

Welcome to

TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH

Call to Worship

Psalm 19 - The Law of the LORD Is Perfect

- ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
- ² Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
- ³ There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
- ⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
- ⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
- ⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Call to Worship

Psalm 19

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Call to Worship

Psalm 19

- ¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹² Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
- ¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.
- ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Trinity Bible Church

Marks of a Healthy Church (Part 1)

“...I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” Mt 16:18

Marks of a Healthy Church

We are a new church:

- What are we (all of us, not just leadership) trying to build?
- What do we want it to look like?
- What should be foundational?
- Where do we go to find out how to build a church?
- How are we to measure our progress?

Marks of a Healthy Church

Introduction:

The church is the:

- Only institution Christ promised to build and to bless (Mt 16:18).

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Marks of a Healthy Church

Introduction:

The church is the:

- most precious assembly on earth because Christ purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 5:25; Col 1:20; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5).

²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, **to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.** - Acts 20:26-28

Marks of a Healthy Church

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²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of his cross.** - Col. 1:20

¹⁸ knowing that you were **ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but **with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. - 1 Pet. 1:18-19

Marks of a Healthy Church

Introduction:

The Church is the Bride of Christ

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

- Eph. 5:25-32

Marks of a Healthy Church

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gave himself up for her – sacrificial love

Marks of a Healthy Church

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gave himself up for her – sacrificial love

that he might sanctify her... - purifying love

Marks of a Healthy Church

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nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church – caring love

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gave himself up for her – sacrificial love

that he might sanctify her... - purifying love

nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church – caring love

two shall become one flesh – unbreakable love

Marks of a Healthy Church

Introduction:

The church is also the:

- Earthly expression of the heavenly reality (Mt 6:10; 18:18).
- Realm of spiritual fellowship (Heb. 10:22-25; 1 John 1:3, 6-7).
- Proclaimer and protector of divine truth (1 Tim 3:15; Titus 2:1,15).
- Chief place for spiritual edification and growth (Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:18).
- Launch pad for world evangelization (Mk. 16:15; Titus 2:11).
- Environment where strong spiritual leadership develops and matures (2 Tim. 2:2).

We'll cover these as we go through the Marks of a Healthy Church.

Marks of a Healthy Church

Reformers understood and taught that the true church is one in which:

- (1) the gospel is rightly taught and
- (2) the sacraments (baptism and communion) are rightly administered.

Marks of a Healthy Church

- 1 Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture
- 2 Sound Doctrine / A Biblical Theology
- 3 The Gospel - Believe, Teach, and Live Out
- 4 Conversion - God must act and people must act
- 5 Evangelism -
- 6 Membership - function as the body
- 7 Discipline must be practiced (holiness)
- 8 Discipleship
- 9 Leadership - plurality of Godly shepherds
- 10 Commitment to Worship

The lists are a blend of 9 Marks by Mark Dever and material by John MacArthur

Dever argues the first three are essential, the last six important. If the first three are not present, find another church. If any of the last six are absent, it may be wise to find another church.

Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture:

a. Scriptural Basis:

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

- 2 Timothy 3:14 -17

All Scripture is inspired by God

Marks of a Healthy Church

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for teaching and reproof – related to doctrine

for correction and training in righteousness – related to living

Marks of a Healthy Church

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complete - mature, capable, proficient

equipped for every good work – enabled to meet all demands of righteousness

Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture:

a. Scriptural Basis:

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”

- 2 Timothy 4:1-4

If the pastor is called to preach the word, reprove, rebuke and exhort, then we must be called to respond to the word, and receive reproof, rebuke and exhortation.

Marks of a Healthy Church

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reprove – correcting wrong behavior or doctrine

rebuke - bring under conviction of guilt

exhort – to admonish (warn) and encourage

Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture:

b. Why is Scripture so important?

1. The Word is the means the Holy Spirit uses in bringing about conversion. (Romans 10:14-17; 2 Tim. 3:15)

2. The Word teaches all that we need to know about God and how he wants us to live. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

3. The Word is the means the Holy Spirit uses to make us more like Christ (sanctification). (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26)

Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture:

c. Why is reason (alone) dangerous?

Because the fall impaired our reason. It cannot function properly on its own. Our reasoning must be informed by the truth of Scripture to function properly.

“If we establish the priority of the Word, then we will have in place the single most important aspect of the church’s life, and growing health is virtually assured, because God has decided to act by His Spirit through His Word.”
(Dever, p. 43)

Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture:
 - d. The best way to teach/be taught the Word is expositionally

To properly understand the Word we must understand it in its historical and grammatical context. Thus we should study it expositionally (taking a passage and letting it speak).

There is a great danger in topical preaching (taking a subject and talking about it). It is not always wrong. This sermon largely is topical. But it should not be the primary method we use. The reason is that it will be based on the preacher knowing what he wants to say and going to the Bible to support it. Both he and the congregation are better served if we go through the Word and allow it to teach us. That way the Word shapes the pastor and the congregation.

Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture:
 - e. Same idea that the Reformers called Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)

Many churches affirm it in their statement of faith when they note that the Scriptures are “the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” Unfortunately many effectively deny it in how they function.

Theologians see 4 concepts captured

1. Inspiration – “All Scripture is breathed out by God” meaning it is all God’s words
2. Clarity (Perspicuity) – understandable
3. Necessity – necessary for salvation, sanctification, and knowing God’s will.
4. Sufficient (Complete) – “that the man of God may be complete...”

Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Commitment to the Absolute Authority of Scripture:
 - e. Same idea that the Reformers called Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)

Definitions of Sufficiency of Scripture:

“That Scripture ... contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.”

Wayne Grudem

“The quality of the Bible in which it contains all necessary revelation to know all that God has desired us to know, do all that God has desired for us to do, and be all that God has desired us to be.

In other words the scripture offers sufficient divine guidance, either *in prescription or principle*, for the man of God to be equipped for every good work ([2 Tim. 3:16-17](#)). No further divine revelation is needed...”

Lyndon Unger

Marks of a Healthy Church

2. Sound Doctrine / Biblical Theology

As #1 focused on the authority of the Word and “how” we are taught, this focuses on “what” we are taught.

Sound = healthy, accurate, reliable, faithful

1 Tim 1:3 “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine”

1 Tim. 6:3-4a “If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing...”

2 Tim. 1:13-14 “follow the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me”

2 Tim 4:3 “time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching”

Marks of a Healthy Church

2. Sound Doctrine / Biblical Theology

As #1 focused on the authority of the Word and “how” we are taught, this focuses on “what” we are taught.

Titus 1:9 elders “must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it”

Titus 1:13 false teachers to be rebuked sharply

Titus 2:1 “teach what accords with sound doctrine”

Marks of a Healthy Church

2. Sound Doctrine / Biblical Theology

As #1 focused on the authority of the Word and “how” we are taught, this focuses on “what” we are taught.

“Every church decides where it requires complete agreement, where it permits limited disagreement, and where it allows complete liberty.” Dever, p. 70

Unity =

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Phil. 2:1-2

It is NOT setting aside all differences and allowing a wide range of beliefs.

Marks of a Healthy Church

Al Mohler's Theological Triage

I. Doctrines Essential to Faith

ex. Trinity, Christ, Salvation, Authority of Scripture

to disagree is to deny true Christianity

II. Doctrines Essential to Church Life (but do not define the gospel)

ex. Baptism, ecclesiology, charismatic gifts, election/free-will

believing Christians may disagree, but the disagreement creates significant boundaries in a local congregation.

III. Doctrines Where Disagreement Does Not Threaten Fellowship of the Local Congregation

ex. Eschatology, Non-violence

Christians can disagree and remain in close fellowship.

Marks of a Healthy Church

3. The Gospel – Believe it, Teach It and Live it Out

“The gospel is not the news that we’re okay. It’s not the news that God is love. It is not the news that Jesus wants to be our friend. It’s not the news that he has a wonderful plan or purpose for our life.... The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died on the cross as a sacrificial substitute for sinners and rose again, making a way for us to be reconciled to God. It’s the news that the Judge will become the Father, if only we repent and believe.”

Mark Dever, *What is a Healthy Church* p. 76

Marks of a Healthy Church

3. The Gospel – Believe it, Teach It and Live it Out

It is so easy to soften the gospel to make it more acceptable. But when we do that we change it, we corrupt it, and turn it into false gospel.

Marks of a Healthy Church

Closing
Prayer