between God and His people.

Now, Israel was God's "chosen...nation" (Ps. 33:12); they are His "chosen people" (Is. 43:20; cf. Deut. 7:6). *We* are God's "chosen...people" (1 Pet. 2:9). But the Church is not Israel, and Israel is not the Church (Matt. 21:43). Any Jew who believes *now* becomes part of the Body of Christ (Eph. 2:11-16), part of the Church (Rom. 11:1-5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28). And one of the mysteries is that we have Jew and Gentile together in Christ (Eph. 3:4-6).

Six of the metaphors that I'm going to show you *also* describe the relationship between Israel and God. God chose those people, God chose the Church, so you would expect there to be similarity; He is the one and only Savior (Is. 43:11). Only one of the seven is unique to the Church, and that's going to be our main focus when we get to it.

So, here are different ways that the Church is described—different names by which the Church is called:

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

The Church is a "bride" (Rev. 19:7). Now, God called Israel His "bride" (Is. 62:5; Jer. 2:32; cf. Jer. 3:1). He chastened Israel, His bride, for her spiritual adultery by worshipping idols, and her often frequent unfaithfulness. In the New Testament version, Jesus is the "Bridegroom" (Matt. 9:15; 25:1; Jn. 3:29) and the Church is His "bride" (Rev. 19:7).

The analogy is used both directions—both to teach about marriage between a husband and a wife, based upon the relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:25)—*and*, a marriage is meant to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:22-24, 28-31). That's a pretty high bar! But that's what God intends. In Ephesians 5, right at the end of the chapter, Paul says: "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church" (vs. 32)—and that's right after he talked about husband and wife. Christ and the Church, husband and wife—parallel.

The second thing that the Church is called: a "vineyard," or a "vine." This one is used prolifically in certain parts of the Old Testament, mainly in the Book of Isaiah (Is. 5:1-7; cf. Hos. 10:1). In the New Testament version, as we make our way through the Gospel of Mark, we're going to see an extended reference to Israel as a vineyard, and how they treated the ones that God sent to tend the vineyard (Mk. 12:1-11).

Jesus applies the very same principle to us in the Church. We need to look at this one: John 15:1-5, just before Jesus went to the Cross; He had just finished the Passover meal with His men, and He said: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away." Now, what would that be? That would be those ones who identify with the local church, but they're not connected to the Vine (see vs. 6; cf. Matt. 7:23; 1 Jn. 2:19)—that's unsaved people professing to be part of the Vine. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." So, we are the branches connected to the Vine, and God is at work in His vineyard, if you will.

Alright: The Church is a "bride." It is a "vineyard" or a "vine." Next metaphor: the Church is a "flock" with a "Shepherd" (Jn. 10:16)—in other words, we are "sheep" (vs. 27). I don't think I probably need to tell you that, *that's not flattering*. Sheep are basically stupid, easily scared, and stinky. So, that's what you are. God is the Old Testament "Shepherd" (Ps. 28:9; 80:1) and Israel is the "flock" (Jer. 31:10; cf. Ezek. 34:12; Mic. 7:14); Psalm 23:1—"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

What about the New Testament version? In John 10:11, Jesus said—and you can't get more straightforward than this—"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." Later in that chapter, Jn. 10:27—"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." That one is picked up and carried quite a bit further into the New Testament, not just from the words of Jesus. The Apostle Paul said to the elders of the church in

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

Ephesus, in Acts 20:28—"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." So there's the idea that we have "the good shepherd" (Jn. 10:11)—"the great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20), "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4)—and we also have those whom He calls to have the oversight and to be His servants as, you might say: "under-shepherds"; or, the Latin word for "shepherd" is "pastor." And in case you think that's a really highly-elevated position, remember: "pastor" backwards is "rotsap"—so, you're stinky sheep, I am too, and I'm a "rotsap"!

So, the "bride," the "vineyard," and the "flock"—all of those metaphors stress a caring, personal, saving relationship between God and His people (Ezek. 34:12; cf. Lk. 15:4; 19:10). Three others are used in the Old Testament for Israel—and then applied to the Church in the New Testament—that show us various aspects, not just of the *relationship* but of the *plan* that He has.

So, the next one is: "kingdom." A "kingdom" is a realm of a king, it's a sphere of rule and influence. "God is the King" (Ps. 47:7), we are His subjects. God the Father has promised and granted the Kingdom to His Son, Jesus Christ (Dan. 7:13-14). We just finished studying Revelation a few months back; we saw Christ receiving the Kingdom (20:4-6; cf. Matt. 25:31).

In the New Testament era—this era in which we live—it's the "Church Age," but it's *also* called "the kingdom of God" (Matt. 12:28; 21:43; Lk. 17:20-21) and "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19; 13:11); those two are used interchangeably and synonymously (Matt. 11:12; Lk. 16:16).

John the Baptist said: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:8). Jesus said: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Why? He's the King; He came from Heaven; He's going to bring the Kingdom of God—the Kingdom of Heaven—to Earth. So we call it the "Kingdom of God" because it's the Kingdom that God rules. We call it the "Kingdom of Heaven" because it's the Kingdom which originates from Heaven.

This plan of developing this Kingdom began way back in Genesis (49:10), and it develops until Jesus returns, sets up the Earthly Kingdom, and reigns "for a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4). So, *now*, while we are *citizens* of that Kingdom (Phil. 3:20)—it isn't here yet—we pray: "Your kingdom *come*. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

So, if you belong to Jesus Christ now—by the means that we talked about last week, under "Soteriology"—you belong to His Kingdom. I know that because He told me so: Colossians Chapter 1, Verses 13 and 14—"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness"—"domain" is a kingdom—"and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." One of the great ways to *overview* the whole Bible is to take the "kingdom" concept as it is revealed in germ form in the Book of Genesis, and watch it develop all the way through the Bible to the end, when Jesus reigns for a thousand years, and then He gives the Kingdom back to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24).

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

The next one also has to do with part of His plan for how these things ought to work out: We are a "household" (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17), or, you could say: a "family" (Eph. 3:15, NKJV). There are a number of references to that analogy; one that sticks out: Galatians Chapter 4, Verses 4 through 7; that's one of several passages that describe our relationship to God in terms of being the adopted children of God. Remember "adoption"—one of the ways to describe salvation, that we studied last week? And so, that reveals His plan, in the sense that it's like a family where the kids need to grow up. Ephesians 4:15—we need to "grow up" into Christlikeness.

Here's another analogy, by way of a metaphor: "building." We are a spiritual "building" not made with hands (Eph. 2:21). Christ is "the chief corner stone" of the foundation (Ps. 118:22; cf. Matt. 21:42), and we are "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone" (vs. 20). The analogy of us as a "building" is based on the idea, in the Old Testament, of the "temple," the dwelling-place of God (2 Cor. 6:16). We, the Church, are the "temple" of the Holy Spirit during this era (1 Cor. 3:16).

Those six metaphors help paint a pretty robust picture of your relationship with God, and our collective relationship with Him and with each other. They all apply to everyone who has ever trusted Christ for salvation—New Testament or Old Testament; if they were looking *forward* to the Savior and putting faith in Him (Jn. 4:25; cf. Deut. 15:18-19; Ps. 2:12; Is. 9:6-7; 53:1-12), all of those metaphors apply to them, in relationship to God. And of course now, we are transferred to His Kingdom.

It's the seventh metaphor that is *unique* to the Church: "body." We are "the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). The Church is uniquely a "body." Ephesians Chapter 1, Verses 22 and 23—"And He"—that refers to the Father—"put all things in subjection under His"—that's Jesus—"feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." *That's* where we're going to camp for most of our time tonight.

What is the Church? Well, it's *all* of those things. What is it that God *does* through the church—How Does the Church Work? You're going to get a powerful picture of what it means to be a Christian by learning what the New Testament says about the Body of Christ. Memorize this week: Romans 12:4-5, classic passage on the Body of Christ: "For just as we have many members in one body"—physically speaking—"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." So it's based *directly* on the analogy to your body; you need to have it working well, or you're crippled or ill.

There is a great four-word summary to describe what the Church is—I *wish* I had thought of this, but I didn't; I borrowed it and repeated it many, many times over the years. Four words: Unity, Diversity, Harmony, and Sovereignty. The Church is all about *unity*. That unity is composed of all our *diversity*, working together in *harmony*, which is all designed by the *sovereignty* of God. So we're going to use that as our outline for what we want to aim for as far as our functioning within the Church according to the design of God.

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various Date: 4-3-19

---

Unity composed of Diversity working in Harmony, designed by the Sovereignty of God. So that'll be the outline.

Let's start with Unity. "Body" is an extended illustration, based upon the *human* body. Like I said a minute ago: Your body—your physical body—either functions as a unit, or it doesn't function as it was designed. You are one *carefully*-designed and complex entity; like the Psalm says: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14)—a plan of God. You are *not* a collection of removable spare parts. The body doesn't work that way. We live in the era of "after-market" equipment—knees, elbows, shoulders, hips, prosthetics. The Body of Christ is *also* not a collection of removable parts; we are *integrally* attached to each other.

Do you remember the prayer of Jesus that we studied on Day 1 of "64 Days of Truth"? John 17:20-21. He said, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone"—the Apostles—"but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one..." And by the way: He *made* us one; we just have to act like it. Jesus didn't only *pray* for our unity; He wasn't sweating drops of blood, saying, "Oh, Father! I *hope* this plan works!" That's not what He was doing. He *designed* it—*designed* the unity—into the Church.

You will notice a lot of references tonight from First Corinthians Chapter 12—it's a great "body" chapter; so is Romans Chapter 12. First Corinthians Chapter 12 says it this way: "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ" (vs. 12)—*many* members, who are *diverse*. If you break your arm, you don't go get a kidney transplant; those parts aren't interchangeable. Everything has to work in its own designed place. You would never say, "I have really gifted hands. My hands are so gifted, I'm going to cut them off and send them to do a piano concert." Your hands wouldn't be gifted unless they are properly, fully in touch with, attached to, and working in partnership with the rest of your body. Severed from the body, *no* part of the body lives! It doesn't work that way. That's one of the most important truths about the Church. Jesus Christ is "the head" and all believers are "the body" (Col. 1:18). We either function together as a unit, or we're crippled. Very important!

First Corinthians 12 *really* emphasizes unity. As you look through there, First Corinthians 12:11 says "one...Spirit works all these things"—we'll see what those things are later. Verse 12—"The body is one...though they are many, are one body," and Verse 13 mentions "one Spirit," "one body," and "one Spirit" again. When you have the word "one" repeated six times in three verses, I think that's a theme. I'm going to go out there on a limb and say: we're supposed to have unity. Very important!

First Corinthians 12:13 explains *how* you wind up getting *into* the Body of Christ; and at the same time, it also reinforces our unity. First Corinthians 12:13—"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." How many people who are Christians are part of the Body? *All of them*—no such thing as a Christian apart from being attached to the Body of Christ. Paul goes on: "whether Jews or Greeks"—doesn't matter; one body—"whether slaves or free"—social status doesn't matter; one body—"and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

Every single Christian has the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9), and is—by that Spirit—placed into the Body of Christ; "baptized into" means "immersed into." So our unity is all wrapped up in the work of the Holy Spirit. It's not based on something external. It's not based upon us all signing an agreement of some kind. It's the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer, to knit them all together.

Ephesians Chapter 4, Verses 1 through 3—Paul says: "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord"—he wrote this from Rome, in prison—"implore you to walk"—remember Pneumatology: "walking by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), picking up one foot, putting it down in front of the other; having a plan, having a goal, knowing where you're going, expending effort, following the directions—"I...implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"—see First Corinthians 12:13: you've been called "into one body"—"with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

I would say the key word in there is the word "preserve." We can't *create* unity. We can't *attain to* unity. We *have* "the unity of the Spirit"—it's *our* job to *preserve* it! That means: we can also mess it up, right? So, our job is to not harm or destroy the unifying work of the Spirit. We *all* come to Christ in exactly the same way. We *all* have the same Holy Spirit. We *all* have the same salvation—that *marvelous* "package deal" of all of those things that we looked at last week. And we're all called to "walk...worthy" of *this* great "calling."

How are you "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"? Well, let's see: "humility...gentleness...patience...forbearance." Those are *all* things that you have to do with imperfect people; you want people to treat you the way you want to be treated, right? You preserve that by being steadfast and zealous to be true to the Scriptures, steadfast and zealous to serve the other members of the Body of Christ. Notice: you can *never* have unity unless you have "one another." You can't be unified all by yourself! That doesn't even make sense. You have to be in a "one another" relationship with other believers. There's actually one single Greek word that is translated "one another," and it's a *great* word to trace through the New Testament (*allēlōn*, e.g., Mk. 9:50; Jn. 13:34; Rom. 12:10, 16; 13:8; 14:13, 19; 15:5, 7; 16:16; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2, 25, 32; 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:9, 13, 16; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9, 18; 5:11, 15; 2 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 10:24-25; Jas. 4:11; 5:9, 16; 1 Pet. 1:22; 4:8-10; 1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Jn. 1:7; 3:23; 4:7, 11, 12).

Now, think back to those metaphors that we looked at. Every metaphor for the Church emphasizes unity: One wife with one Husband, one flock with one Shepherd, one set of branches attached to one Vine, one kingdom with one King, one family with one Father, one building with one Foundation, one body with one Head. Do you have any doubt that unity is an *extremely* important aspect of practicing Christianity? You shouldn't, by now.

Let's move on: Diversity—Unity composed of Diversity. Every member of the Body of Christ is *different* from *every other* member of the Body of Christ. Let's go back to that key chapter again—First Corinthians 12—and let's look all the way from Verse 14 through Verse 20:

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them"—hear that: that's *you*, each and every single one of you, without *any* exception *anywhere*, every single believer has been placed *by God*—"in the body, just as He desired." You are where God put you! Might He move you? He might. Might He change your circumstances? He might. He could. But, understand: You are there by His design. Then Paul says: "If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body."

Every part of the Body of Christ *needs* every other part of the Body of Christ (see vs. 26). And here's the point: You, with *your* history, *your* background, *your* physical makeup, *your* education, *your* experiences, *everything*...you, plus your spiritual gift—given to you sovereignly by God—is a *completely unique combination* which is not duplicated anywhere else in the Body of Christ. Why do I say that? Well, how about First Corinthians 12:7: "But to each one"—there it is again: *each* one, *everyone*, no exception—"is given the manifestation of the Spirit"—that's another expression for spiritual gifts—"for the common good." In other words: for the Body of Christ to be as healthy and good as it can possibly be, in any location at any time, it *absolutely* needs each and every member to be functioning as God designed! All of this diversity, supplied by *each one*, is for the "common good" (cf. 1 Pet. 4:10). People who come to church for *what they're going to get* don't yet understand Christianity (cf. Mk. 10:45; Gal. 5:13). We come together "for the common good"! We *belong* to each other! We *need* each other! It's *very important* that we are committed to each other.

I would say this: The Church of Jesus Christ is meant to be a picture of Christ, and think of it as a mosaic: a mosaic is made up of a bunch of little stones; when you get up close and you look at them, you say, "Somebody glued a bunch of rocks to this thing." But when you *step back*, and you see all those stones as they are arranged in relationship to each other, you see a picture. So, *missing* stones, missing tiles, blemished tiles—they *sully the picture*...and we need to be the purest picture we can be.

We don't have time to deal thoroughly with spiritual gifts, but let me say a couple of things: Your spiritual gift is how the Holy Spirit wants to work through you. Now, don't get into thinking, "Well, I'm a Seaman Third Class Mechanic's Assistant..." Trust God—He wants to work through you. He wants to *enable* you—that's what a spiritual gift is: it's an enablement—He wants to enable you to serve, by God's power, for the common good of the Church.

I will also say this—and this might shock some of you, depending upon your background: You are *never* commanded to *know* your gift, or to *seek out* to define your gift. I said that one time—it caused a big ruckus, there was an emergency meeting about this weird teaching that had come; I didn't know just how many toes I had stepped on, because I was brand new in the pastorate at that time, and we had a *crisis* over that! I said, "There's *no* verse that tells you to

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

seek out to know what your spiritual gift is!" "Well, how do you know there's no verse?" "*I read the whole stinkin' Bible! There's no verse!*" And I had people *angry* at me for *saying* that! And I said, "Well, what do you want me to say? There *is no verse* that tells you to do that!" And I had a guy close the book in front of me and say, "*It's implied!*"

Alright—I think, if you serve the Lord for the first fifty years or so after you're a Christian, you're going to get a pretty good idea what your giftedness is. But your *goal* is not to *seek that out*—your goal is to *serve*, and trust God that He will enable you to serve. You are told that you *have* a gift—that's *very clear*—and that it's for the good of the Church. The gift is never meant for you to contemplate yourself (e.g., 1 Cor. 14:4). The point is for you to be sensitive to the needs that you see around you, so that you can serve in whatever ways open up to you.

And you and I aren't going to have a really pleasant conversation if you tell me some time: "Well, I see that need over there; I *could* meet that need, but—that's not my gift." That's not going to fly! If you see a need, and you can meet the need, *meet the need!* "Yeah, but—what if God leads me to something I don't like?" Well, He probably *won't*...but He will be glorified when you serve by the power of His Spirit "for the common good."

There are a lot of really unhealthy things taught about spiritual gifts. One of the worst is when people start ranking gifts in order of importance. The New Testament, in First Peter Chapter 4, breaks down gifts into two categories: "speaking" gifts and "serving" gifts. Obviously, I talk a lot. But there are gifts for people who don't talk. Most of you probably would have a bad physical reaction if I said, "Hey, you come up and finish this for me tonight!" There are "speaking" gifts, and there are "serving" gifts—*all* "for the common good." Some gifts may have broader *influence* than others, but that's not a "greater" gift.

You have something no other Christian has, and to the extent that you *don't use it*, in the context of a local church, the Body of Christ is crippled, and that mosaic picture of Christ is smudged.

Unity composed of Diversity. How about Harmony? It is Unity, composed of all of our Diversity, *working in Harmony*. God blends together all the diversity of the Body of Christ into that portrait. *No one* is insignificant. *No one* is superior in the Body of Christ. Now, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required" (Lk. 12:48)—there is greater accountability for "teachers" and the like (Jas. 3:1)—but it's not a matter of superiority in *any* sense of the imagination.

Let's go back to First Corinthians 12, and let's read another six verses that I wish I could preach on tonight: First Corinthians 12:21-26—"And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.'" Remember the last one we read—it was someone saying, "Well, I'm not as special as you, so I'm not part of the Body," or, "I'm not like you, so I'm not part of the body." Here's the other way around: this is one part of the Body despising another part. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be



Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor." You know, your body goes to *a lot of trouble* to protect your spleen and your gall bladder and your heart and your lungs, and all of that. That's not the stuff we see. "...on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable"—because your heart isn't hanging out and making a mess on the floor—"whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." It's pretty obvious: Every part of the Body of Christ has to do its part in order for the whole to be what God designs it to be.

It's time for Spring Football at Boise State, and they're bringing up new football players, and trying to put together the team for this year. Just imagine if Coach Harsin, in his press conference before the spring game this weekend, said: "This team has more unity than I've ever seen! This team has such unity that the *entire* team has *all* decided to play Offensive Tackle!" How would the team do? Not so good. Every part of the Body has a *unique* job to do, and they are unified when the *diverse* parts work in *harmony*. Be what you are. Work on being more and more like Jesus in your character (Rom. 13:14a), and let God blend the gifts of the body together, just as He chooses to.

We are Unity composed of Diversity working in Harmony—under the Sovereignty of God. What we mean here is that God designed the Body of Christ, and He places *each part* just as He wants it to be. Go back again to First Corinthians Chapter 12; this time, let's pluck out Verse 11 and Verse 18: "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually"—there you go again: "each one," *each* and *every* one, *every* individual, *no exceptions*—"distributing to each one individually just as He wills...But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired." *You're not a mistake!*

Now, should you be *growing*? Yes! Should you be pursuing maturity? Yes! Should you be *branching out* in how you serve? Sure! Might you start out doing one thing, and find out that you actually do something else better? Sure! That's part of growing up! But don't worry about trying to be like somebody else. God gifted *you*. God placed *you* where He wants you to be.

Now, the more you are like Christ in your *character*, the wider will be the variety of things that you do (see 2 Tim. 2:21; cf. Prov. 25:4). Some of the seek-out-your-spiritual-gifts people go *just the opposite* direction. It's like, the more *adamantly* you identify your gift, the more you specialize in *only that*—and so, you don't do anything for that widow who needs her lawn mowed, even though you have a perfectly good lawnmower, and an hour available.

You should *never* seek certain spiritual gifts, because what does it say? God gives the gifts "just as He wills." Do you really want to fight the will of God? Not a good idea! The people who tell you that you need to have a certain spiritual gift in order to have the Holy Spirit, or in order to be important—they're *dead wrong!* That's just *anti-Biblical*.

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

So: What is the Church? Well, the Church is the Body of Christ—the people of God in His family, the building of which Jesus Christ is the foundation and the corner stone, the Kingdom of God on Earth, the Bride of Christ, the flock under the Chief Shepherd, and the branches attached to the True Vine.

How Does the Church Work? This Body of Christ is Unity composed of Diversity working in Harmony, assembled by the Sovereignty of God.

So, we come to: What Can Go Wrong? As with every doctrine, there are a number of problems that develop when you fail to understand, or fail to apply, the doctrine properly. Here are some things to think about under: "What Can Go Wrong in the Realm of Ecclesiology."

One is: Importing worldly leadership structures into the Church. We are a *spiritual* organism, but there are worldly ways to go about doing things. In my first year as a pastor, a well-meaning man told me: "Jim, you need to realize that you are the CEO of this corporation." That's nice for the ego of a young pastor, but it's *dead wrong* for the Doctrine of the Church. The New Testament teaches that the Church is to be led by a plurality of Elders—a group of Elders who, *together*, bear the responsibility for shepherding the Church of God; they all occupy the same office (see Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:12; 3:1; 5:17; Titus 1:5; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:1). Some of them are supported by the Church (1 Cor. 9:14), some are not. All of them are collectively responsible for the spiritual health of the flock (1 Tim. 1:3), and the purity of the flock (Titus 2:7), and the thoroughness of the doctrine that is proclaimed (1 Tim. 4:18).

Some reject the "CEO Pastor" for the *other* extreme of democratic rule—we *all* occupy the same office. That goes to the extreme of saying that everything in the church is to be done by democratic rule. This doesn't happen very often, except in America, it's a way that we've messed it up. That allows the most *immature* in the Body to have the same influence as the most mature ones, and that's *not* God's plan for His Church (cf. Heb. 5:12-14).

Another thing that can go wrong is a lack of commitment to the local church (Prov. 18:1). For many reasons, people—especially in our society—have, by and large, lost the proper sense of commitment to the local church (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:18; Heb. 10:25-25; cf. Matt. 18:15-17). It's really popular—especially in America, but not *just* here—to say: "Well, I belong to the *Body of Christ*; I don't *need* to belong to a local church." The problem with that is: the local church is the only expression of the Body of Christ that God has designed to function on Earth! So don't just say, "I want the 'Capital-C' on church, and I don't want anything to do with that 'Small-C' stuff," because, you know what? The "Small-C" stuff is where *the problems are*—because of people like *you*, and people like *me*! Some people say they love Jesus, but they'll never join the church. Well, they don't know Jesus—not the Jesus who gave us the New Testament, if they say that (see 1 Jn. 2:3-5). I've heard it said many times: "Well, you know, it's easier to get to Heaven by faith than it is to join the local church." Okay—I'll grant you that. But let's turn that around: If you *really do* love Jesus, how do you *show it* by turning your back on His Bride? (see 1 Jn. 5:1). I don't think that works. If you choose not to join a local church, then explain yourself to God.

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

I feel like I don't need to preach that very much here, because, by golly, you're *here!* Praise the Lord! You are "*the* elect" for sure! We need each other far too much to limp along without every person that He's calling to serve Him through the local church to be doing what they're supposed to be doing.

When you fill out a membership application here at this church—we're not the perfect model, but—you sign over this statement: "I hereby request to be a member of Heritage Bible Church. If accepted, I promise, to the best of my ability, by God's grace, to support the church with my regular attendance at services"—that's not too much to ask—"with regular financial contributions, and by serving in other capacities, according to God's leading." In other words, what that says is: "I really promise to act as a Christian." That's what you're supposed to do. What problem could a person have with that?

The story is told of a well-worn 1-dollar bill and a well-worn 20-dollar bill, that they arrived at the Federal Reserve Bank to be retired. They were moving along the conveyor belt to be burned, and they struck up a conversation. The 20-dollar bill reminisced about its travels all over the country. "I've had a pretty good life," the Twenty proclaimed. "I've been to Las Vegas and Atlantic City, the finest restaurants in New York, performances on Broadway, and even a cruise to the Caribbean." "Wow!" said the 1-dollar bill. "You've really had an exciting live!" "So tell me," said the Twenty. "Where have *you* been throughout your lifetime?" The 1-dollar bill said, "Well, I've been to the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Lutheran Church..." And the 20-dollar bill said, "What's a 'church'?"

Another *big* way that we can go wrong with the Church is very much a matter of our day and age: the "Electronic Church." I call it the "Electronic *Non-Church*." The advent of television, radio, Internet, and other methods of communication and interacting are all good things, they can all be used in good ways...but one thing they can *never do* is be the Church—a substitute for the Church.

Now, I say that as somebody who has been involved in Christian Radio for over 40 years. It's a *great* way to communicate! It's a great way to pass on information. But it's *not* the Church, and it *can't* be the Church. It can *serve* the Church, it can be a *tool* of the Church—especially by spreading good teaching, and spreading the Gospel, but it's *not the Body of Christ!* When was the last time that you ever heard of an Electronic Church making a hospital call? Or doing a funeral? Or a wedding? Or sending money to the needs of a struggling member? Or spending a few hours counseling someone in the distress of a family problem? That doesn't *happen*, except when you are "one-anothering."

Then, maybe the opposite of that, there's the "Edifice Complex"—and, yes, that's supposed to be a pun on the "Oedipus Complex." This is the error of thinking that the *building* is the church. The building isn't the church. The church is *the people* (Acts 20:28; cf. Rev. 5:9). The building is a tool that the church uses, where the people come together to worship and to serve and to be equipped so that they can go out and do outreach (Eph. 4:12).

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

Hebrews 10:24-25 was written long before there were such things as church buildings. That's where it says: "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Now, it's hard to get that into English. That's a very good translation, but the idea is that we don't consider *how we might* stimulate each other; literally, the order of the words is: "Let's consider one another, to the point of stimulating." So, you have to be with "one another" in order to do that.

You might look at the poster in our foyer. If you haven't noticed it, we put up a new version of it: "The Seven Commandments." It's based on a sermon I preached when we dedicated this building to the Lord. It's our attitude toward this building—how it ought to be used. Next month, it's going to be my privilege to present the same commands—and we've actually had a poster made up in Russian; I'm going to speak at the building dedication over there, and we're going to give them that as a gift, at Spring of Life Church; because the right attitude transfers in *any* culture.

Another one—*big one*, these days: the "Seeker-Sensitive Movement." This is a movement I would tend to say has been redefining the church among Evangelicals—it's almost *completely finished* redefining the church, in the direction *opposite* what God designed (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-5). The idea of the "Seeker Sensitive Church" is: "We want to build the church services so that people who are seeking God can come here and find Him." Well, you know what? People who are seeking God have been able to come to church and find Him for 20 centuries. But when you go and *design* your church services, and *design* your ministries, in order to make them *attractive* to people who aren't part of the Body of Christ, that's the *polar opposite* of what the Scripture teaches! Romans 3:10-11 couldn't be any more clear: "As it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God.' " There are *not* tens of thousands of people running around Boise, and running around Idaho, just *looking for God!* "Where is He? Where is He? Where is He? Where can I find Him?" That's not *going* on (see Job 21:14-15; Ps. 36:1-4; 78:34; Jn. 3:19; 7:7).

People seek God when God *reaches out* and "draws" them (Jn. 6:44; cf. Jer. 24:7; Acts 16:14). People are not lost because "church" isn't cool enough, or, to their liking, or, entertaining enough. They're not lost because they're "not churchy"—they're lost because of their *sins*, and they *won't* seek God on their own (Jn. 3:19)! God is the Seeker (Jn. 4:23). *Every* church ought to be "seeker sensitive"—sensitive to the fact that, as Luke 19:10 says: "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." We come to church as *believers*, to "stimulate one another to love and good deeds," to proclaim the Word of God (1 Tim. 4:13), to be built up in Christ (Jude 20), to be equipped to go out into the world and take the message by which God is seeking sinners (Rom. 10:17)! *That's* what we do! The Seeker is God. The Church is to be "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim, 2:15). The Church is where we're supposed to "Preach the word" and "be ready in season and out of season" to do that (2 Tim. 4:2). Now, it's perfectly fine for unbelievers to come to church, and we're not opposed to you inviting people to come to church—but when they come to church, they need to figure out: "These people have something I don't." And we can tell them what that is (1 Cor. 14:24-25).

Sermon Title: Your Spiritual Family – Doctrine of the Church      Speaker: Jim Harris  
64 Days of Truth # 7 of 10  
Scripture Text: Various      Date: 4-3-19

---

The "Seeker Sensitive" movement is all about style—and the one that takes it on the chin is the truth. We need to preach *truth*. You cannot ignore what God says, and be doing His will for His glory (Is. 8:20; Jer. 8:9).

The final one on my list is the "Emerging Church." The "Emerging Church" is another cancer that has grown in the Body of Christ. The movement itself has collapsed; it lasted about eight years, maybe. Nobody I know around here uses that term anymore. The movement has collapsed, but the cancer is still in the bloodstream of *many* churches these days.

What is the "Emerging Church"? It's taking Postmodern philosophy and importing it into the Church. They say that to be precise and thorough about doctrine is *wrong*—you *shouldn't* take a stand on doctrine. They say it's actually *impossible*, because we can't really *know* for sure; and they say it's *arrogant* to say "This is the truth" and "That's an error" (contra 1 Jn. 4:6; cf. Eph. 5:11). Postmodernism is the idea that there are no absolutes—and they say that with *absolute* dogmatism, which is an interesting thing.

"Seeker Sensitive," "Emerging Church," any of those things—if you are seeking to try to keep up with the latest trends, you are programming your own irrelevance, because the trends will always change. And Christians tend to be about two and a half steps behind, even when they try it.

So, as you take in this message, and as you discuss these things in your discussion groups, as you do your devotions—I ask only that you pray about *your own commitment* to the Church of the living God. If you know somebody who is professing Christ who *isn't* "one-anothering," reach out as "one" to "another," and exhort them, encourage them, draw them, bring them with you, and do as God leads you to do in light of His Word (see Ps. 141:5).