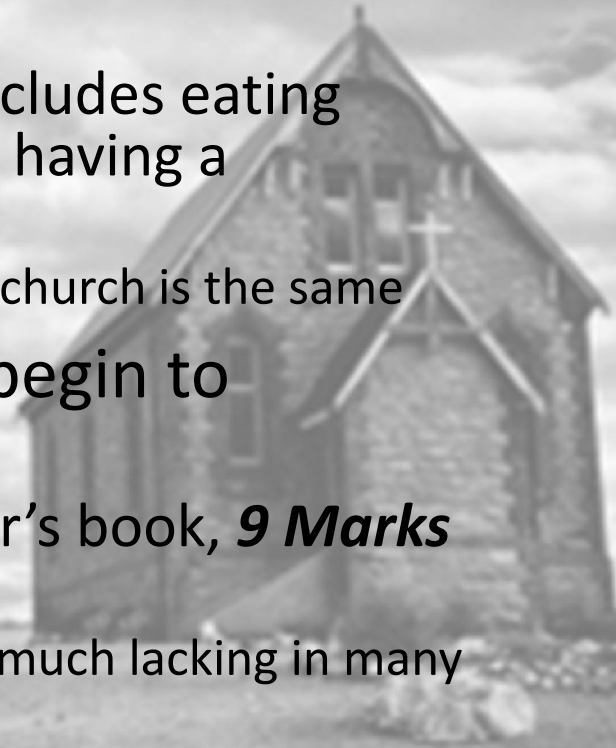


Autopsy of a Deceased Church



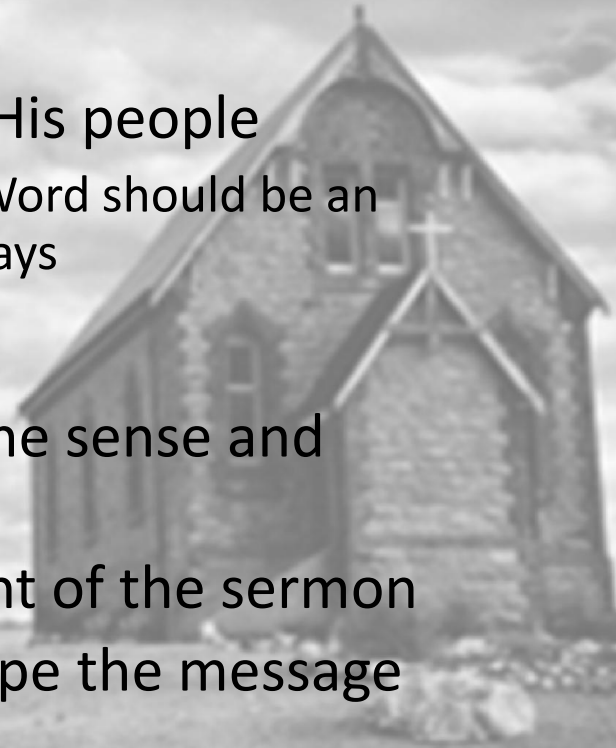
What makes a church healthy?

- Having a healthy church is very similar to having a healthy body
 - If creating an atmosphere for health includes eating right, exercising, getting enough sleep, having a balanced diet, etc.
 - Creating an atmosphere of health in your church is the same
- There are things that you can do to begin to promote health in your church
 - The following is taken from Mark Dever's book, ***9 Marks of a Healthy Church***
 - Not exhaustive, but these marks are very much lacking in many American Churches today



Expositional Preaching

- This is probably the most important injection of health a church can have
 - God's Word is simply God speaking to His people
 - So it follows that the preaching of God's Word should be an endeavor to tell God's people what God says
- Expository preaching is defined as...
 - The sense and message of the text is the sense and message of the sermon
 - The point of the Biblical text is the point of the sermon
 - The particular text will control and shape the message



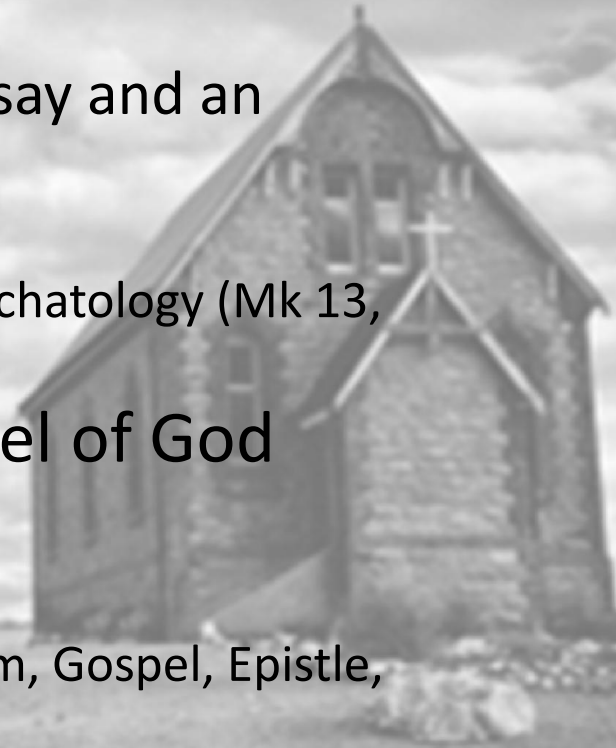
Expositional Preaching

- Some confusion today...
 - Expository Preaching is not Topical
 - In topical preaching, the preacher already knows what they want to say and looks for scriptures to validate & support
 - Expository Preaching is not verse by verse preaching
- Neither is inherently bad
 - But you do not want to make them the sermonic diet for your congregation



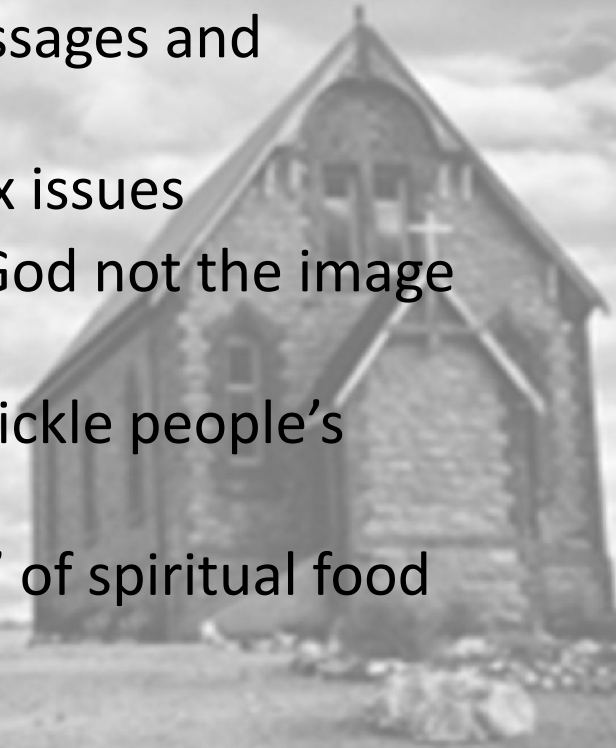
Expositional Preaching

- Expository preaching typically proceeds through books of the Bible
 - We realize that God has something to say and an extended context in which to say it
 - Although can be done topically
 - The sermon on the mount, Beatitudes, Eschatology (Mk 13, Matt 25, 2 Peter 3)
- Endeavors to teach the whole counsel of God
 - Both Old and New Testaments
 - All genres of Scripture
 - Law, History, Prophetical, Poetical, Wisdom, Gospel, Epistle, Apocalyptic



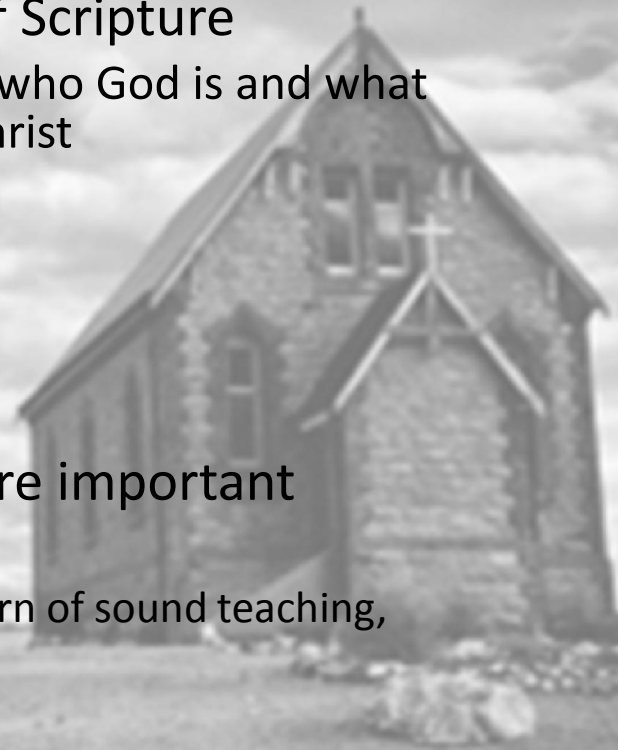
Expositional Preaching

- Benefits of expository preaching
 - Demands that you preach the hard passages and uncomfortable subjects
 - Keeps pastors away from their soapbox issues
 - Conforms the people to the image of God not the image of the pastor
 - Avoids the preacher's temptation to "tickle people's ears" (2 Tim 4:3)
 - It gives believers a well-rounded "diet" of spiritual food



Biblical Theology

- What is it?
 - An understanding of the meta-narrative of Scripture
 - That Scripture is a progressive revelation of who God is and what he has done in and through His Son Jesus Christ
 - Creation, fall, redemption, Glorification
 - Father, Son, Spirit
 - The people of God
 - The temple of God
 - The presence of God
 - The belief that the doctrines of the faith are important
 - 2 Tim 1:13
 - What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.
 - Cf. 1 Tim 1:10-11, 6:3; 2 Tim 4:3
 - “Doctrine” is not a bad word
 - A view that the Bible is all about God and not all about me



Biblical Theology



- Biblical Theology is important because it is not only the ‘how’ that is important, but the ‘what’
 - E.g. You can have bad expository preaching if the theology behind it is bad
- Biblical theology informs each aspect of the whole church
 - Evangelism
 - The gospel is doctrine. Therefore, sound doctrine is necessary for evangelism.
 - Discipleship
 - Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth” (Jn. 17:17). Christians grow by learning and living in light of the truth—in other words, by sound doctrine.
 - Unity
 - According to the New Testament, the only true unity is unity in the truth (1 Jn. 1:1-4; 2 Jn. 10-11)
 - Worship
 - To worship God is to declare his excellencies (1 Pet. 2:9-10) and to exalt him because of who he is (Ps. 29:2). True worship is a response to sound doctrine.
 - Leadership
 - Again, according to the Bible there are specific ways to lead Christ’s church

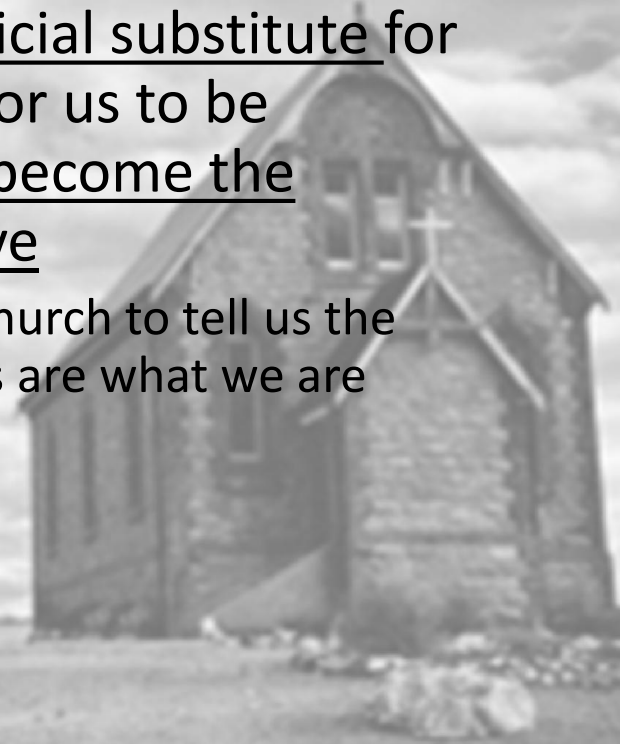
A Biblical Understanding of the Good News

- The most important doctrine is the one to get right!
 - A Biblical understanding of the good news should inform every sermon, every act of baptism and communion, every song, every prayer, every conversation. (p. 75 What is a Healthy Church)
- If you want your church to be healthy
 - It is critical that everyone be on the same page here



A Biblical Understanding of the Good News

- What is the Gospel
 - That Jesus died on the cross as a sacrificial substitute for sinners and rose again, making a way for us to be reconciled to God. That the judge will become the father, if only we will repent and believe
 - We require people who seek to join our church to tell us the Gospel in 60 seconds; and these elements are what we are looking for



A Biblical Understanding of the Good News

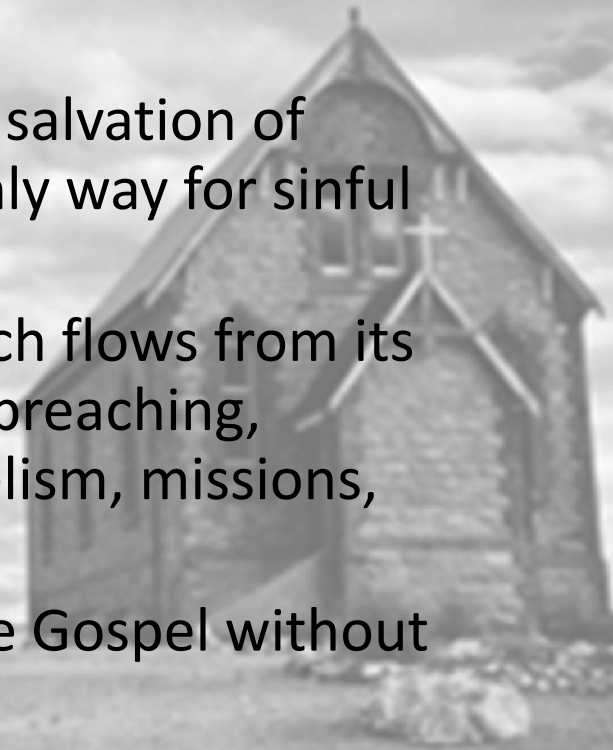
- What it's not
 - That we are OK
 - The Bible utterly rejects the idea that we are okay, that the human condition is just fine and that Jesus is a wonderful "aid to navigation" in this life
 - That we are Jesus' friend
 - Gospel is not cultivating a friendship or following an example
 - That God is love
 - God's love has a depth. It requires those who love him to be perfect (Matt 5), holy (Heb 12:14), etc.
 - That we should start living right
 - The Gospel is not about morality or ethics or virtues
 - The Gospel is not an "additive" that makes our good life better
 - That He has a wonderful plan and purpose for our life
 - That we receive peace, happiness, fulfillment, love, etc. because of the Gospel
- Some of these are the benefits of the Gospel and they are partially true
 - JI Packer
 - A half truth masquerading as a whole truth becomes a complete untruth

A Biblical Understanding of the Good News

- Have we heard the Gospel? Have we believed it with our lives or are we still playing at religion...To really hear the Gospel is to be shaken to the core. To really hear the Gospel is to change. Have you heard the Gospel...not a soothing word about your goodness, or about God's acceptance, or about Jesus' inoffensive willingness to befriend all and sundry, or even some convicting word about getting rid of some sin in your life...but have you heard the Bible's great message about God and us? Does it sound like the best news you have ever heard? Old sin forgiven! New life begun! A personal relationship with your God, your creator, now and forever! (9 MHC, p. 81)

A Biblical Understanding of the Good News

- A biblical understanding of the gospel is important because...
 - The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, and it is the only way for sinful people to be reconciled to a holy God.
 - Not only that, but everything in a church flows from its understanding of the gospel, whether preaching, counseling, discipleship, music, evangelism, missions, and on.
 - Many people think they are sharing the Gospel without knowing that they are not



A Biblical Understanding of Conversion

- There is much confusion and poor theology surrounding conversion in today's church
 - Biblical conversion is not simply...
 - Reciting a creed
 - Being born in a certain family/country
 - Attending a class
 - Saying a prayer
 - Mental acceptance of Biblical doctrine
 - Moral living
 - Something that we do (we'll talk more about this in a minute)



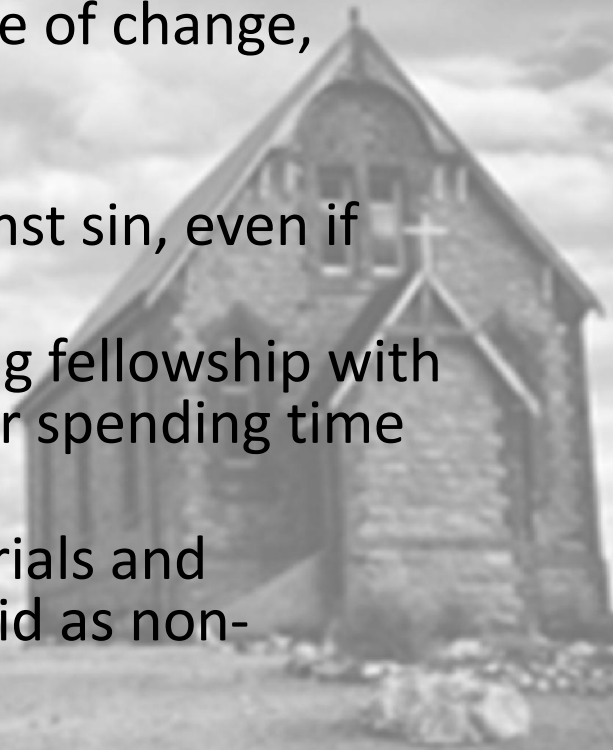
A Biblical Understanding of Conversion

- Biblical conversion is understanding...
 - That our condition is desperate
 - Depravity of man (Rom 3:9-20; Eph 2:1)
 - We are called to tell people that they must turn to God. But we must understand that in doing this, God is calling us to talk to a bunch of corpses (p. 97, 9 MHC)
 - That all we do call people to “merely” rely on Christ alone
 - Repentance & Faith
 - Repentance
 - We turn from our sins
 - Faith
 - Are enabled to see and repent of our sins and rely on Christ by a supernatural act (Eph 2:8-9)
 - We do not do “nothing”, but we don’t do everything
 - It is human act enabled by a divine one
 - Jesus taught clearly that we must act, but he also taught that we can act only if God’s actions are behind our own (p. 94, 9MHC)
 - We respond to what the Spirit has already done in us (Acts 11:18; Eph 2:1, 8; 1 Cor 2:14)



A Biblical Understanding of Conversion

- Evidence of conversion (The Works of the Spirit)
 - Do the lives of the people give evidence of change, putting off the old and on the new?
 - Gal 5:22 & 2 Peter 1:5-8
 - Are they interested in waging war against sin, even if they continue to stumble?
 - Do they show a new interest in enjoying fellowship with Christians and perhaps new motives for spending time with non-Christians?
 - Are they beginning to respond to the trials and challenges differently from how they did as non-Christians?

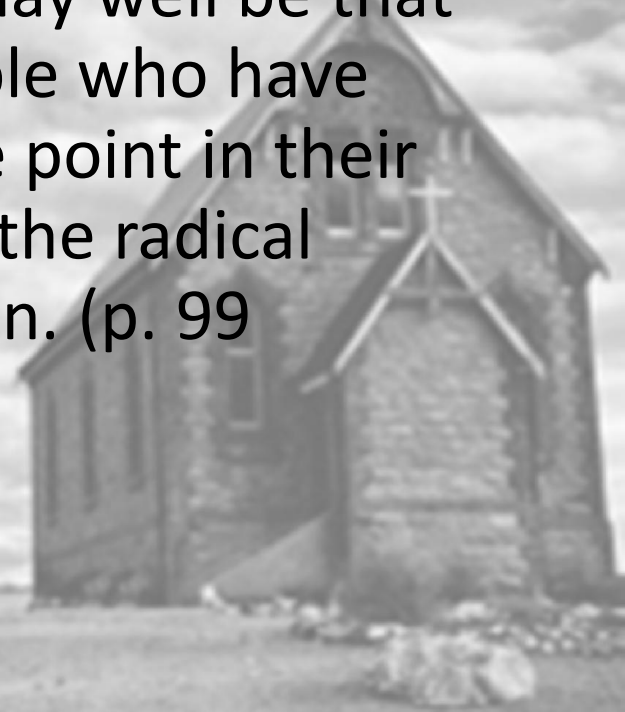


A Biblical Understanding of Conversion

- Do you see why understanding this is important for your own spiritual health, and for the spiritual health of any church that you would be involved in? If our conversion, our turning, is basically understood to be something we do ourselves instead of being something God does in us, then we misunderstand it. Conversion certainly includes our own action...even so, real conversion is more than that. Scripture presents us as needing to have our hearts replaced, our minds transforms our spirits given life. We can do none of this ourselves...

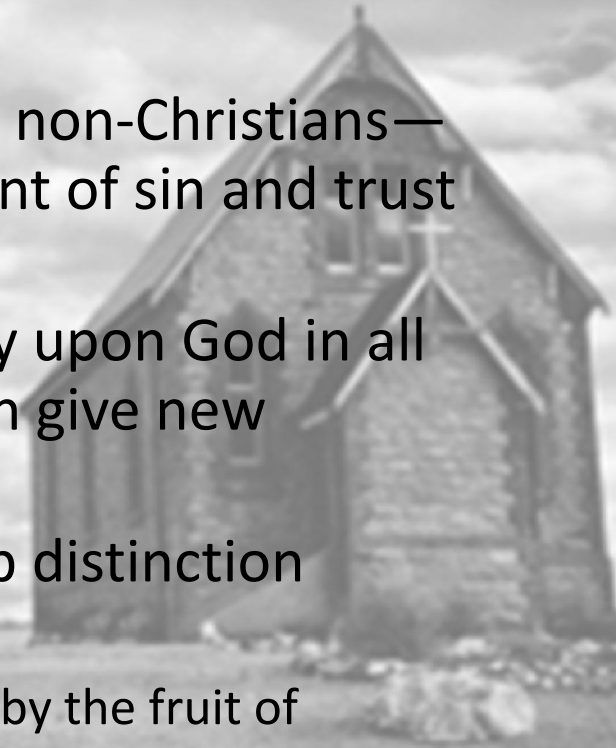
A Biblical Understanding of Conversion

- I fear that one of the results of misunderstanding the Bible's teaching on conversion may well be that evangelical churches are full of people who have made sincere commitments at some point in their lives but who have not experienced the radical change that the Bible calls conversion. (p. 99 9MHC)



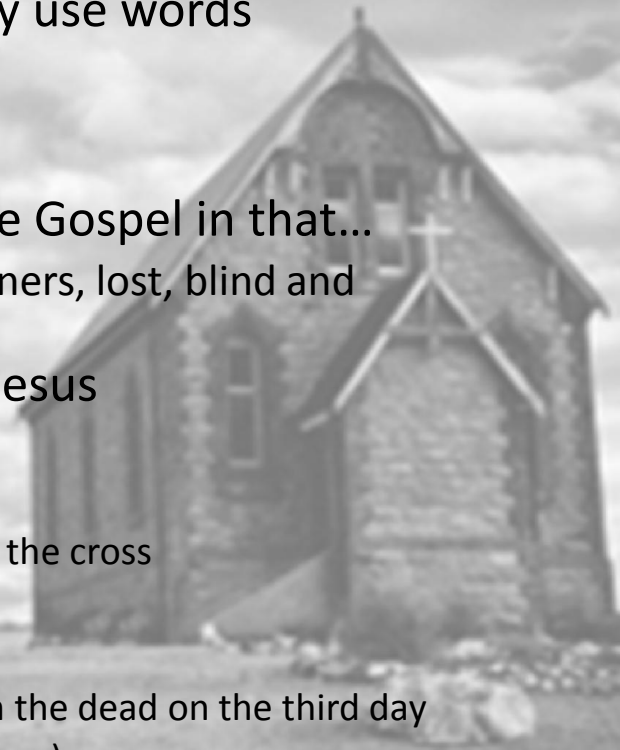
A Biblical Understanding of Conversion

- This promotes Church health by...
 - Ensuring Biblical conversion
 - It clarifies how churches should exhort non-Christians—they should call non-Christians to repent of sin and trust in Christ.
 - It reminds churches that they must rely upon God in all of their evangelistic efforts; only he can give new spiritual life.
 - It teaches churches to maintain a sharp distinction between themselves and the world.
 - Church members' lives should be marked by the fruit of conversion,
 - Churches should admit to baptism and the Lord's Supper only those who show evidence of conversion.



A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

- We've all heard or even used the adage...
 - Preach the gospel always...and when necessary use words
 - Well, that is false
- Gospel Evangelism *necessarily* uses words
 - It is informed by a correct understanding of the Gospel in that...
 - They must be told the bad news that they are sinners, lost, blind and broken
 - Then they must be told the good news about Jesus
 - That through trusting Jesus' completed work...
 - Living the perfect life we can never live
 - By trusting that he was your and my substitute on the cross
 - That He took the punishment for our sins
 - That he died the death that we deserve
 - That he defeated the curse of death by rising from the dead on the third day
 - And that if anyone trusts His work (and not your own)
 - He will live forever
 - And we must present them as fact...not our opinion or belief



A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

- What Evangelism is not...
 - It is not a personal testimony
 - It is not saying a prayer with someone
 - It is not being nice to people
 - It is not doing good deeds for people
 - It is not social action or political involvement
 - It is not apologetics
 - It is not the results of evangelism
 - A common misunderstanding that converts are evangelism



A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

- Evangelism is not a making of proselytes; it is not persuading people to make a decision; it is not proving that God exists, or making a good case for the truth of Christianity; it is not inviting someone to a meeting; it is not exposing the contemporary dilemma, or arousing interest in Christianity; it is not wearing a badge saying “Jesus Saves”!
- Some of these things are right and good in their place, but none of them should be confused with evangelism. To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what he has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. (John Cheesmen, p. 123, 9MHC)

A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

- Responsible evangelism also includes...
 - Telling them Christianity will be costly
 - Telling them following Christ will be hard
 - Telling them the life of a believer is a sacrificial
 - Telling them it is an other-centered life they are committing to
 - i.e. encouraging them to counting the cost



A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

- How does this promote Church health?
 - It frees the normal church member to share the faith
 - It takes the pressure off knowing everything
 - It ensures that true converts are joining our churches
 - I'm concerned that if one doesn't believe that...the Gospel is the good news of God's action, the Father's electing, the son dying, the Spirit drawing, and that conversion is our only response to God giving us the grace-gifts of repentance and faith: and that evangelism is our simple, faithful, prayerful telling of this good news...I'm concerned that that you will actually damage the evangelic mission of the church by making false converts (9MHC, p. 123)

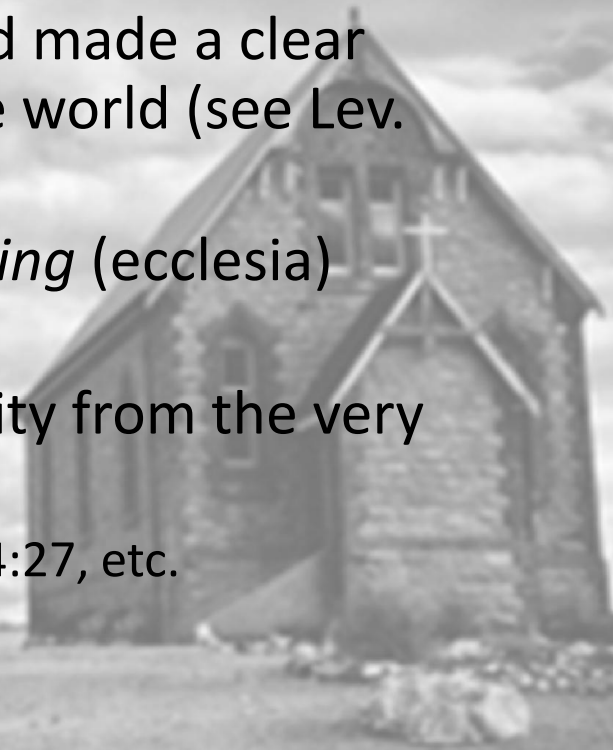
A Biblical Understanding of Membership

- What do you get when you combine two common human tendencies (commitment-phobia & Lone-rangerism) together in our American culture?
 - You get people who are fairly hostile to NT Christianity and not very comfortable with church membership!



A Biblical Understanding of Membership

- A (very) brief case for Church membership
 - Throughout Old Testament history, God made a clear distinction between his people and the world (see Lev. 13:46, Num. 5:3, Deut. 7:3).
 - The word for church means the *gathering* (ecclesia)
 - People gathering around the Gospel
 - The church was naturally a distinct entity from the very beginning
 - ACTS 5:11; 8:1; 9:31; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 14:27, etc.



A Biblical Understanding of Membership

- A (very) brief case for Church membership
 - Christ says that entering the kingdom of God means being bound to the church “on earth” (Matt. 16:16-19; 18:17-19). Where do we see the church on earth? The local church.
 - There is a definite “In” and “Out” of the church
 - Matt 18:15-17
 - “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault...if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you...If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
 - The ability to exclude someone from “the church” presupposes that it’s known who belongs to “the church” as a member in the first place
 - 1 Cor 5 – expel the immoral brother
 - Have to have an “include’ in order to “exclude”
 - 2 Cor 2:6
 - The majority allowed this man back in
 - Majority means they knew the limits of their fellowship

A Biblical Understanding of Membership

- Church membership is healthy...
 - For our own souls
 - To be a blessing to others
 - For those caught in sin
 - To support the elders
 - To be blessed by the elders' ministry
 - So that the Gospel can go out
 - So that you can use your gifts
 - So that God may be glorified
 - To demonstrate your commitment
 - So that Biblical church discipline can occur



A Biblical Understanding of Church Discipline

- Church Discipline flows out of Church membership
 - Church growth writers often tell us that the way to grow a church is to...
 - Open the front door and close the back door
- But Biblically it should be the other way around
 - Close the front door
 - Have a high standard of membership (admittance)
 - And open the back door
 - Be willing to administer church discipline



A Biblical Understanding of Church Discipline

- What is church discipline?
 - Excluding someone who professes to be a Christian from membership in the church and participation in the Lord's Supper for clear and serious unrepentant sin
- Matt 18:15-17
 - If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

A Biblical Understanding of Church Discipline

- When to do Church discipline
 - When the sin is clear
 - When the sin is serious
 - When the sin is unrepentant (what Matt 18 addresses)



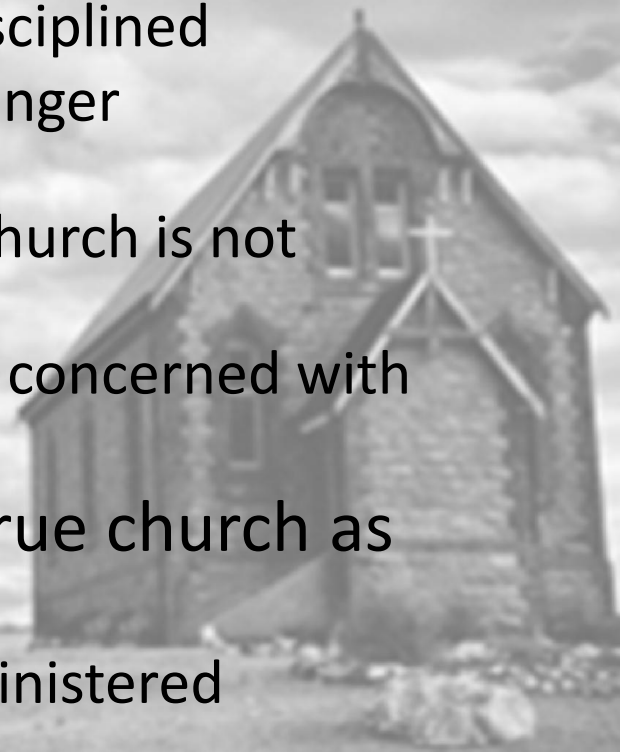
A Biblical Understanding of Church Discipline

- Why we don't administer church discipline
 - The abuses in the past
 - The abuses in the past should not be used as an excuse for leaving something unpracticed
 - The fear of man
 - Do not judge lest you be judged...
 - How can we be so hypocritical



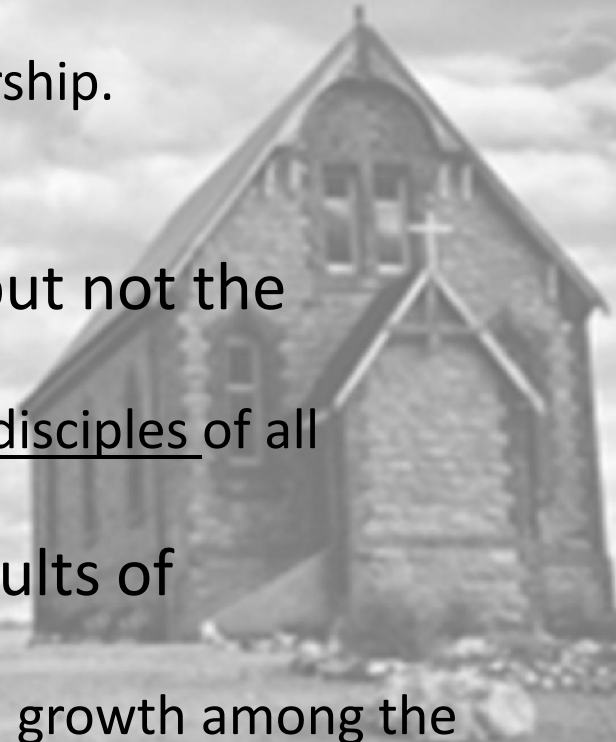
A Biblical Understanding of Church Discipline

- Church discipline promotes health in that...
 - It is spiritual good for the individual disciplined
 - Other members (Christians) see the danger (consequences) of sin
 - It gives witness to the world that the church is not hypocritical
 - It gives glory to God in that his bride is concerned with her purity
- John Calvin defined the marks of a true church as
 - Where the Word is rightly preached
 - Where the sacraments are rightly administered
 - Where church discipline exists



A Concern for Discipleship & Growth

- It is tempting for churches to reduce the definition of growth to statistics
 - Attendance, baptisms, giving and membership.
 - Or the “A,B,C’s” of health
 - Attendance, Building & Cash
- Attendance is part of healthy growth, but not the whole story
 - Matt 28:19 challenges us to go and make disciples of all nations...
- Thus biblical growth is not just the “results of evangelism”
 - But of spiritual maturity, personal spiritual growth among the members
 - (2 Cor 10:15; Eph 4:15; Col 1;10; 2 Thes 1:3; Heb 5:13-14; 1 Peter 2:2-5)



A Concern for Discipleship & Growth

- How to ‘make disciples’
 - Practice the marks of a healthy church
 - Expository Preaching, Biblical understanding of the Gospel, Conversion, Evangelism, Church membership, Church Discipline & Church leadership
 - Practice pastoral visitation
 - Encourage one-on-one, one-on-two/three discipleship relationships
 - Cf. The Trellis and the Vine

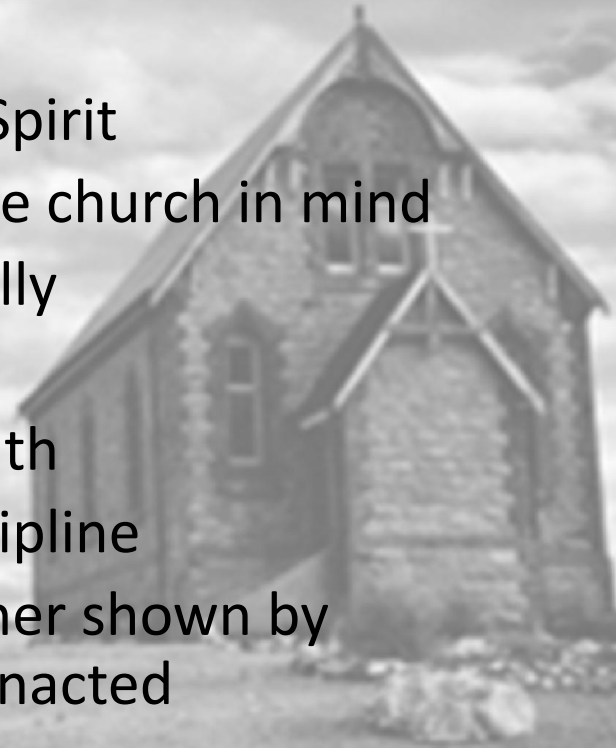


A Concern for Discipleship & Growth

- Signs of Gospel growth in churches
 - Growing number of members are called to missions
 - Older members are getting fresh sense of responsibility and mentoring younger people
 - Younger members attend funerals of older members out of love
 - Increased prayer and prayers centered around evangelism, the lost and ministry opportunities
 - More members sharing the Gospel with outsiders
 - Less reliance of members on church programs and more on spontaneous ministry opportunities
 - Informal gatherings among church members characterized by spiritual conversations

A Concern for Discipleship & Growth

- Signs of Gospel growth in churches
 - Increased sacrificial giving
 - Increased presence of the fruit of the Spirit
 - Members making life decisions with the church in mind
 - Husbands leading their wives sacrificially
 - Wives submitting to their husbands
 - Parents disciplining their children in faith
 - A corporate willingness for church discipline
 - Corporate love for an unrepentant sinner shown by pursuing him/her before discipline is enacted



Biblical Church Leadership



- The practice of recognizing godly, discerning, trusted laymen as elders is another mark of a healthy church (p. 119, What is a Healthy Church)
 - It is curiously interesting that many churches have moved away from Biblical eldership
 - The reason for this range from basic inattention of Scripture and the rapid growth of the church in 19th America
 - To fear of authority and gender
- Yet it is clearly one of the two Biblical offices set apart in the church
 - Cf. Acts 6; 1 Tim 3; Titus 1

Biblical Church Leadership



- According to Scripture...
 - Elders are set apart for the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6)
 - They are the spiritual shepherds of the flock
 - In so being, they are a gift to the church
- In being set apart, elders should be...
 - Qualified (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)
 - DA Carson
 - The Biblical qualifications for elders are remarkable in that they are unremarkable
 - Plural (Acts 14:23, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18; Titus 1:5; James 5:14)
 - Male (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)

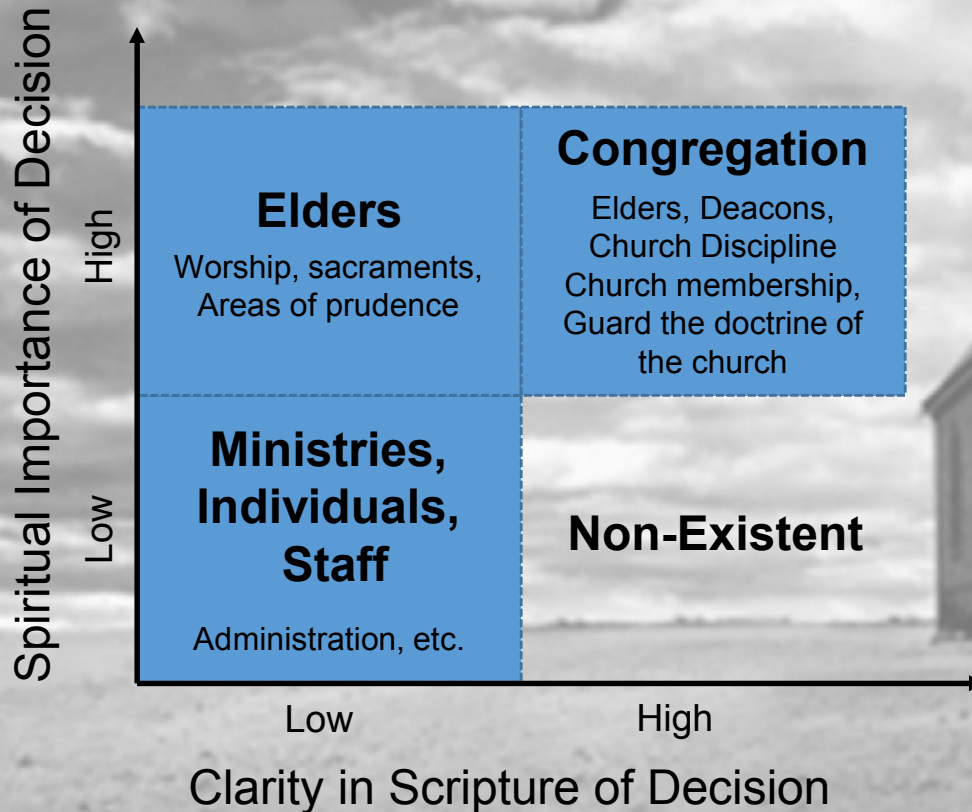
Biblical Church Leadership

- The Elder and authority
 - Hebrews clearly encourages the congregation to submit to the elders authority (Heb 13:17)
 - But the elders should never usurp the Scriptural responsibility of the church body
 - Be careful not to “fire” the congregation



Biblical Church Leadership

Who is Responsible?



Biblical Church Leadership

- Biblical Church eldership promotes health in that they...
 - feed God's sheep God's word (Jn. 21:15-17),
 - guide the sheep (1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Pet. 5:3, Heb. 13:7),
 - and protect the sheep from attackers (Acts 20:27-29; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; Tit. 1:9),
 - while protecting both themselves and the church through the wisdom of their plurality (Prov. 11:14; 24:6).
- The bottom line
 - Biblical church leadership is important because without it, God's people are like sheep without shepherds.