

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

(1) “PRAYER” OUTLINE

Colossians 1:9-14

PRAY TO BE GUIDED BY THE WILL OF GOD “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will . . . “Colossians 1:9a.

I. PRAY TO BE GUIDED BY THE WISDOM OF GOD

“. . . in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Colossians 1:9b. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” James 1:5.

II. PRAY TO BE GLORIFYING IN YOUR WALK WITH GOD

“So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him . . .” Colossians 1:10a.

III. PRAY TO BE GROWING IN YOUR WORK FOR GOD

“. . . bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the Knowledge of God.” Colossians 1:10b.

IV. PRAY TO BE GROUNDED IN YOUR WORSHIP OF GOD

“. . . giving to the Father who has qualified you to share in the Inheritance of the fruits in light.” Colossians 1:12. “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13-14.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

(1.) “PRAYER”

Colossians 1:9-14

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is not only one of the primary functions of the church, it is also, one of the primary functions of the life of a believer. In the text we are looking at, Colossians 1:9-14, Paul is writing to a church he never visited---the church at Colossae.\

Yet without knowing a single person or a single need, he prayed a tremendous prayer, not just for that church, but for any church and any people. This is a prayer that if we pray it every day, it will be amazing what God will do in us, for us and through us.

I. First, Paul challenges us to PRAY TO BE GUIDED BY THE WILL OF GOD.

He writes in verse nine, “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will . . . “Colossians 1:9a. We need to begin every day asking God to do just that—to fill us with the knowledge of His will. Because if we are living in the center of His will, every other part of our walk with Him will fall into place. But our biggest problem is not finding the will of God, but rather doing the will of God. Listen, the purpose of prayer is not to tell God what you want Him to do. Rather, it is to ask Him what He wants us to do. So, the first thing we must do each day, is to pray to be guided by the will of God.

II. But secondly, we are to PRAY TO BE GUARDED BY THE WISDOM OF GOD.

Look at verse nine in its totality. Paul writes, “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Notice that Paul not only prays for knowledge, but also for wisdom and understanding.

Knowledge without wisdom can be dangerous. Did you know that wisdom is something God always gives to us when we ask Him for it? James 1:5 says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” James 1:5. When you pray, pray for God to guard you with His wisdom.

III. And then number three, PRAY TO BE GRATIFYING IN YOUR WALK WITH GOD.

In verse ten Paul writes, “so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him . . .” Colossians 1:10a. In the New Testament, the Christian life is often described as a walk. And we are to never stand still in our walk with Jesus. Every step we take should bring us closer and closer to Him and as a result, we will always be pleasing in His sight.

IV. Also, PRAY TO BE GROWING IN YOUR WORK FOR GOD.

In the last part of verse ten, we read these words, “. . . bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Colossians 1:10b.

If you know the will of God, through the wisdom of God, as you walk with God, that should lead you to grow in your work for God. Paul refers to this as “bearing fruit.” We don’t manufacture fruit, we bear fruit. Jesus said in John 15:5, “I am the vine; you are the branches.

Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5. We are not the tree. We are the branch. It is our job to let Jesus bear His fruit through us. The way we do that is by growing in the knowledge of God. Today, in all honesty, how fruitful are you?

V. PRAY TO BE GROUNDED IN YOUR WITNESS FOR GOD.

In verse eleven, Paul writes, “being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.” Colossians 1:11. There is no way you can live the Christian life in your own strength and in your own power. But the good news is, He gives us the power and need to do what He wants us to do. And to do it, as long as He wants us to do it. God’s power is inexhaustible. It never shuts down. You see, when we acknowledge this truth, we can be grounded in our witness for Him.

VI. PRAY TO BE GRATEFUL IN YOUR WORSHIP OF GOD.

In verse twelve, we read, “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.” Colossians 1:12. The problems we face and the difficult people we deal with should never have an effect on our gratefulness to the Lord.

You see, regardless of what we might face in life—we should always see what Jesus has done for us. We need to ask Him to constantly give us an attitude of gratitude. Listen to how Paul closes this prayer: “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13-14.

Do you know what at the end of this great prayer we should be grateful in our worship of God? Because of who we are. We are redeemed and forgiven. We are headed to a Kingdom where there is no darkness, only light. And that alone, should make us want to go out every day under the covering of this prayer and be obedient followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if you don't know and have never trusted Him to save us I pray that today you will.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH (2)
“Worship” Outline
Romans 12:1-2

Worship is giving all that I am, to all that God is.

I. YOU TAKE THE ROAD OF TOTAL DEDICATION

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12:1)

II. YOU SEE THE RESULT OF A SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind . . .” (Romans 12:2a)

“. . . be renewed by the spirit of your minds.” Galatians 4:23b

III. YOU GET THE REWARD OF PERSONAL REVELATION

“. . . that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2b)

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(2.) “Worship” Manuscript
Romans 12:1-2

If you were to ask 20 people to write down this definition of worship, you would probably get 20 different answers.

The Bible talks about worship from beginning to end and it describes what worship looks like. But there is only one place in all of Scripture where worship is defined and that is in Romans 12.

In this definition, nothing is mentioned about singing or preaching or prayer or going to church. You see, all these things are just expressions of worship.

Paul defines worship in Romans 12:1, where he says, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” So based on what Paul says here, I want to give you what I believe is a statement that builds on Paul’s definition of worship. It’s this, worship is giving all that you are, to all that God is. So how do you know that you’re truly worshipping God?

I. First, YOU TAKE THE ROAD OF TOTAL DEDICATION

Look at verse one again. Paul says: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

If we want to worship the way Scripture instructs us to, we have to be completely dedicated and totally surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ.

True worship is placing all of our desires, wants, privileges, rights, demands, and goals on the altar of the sacrifice that we make to Jesus every day. Worship is a total sacrifice

II. Secondly, YOU WILL ALSO SEE THE RESULT OF A SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION.

Do you know how you can know that you’re truly worshipping Jesus? Your life will be changed. It will be transformed. You will not be the same. You will begin to see life through His eyes. You will begin to hear through His ears. And you will begin to think with His mind, the mind of Christ.

This is what Paul means when he says in the first part of verse two, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind . . .” You cannot worship the Lord and continue to see things the world sees them and think the way the world thinks.

When you genuinely worship Christ, He not only changes your heart, He changes your mind. This is what Paul is saying in Ephesians 4:23. He writes, “. . . be renewed by the spirit of your mind.”

III. And then thirdly, WE WILL GET THE REWARD OF PERSONAL REVELATION.

Look at the last part of verse two, “. . . that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” You cannot separate the worship of God from the will of God.

It is His will that when you truly worship Him, He will reveal His will to You. And when you do His will, He’s always pleased.

CONCLUSION

And that’s what worship is genuinely all about.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(3.) “EVANGELISM” OUTLINE
Matthew 28:18-20

I. THE PROVISION OF HIS POWER

“ . . . And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’” Matthew 28:18.

II. THE PROCESS OF HIS PLAN

Stage 1. “Go therefore . . .” Matthew 28:19a.

Stage 2. “. . . and make disciples of all nations . . .” Matthew 28:19b.

Stage 3. “. . . baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19c.

Stage 4. “. . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . .”
Matthew 28:20a.

III. THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE

“ . . . And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20b.
“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5b.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(3.) “EVANGELISM”
Matthew 28:18-20

Did you know what the most important job of every follower of Jesus and of every church is? It's the job of evangelism. The job is telling others about Jesus. D. T. Niles said, “Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.”

And that job is described in the Great Commission of Jesus, found in Matthew 28:18-20.

I. THE PROVISIONS OF HIS POWER

One of the first principles of leadership is that you never give people the responsibility to do something without also giving them the power and the authority to do it. Jesus lets us know right up front that we have that.

Look at verse 18 of our text. Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

He makes it clear that He has all authority and all power to do all things. And this is the same authority that He also given to us. Because He has, as His followers, we have the same authority and power to share with a lost world that people need to repent and believe in Him, that there is forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those who are willing to receive His gift of salvation.

II. THE PROCESS OF HIS PLAN

His plan is laid out in three stages. The first stage is “Go therefore . . .” Matthew 28:19a. Our primary job as believers is not to come to church, but to go out into our community and world with the message of the Gospel. We are to come to the church, so we can go from the church and be the church for people who don't even attend church.

And that brings us to the second stage. We are to then “make disciples of all nations . . .” Matthew 28:19b. Jesus is very clear that disciples make disciples. The phrase “of all nations” does not refer to countries. It refers to ethnic or language or cultural groups within those countries. In other words, our job is to be multi-cultural and multi-national.

The third stage is “. . .baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . . “Matthew 28:19c. Baptism is a picture that we have become a part of the family of the Father, placed into the fellowship of the Son, and we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

This brings us to the fourth stage, which is “Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . . “Matthew 28;20a. Jesus has been teaching His disciples and now, He tells them to go and teach other disciples to obey what He has taught them. You see, we are to lead people to trust in Jesus and then to obey Jesus.

III. THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE

Jesus concludes by saying “And behold, ‘I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:20b. What he wanted His disciples, then and now, to know is that we are not on our own. We have His presence. No matter what we’re going through, “He will never leave nor forsake us.” Hebrews 13:5b. And we have it particularly and intensely and most Personally, when we are doing the job of evangelism and witnessing.

CONCLUSION

We have one primary job as followers of Christ and as a church—make disciples, see them baptized, and lead them to obey Jesus. There is no greater thing you will do with your life than that!

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(4.) “DISCIPLESHIP” OUTLINE
Luke 9:23, (NIV)

- I. A DISCIPLE FOLLOWS JESUS EVEN WHEN IT’S NOT CONVENIENT
“Whoever wants to be my disciple . . .” Luke 9:23a, NIV
- II. A DISCIPLE ALWAYS PUTS JESUS FIRST
“ . . . must deny themselves . . .” Luke 9:23b, NIV
- III. A DISCIPLE EMBRACES THE SACRIFICES OF THE CROSS
“ . . . and take up their cross daily . . .” Luke 9:23c, NIV
“ . . . I die daily.” I Corinthians 15:31b, NKJV
- IV. A DISCIPLE IS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, NOT JUST A FAN
“ . . . and follow me.” Luke 9:23d

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(4.) “DISCIPLESHIP”
Luke 9:23, NIV

Did you know that the word Christian is used only three times in the New Testament? But the word *disciple* is used 269 times and 238 of those times occur in the four Gospels. Jesus didn't come into the world to live, die, and rise again to make Christians. No, He did that to make disciples.

In the text, we are going to look today at Luke 9:23a, as Jesus tells us in one scripture what it takes to become a disciple.

I. First, A DISCIPLE FOLLOWS JESUS EVEN WHEN IT'S NOT CONVENIENT.

“Then He said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple . . .’” Luke 9:23a, NIV. The first step to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ is that you've got to want to become a disciple. You have a choice in the matter. Jesus will not force discipleship on anyone. But when you truly become His disciple, you will follow Him regardless of the circumstances. You follow Him even when it's hard. Even when it's painful. Even when it's unpopular. Because if you follow Jesus only when it's easy, then you're really not a true disciple.

II. Secondly, A DISCIPLE ALWAYS PUTS JESUS FIRST.

Notice Jesus says next that a disciple of His “must deny themselves . . .” Luke 9:23b, NIV. If you're a genuine follower of Christ, then your life does not belong to you. It belongs to Him And as a result, for the rest of your life you're going to put Jesus before you, above you, ahead of you, and instead of you. Listen, you've got to come to the point where your life is all about Jesus and none of you.

III. Thirdly, A DISCIPLE EMBRACES THE SACRIFICES OF THE CROSS.

Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple, must deny themselves, and take up their cross daily...” In the first century, the cross represented death and if you saw somebody carrying a cross down the road, you were looking at a dead man walking. Because very soon, they were going to be crucified on that cross. Paul said in I Corinthians 15:31, “I

die daily.” He was saying that He dies daily to himself. And we must do the same thing. We need to begin each day by having a funeral. A funeral to self, because we will either live for Christ and die to self, or we will live for self and die to Christ. And it’s not a one-time decision. We must die to ourselves every single day.

IV. Fourthly, A DISCIPLE IS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, NOT JUST A FAN.

Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple, must deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow me.” But for so many people, they’re not the followers. They’re just fair-weather believers. As Kyle Idleman pointed out they’re just fans. Jesus calls us to be genuine followers of Him, regardless of the circumstances in which we might find ourselves.

CONCLUSION

I want to make two things extremely clear. First, you cannot follow Jesus, unless you give up everything to Him. And secondly, the only Jesus worth following is the Jesus who demands you give up everything. And you do that by becoming a disciple, being discipled, and becoming a disciple maker.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(5) “FELLOWSHIP” OUTLINE
1 John 1:1-4

I. THE BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

“That which was from the beginning . . . “ 1 John 1:1a.

“. . . which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.” 1 John 1:16.

“The life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.” 1 John 1:2.

II. THE BLESSING OF FELLOWSHIP

“That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, So that you too may have fellowship with us . . .” 1 John 1:3a.

“. . . and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:3b.

“God is faithful by whom you were called into fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:9.

III. THE BEAUTY OF FELLOWSHIP

“And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.” 1 John 1:4.

“. . . in Your presence there is fullness of joy . . . “ Psalm 16:11b.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

(5) “FELLOWSHIP”

1 John 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION

In Dave Stone’s book, I’d Rather See a Sermon, he writes: “As times have changed, so have people. In Time magazine, Robert Wright said, ‘These days thanks to electric garage openers, you can drive straight into your house, never risking contact with a neighbor.’” He’s right. We used to build a front porch with a swing, Now we build a back deck with a privacy fence.

The church needs to be a contrast to the coldness. That’s why fellowship is so important. And that’s why there has never been a greater need for fellowship than there is right now. Believe it or not, the key to real fellowship is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I. THE BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

John tells us that Jesus is not the only reason we can have Fellowship. He is the only way we can truly have fellowship as well. First of all, Jesus is real in eternity. John writes, “That which was from the beginning . . . “ 1 John 1:1a. You see, Jesus was present before the creation. But He was also present during the creation and He is present after the creation. Therefore, Jesus is eternal. There was never a time when He was not, nor is there a time when He will not be. But He is also real in experience.

John writes, “. . . which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our own hands, concerning the word of life.” 1 John 1:1b. John is saying that He was not a fairy tale. He was flesh and blood, skin and bones, just like you and me. And he is also pointing out that he saw Jesus with his own eyes and touched Him with his own hands.

But Jesus is also real in expression as well. Verse two says “the life was made manifest and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.” The word “manifest” means to reveal something previously unknown. God knew that the only way anybody can ever know Him, is if He reveals Himself to others. Jesus was God’s full, final revelation of God Himself. And because of Jesus, we know God in a personal way and therefore have fellowship with one another.

II. THE BLESSING OF FELLOWSHIP.

There is a blessing that comes from having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ that is summed up in the word fellowship. First of all, there is a horizontal blessing. John writes in the first part of verse three, “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us . . . “ 1 John 1:3a.

The word fellowship is often misused and misunderstood. For example, many times when we talk about fellowship, we’re thinking of a social activity. But the word fellowship in the New Testament is the Greek word “koinonia” which means to “share in common. The one thing we as believers share in common is Jesus. When we receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, we are born again into the family of God and therefore as part of His family, we can enjoy fellowship with one another.”

But there is also a vertical blessing. The last part of verse three Says, “. . . and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:3b. This fellowship is not only with one another, but it’s also with the Father and His Son, Jesus.

You can’t have fellowship with someone you don’t know. You can’t have fellowship with God without a relationship with Him. And you can’t have a relationship with God unless you have a relationship with His Son. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:9, “God is faithful by whom you were Called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

III. THE BEAUTY OF FELLOWSHIP

In verse four, John writes, “And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.” 1 John 1:4. So John is saying: “I want your joy to be totally full, not half full, but fully full!” David writes, “. . . in Your presence there is fullness of joy . . . “ Psalm 16:11b. If you want joy you need fellowship and you need the right kind of fellowship. You need fellowship with God and fellowship with your fellow believers.

CONCLUSION

Billy Graham once said, “Churchgoers are like coals in a fire. When they cling together they keep the flame flowing. When they separate they die.” Fellowship is the other side of worship. And we need both sides if we’re going to experience the full joy of the risen Christ.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(6) “MINISTRY” OUTLINE
I Peter 4:10-11

I. WE ARE GIFTED FOR OUR MINISTRY.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another . . .” I Peter 4:10a.

“. . . as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” 1 Peter 4:10b.

II. OTHERS ARE GRATIFIED BY OUR MINISTRY.

“Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves, by the strength that God supplies . . . “ I Peter 4:11a.

III. GOD IS GLORIFIED BY OUR MINISTRY.

“. . . in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” I Peter 4:11b.

“. . . whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” I Corinthians 11:31b.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(6) “MINISTRY” OUTLINE
1 Peter 4:10-11

Every follower of Christ is not called to be a pastor or a staff member or a Sunday School teacher—but every follower of Christ is called to be a minister. That is, every believer is called to use his or her spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities in ministry in the life of the church. Every Christian is called to serve Jesus by serving others.

In I Peter Chapter four, verses 10-11, we discover three reasons why we are called to minister in the body of Christ.

I. WE ARE GIFTED FOR OUR MINISTRY.

Peter begins with a word of encouragement to all of us. He says, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another . . .” I Peter 4:10a.

A minister or a servant is not just what you do. It’s who you are. It’s not just an action, it’s an attitude. We all have various gifts, abilities, passions, skills, and interests that God has given us and we are to leverage them in ministering to others in the name of Jesus.

To drive this point home, listen to what the rest of verse 10 says, “. . . as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” I Peter 4:10b. The Greek word for “steward” literally means house manager. It is someone who manages the affair, or the money that belongs to someone else. Your life is not your own. It belongs to God. Your gifts and abilities have come from Him as well. And one day, we will give an account to God on how we managed those things.

What did Peter mean when he said, “as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” The term “varied grace” literally means “multi-colored.” It is a picture of a rainbow. You see, we are all different colors in God’s rainbow. He didn’t give the same gift to every person. He gives different people different gifts, but they are all necessary to make His rainbow as beautiful as it can be.

II. OTHERS ARE GRATIFIED BY OUR MINISTRY.

In the first part of verse 11, Peter mentions the categories of gifts. These are not exhaustive but they serve as examples. “Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies . . .” I Peter 4:11a. Every gift is important and if one person in the body fails to utilize his or her gift,

then the church is weakened as a result. Don't ever let the devil talk you into believing that you don't have much of a gift to offer or that your gift is not important. That is a lie from the pit of hell!

III. GOD IS GLORIFIED BY OUR MINISTRY.

Peter concludes verse 11 by saying, “. . . in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” I Peter 4:11b. You see, when you serve God and minister in His name---not only are others gratified by your ministry, but most importantly God is glorified by it. You were put here on this earth to glorify God. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says: “Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever.” That's why the Bible says, “. . . whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” I Corinthians 11:31b.

This is one simple way that you can evaluate anything you are doing in your life at any given moment and that is to ask this question: “Is what I'm doing glorifying God?” I'm convinced that so much of what we do in life really doesn't matter. But I tell you the things that will always matter are the things that will gratify others and glorify God.

CONCLUSION

Let me ask you three questions and I want you to honestly answer each one of them. (1) Where are you ministering and serving? (2) Who are you ministering to and serving? And (3) When are you ministering and serving? If you can't answer all three of these questions, the way they should be answered, then you had better stop and think long and hard--because you are probably living a wasted life.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(7) “GOD IS LOVE” OUTLINE
John 3:16, ESV

I. GOD’S LOVE IS EXTRAVAGANT.

“For God **so** loved the world . . . “

“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

II. GOD’S LOVE IS EXTENSIVE.

“For God so loved the **world** . . . “

III. GOD’S LOVE IS EXPENSIVE.

“FOR God so loved the world, that He **gave His only Son** . . . “

“In this love, the love of God was made manifest among us that God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him.” I John 4:9.

IV. GOD’S LOVE IS EXPANSIVE.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that **whoever** . . . “

V. GOD’S LOVE IS ALSO EXCLUSIVE.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever **believes in Him** . . . “ “**. . . should not perish** . . . “

VI. GOD’S LOVE IS ETERNAL.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish **but have eternal life**.”

“For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor death, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39.

“. . . Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”
2 Corinthians 6:2b.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
“GOD IS LOVE”
John 3:16, ESV

The most famous verse in the Bible is John 3:16. Martin Luther called it “the Gospel in miniature.” The theme of this verse is that God is love. And whenever we hear the story of God’s love, it strikes a resounding note in our hearts. As we prepare for John 3:16 this Sunday, we discover in this verse six wonderful things about God’s love.

I. GOD’S LOVE IS EXTRAVAGANT.

“For God **so** loved the world . . .”

The most significant word in John 3:16 is the little word “so.” God so loved us that He did something about that love. As Jesus hung on the cross, writhing in agony, God was writing His message of love to us in red. Romans 5:8 says, “But God, shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

II. GOD’S LOVE IS EXTENSIVE.

“For God so loved the **world** . . . “

God loves the whole world. And He has called us to express His heart to the world. That is why missions are so important. When God says that He loves the whole world, it is possible for Him to love the world and yet, at the same time, love every individual in the world. What an amazing God He is!

III. GOD’S LOVE IS ALSO EXPENSIVE.

“For God so loved the world, that **He gave His only Son** . . . “

This is the most expensive gift God could have ever given us, His only Son. It’s free to us, but it cost God everything. He sent His only Son into the world to pay the price of our sin and to demonstrate His love. I John 4:9 says, “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.” In other words, in this God communicated His love to us. In this, He shares His love with us as well.

IV. GOD’S LOVE IS EXPANSIVE.

This means that God’s gift of salvation is for everyone. Jesus died for all. But that brings up an important question, “If Jesus died for everybody, why isn’t everybody saved?” That brings us to the next thing.

V. GOD'S LOVE IS ALSO EXCLUSIVE.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever **believes in Him . . .**”

That word “believe” means to trust. So, to believe in Jesus means that you must, by faith, trust Him as Savior and Lord. So, salvation is only for those who believe. And if we do, Jesus says we will “not perish.”

The word perish does not mean that you cease to exist when you die. The Bible teaches that we will all live forever, either in heaven or in hell. You see, the word perish means to be separated from God forever. It means to be cut off from God for all eternity.

VI. GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish **but have eternal life.**”

When does eternal life begin for the follower of Jesus? The moment he or she believes. And from that moment on, they are not separated from God. Paul makes that clear in Romans 8:38-39, “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39.

CONCLUSION

God loves you. He always has and He always will. But what you do with His love is the key. God does not force His love on anybody. You have a choice to either accept it or reject it. If you've never received His love by receiving His Son, Jesus, into your life--do it right now. The Bible says, “. . . Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2b.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(8) “GOD IS SEEKING TO SAVE THE LOST” OUTLINE
Luke 15:1-10

“. . . This man receives sinners and eats with them.” Luke 15:2b

I. WE SHOULD PROPERLY VISUALIZE OUR ONE.

“So He told them this parable: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if He has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it.’” Luke 15:3-4.

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it.” Luke 15:8.

II. WE SHOULD PERSONALLY EVANGELIZE OUR ONE.

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost until he finds it.” Luke 15:4.

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it.” Luke 15:8.

III. WE SHOULD PURPOSELY PRIOTIZE OUR ONE.

“And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’” Luke 15:5-6.

“And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’” Luke 15:9.

“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Luke 15:10.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH
(8) “GOD IS SEEKING TO SAVE THE LOST”
Luke 15:1-10

God is always seeking to save the lost. Lost people matter to Him and they should matter to us as well. This passage begins with the tax collectors and sinners gathering around Jesus to hear Him. And because of that, the Pharisees and scribes criticized Jesus, saying, “. . . This man receives sinners and eats with them.” Luke 15:2b.

In that day, it was taboo for any respectable Jew to interact or associate with sinners or Gentiles. You see, the Pharisees and scribes only cared for people who kept the law to a “t.” But sinners and Gentiles didn’t do that and therefore weren’t allowed into the temple to worship. The religious leaders only cared about those who were in the temple.

But Jesus cared about the one who was outside the temple as well. The religious leaders built walls, but Jesus built bridges. He was always seeking after the one who was lost. And we are to do the same.

I challenge you to ask the Lord to put on your heart one person who is lost and then pray for their salvation. Also pray for the Lord to give you opportunities to witness to them. As we look at these two parables that Jesus talked about in Luke 15:4-10, He instructs us on what to do regarding our own one.

I. WE SHOULD PROPERLY VISUALIZE OUR ONE.

“So He told them this parable: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it.’” Luke 15:3-4. He was pointing out that shepherds care about all of the flock and if one sheep is lost, they go after it. And we are to do the same.

Then Jesus moves from a lost sheep to a lost coin. Look at verse eight, “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it.” Luke 15:8. To this woman, even the loss of one coin was a big deal. And like the shepherd, she begins looking frantically for that coin. She turns the house inside out to find it.

And just like the lost sheep was important to that shepherd and the lost coin was important to that woman, lost people are important to God and they should be important to us as well. So we need to visualize our one and be intentional to seeking to share Jesus with them.

II. WE SHOULD PERSONALLY EVANGELIZE OUR ONE.

Go back to verse four, Jesus says, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it.” Now notice something, that the shepherd is so focused on that one lost sheep that he leaves the other ninety-nine in the open country. This shows his deep concern for the one who is lost.

And the same is true of the woman. Go back to verse eight again, “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweeps the house and seeks diligently until she finds it?” Like 15:8. She pours all her attention, concentration, and effort on that one lost coin.

Listen to me, the reason why the shepherd looked for that one lost sheep and the woman looked for that one lost coin, was because of their love and care for the one that was lost. You know, we don’t really find God, God finds us. And just as He found you, you should want to help others be found as well. Who is your one? Who is the one you are looking for?

III. WE SHOULD PURPOSELY PRIORITIZE OUR ONE.

Both the shepherd and the woman do something that would have shocked the crowd listening to this story. They both throw a party. “And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’” Luke 15:5-6. “And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’” Luke 15:9.

Here is the point of these two parables. Lost people matter to God and what matters to God should matter to us. Heaven throws a party when lost people are found. Stop and think about that. God doesn’t throw a party or rejoice when our team wins or when we get a promotion. But He throws a party every time one person repents, surrenders their life to Jesus, and that lost person is found. Look at verse ten, Jesus says, “Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Luke 15:10.

CONCLUSION

God is always seeking the lost and He is always happiest when that lost person is found. And we should prioritize what makes God the happiest. So, I ask you, who’s your one?