

Marks of a Great Church (2)

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Introduction: We must have God's standard constantly placed before us.

- A. We have learned that the things God values will differ from what man considers important. **(1 Sam 16:7)**
- B. The goal of these lessons is to provoke self-examination.
 - 1. What are our goals as a congregation?
 - 2. How well are we achieving those goals?
 - 3. Wherein do our weaknesses lie? Our strengths lie?
 - 4. What can we do to be a better congregation in the Lord's sight?
- C. Last study we determined that a great church is characterized by:
 - 1. A determination to do God's will.
 - 2. A genuine concern for the lost.
 - 3. A strong stand for the truth.

I. A Great Church is Characterized by Members Who Serve Others

- A. How did the Lord say his followers would be known?
 - 1. They would be servants, not here to be served. **(Lk 22:24-27)**
 - 2. Jesus will judge us by how we have served others. **(Mt 25:35-36, 40)**
- B. What are some ways we can serve one another?
 - 1. What would your list look like?
 - 2. We should serve others even when the local church is not directly benefited.
 - 3. Why did Jesus wash the disciple's feet? **(John 13:3-5, 13-15)**

II. A Great Church is Characterized by Mutual Love and Respect among its Members

- A. To each of the seven churches Paul wrote he commanded the brethren to "love one another".
 - 1. Paul did not consider these differences as "small". **(Phil 4:2)**
 - 2. How does one knit things together? **(Col 2:1-2)**
 - 3. How much is enough? **(1 Thess 3:12)**
- B. When a congregation has this mutual love and respect it is because they have worked hard at it!
 - 1. We can lose it quickly, therefore let us be diligent! **(Heb 12:15)**
 - 2. How many churches had a "blow-up" just as the work was going well?
 - 3. The first place to stop a blow-up is to stop the idle and vicious talk among Christians. Even if the talk is only in the home, it will bear an ugly fruit.
 - 4. Consider how our Lord identified his followers. **(John 13:34-35)**
- C. There are four things which can destroy unity.
 - 1. **A lack of respect between the educated and the less educated.**
 - a. It may be a lack of knowledge of the Bible. (Ex. New convert versus one "raised in the church".)

- b. This also may be reflected in secular knowledge or even the amount of money earned by one. **(James 2:1-4)**
- c. Consider the differences between races, such as Jew and Gentile.

2. Differences in Judgment.

- a. How can two sincere men work out differences in a business meeting or with an eldership?
- b. We must be willing to yield here. **(Jas 3:17)**

3. Differences in Personal Conviction

- a. There must be a patience and love show in differences. **(Rom 14:1, 5, 15)**
- b. Not all differences fall within the scope of this chapter.
- c. Please notice the differences between individual matters and collective issues.
- d. In all issues, the truth of God can be known. **(1 Cor 1:10)**

4. Differences in Personality

- a. Some people are harder to be around than others.
- b. Remember this is one for whom the Lord died. He is precious! **(1 Cor 8:11-12)**

D. Is there any person who is a part of this church that I do not love as I ought?

- 1. If so, repent!
- 2. If this one has offended you, go tell him and work it out! This is maturity. (Ex. "War" as a child.)
- 3. Every member of this church ought to know that he is in the midst of people who care about him. Let us express this love in word and deed.

III. Spiritual Growth on the Part of Every Person.

A. Some people think there are only two kinds of Christians: the perfect and the hypocrite.

- 1. Everyone has weaknesses and the need for growth. We never obtain perfection.
- 2. Even when a person has 1,000 weaknesses he is no hypocrite as he repents of each sin and walks in the light. **(1 John 1:7-9)**
- 3. On the other hand our weaknesses are not a matter of indifference.

B. If we are alive in Christ, we must grow. **(Phil 3:13-14; 2 Peter 3:18)**

- 1. Are you a stronger Christian today than last year? Five years ago?
- 2. How about your attendance? Maturity will lead you to go even when it is not convenient.
- 3. How about your spiritual knowledge?
- 4. How about your love for the brethren?

Conclusion: Where does this church stand before the Lord?

A. When the Lord saw the seven churches of Asia with two He had no fault, with one He spoke no good and with four there was both good and bad.

B. Let us improve as individual Christians in the areas we lack. **(2 Cor 13:5)**