

A Church Positive About The Church

By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. The past several weeks we've been talking about some things about which we
Need to be positive

1. The Bible
2. Jesus Christ
3. Life
4. Eternity

B. I want to talk about one more thing about which there is a tremendous need
For us to be positive

1. I'm talking about the church
2. As strange as it sounds, the very people who ought to be more positive than any other people in the world, are sometimes among the most negative

C. Evidence

1. Back in the 60's there arose this idea: Jesus, yes; the church, no!
2. Social scientists tell us that more people are interested in spiritual things than ever before, but a great number of these are uninterested in church
3. In the minds of many, church is irrelevant and unnecessary – a relic of days gone by
4. To others, the church is nothing but an institution that exists only to perpetuate itself
5. While the church has always been a volunteer organization, fewer and fewer people are willing to volunteer
6. Other activities – work, recreation, children's extra-curricular activities, etc., often not only compete with the church but win the battle for people's hearts and minds
7. Too many, instead of finding a godly, accepting, encouraging people in the church, find instead a harsh, judgmental and difficult people
8. Still others are just simply lukewarm when it comes to church

D. The church was intended to be better than that and if this church is to
Accomplish God's will, we need an approach and an attitude that overcomes
All these negatives

I. BE POSITIVE ABOUT WHAT THE CHURCH IS

A. Defined

1. The church is something Jesus intended to build
 - a. Mt 16:18 -- "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. (NAU)
 - b. the church is something that belongs to Jesus – we would be wise to be careful with it
 - c. it is something eternal, with eternal implications for those who belong to it – it must not be treated like it was unimportant
2. The best picture of the church is that it is a body with Jesus as the head
 - a. Col 1:18 -- He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. (NAU)
 - b. Col 1:29 -- For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me. (NAU)
3. To understand the value God places on the church, understand what it cost
 - a. 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. (NAU)
 - b. 1 Pet 1:18-19 -- knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, {the blood} of Christ. (NAU)
4. To understand the relationship of Christians to the church, see every person as a vital part of the body of Christ
Rom 12:4-5
 - a. 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. (NAU)
 - b. 1 Cor 12:27 -- Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. (NAU)
5. Best of all, the church is saved people
 - a. Acts 2:46-47 -- Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (NAU)

- b. Tit 3:4-7 -- But when the kindness of God our Savior and {His} love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to {the} hope of eternal life. (NAU)

B. It matters what and how we think of the church

1. 1 Pet 2:9-10 -- But you are a CHOSEN RACE, a royal PRIESTHOOD, a HOLY NATION, a PEOPLE FOR {God's} OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT a PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. (NAU)
2. Rom 12:10 -- {Be} devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; (NAU)
3. 1 Pet 2:17 -- Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. (NAU)

C. Paul's warning to those who would damage the church becomes clear and Understandable

1. 1 Cor 3:17 -- If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. (NAU)
2. Rom 14:19-20 -- So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. (NAU)

II. BE POSITIVE ABOUT THE CHURCH

A. The church has had enough of some things:

1. Christians who are constantly murmuring, grumbling and complaining
2. These people ought to re-read the OT verses about grumblers and complainers:
 - a. Jas 5:9 -- Do not complain (lit., groan), brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. (NAU)
 - b. Ex 16:2 -- The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. (NAU)
 - c. Ex 16:8 -- Moses said, "{This will happen} when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the LORD hears your grumbings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumbings are not against us but against the LORD." (NAU)

- d. Num 14:26-29 -- The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "How long {shall I bear} with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. "Say to them, "As I live,' says the LORD, "just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. (NAU)
- e. Ps 106:24-25 -- Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe in His word, But grumbled in their tents; they did not listen to the voice of the LORD. (NAU)

B. God wants something better out of us

- 1. 1 Cor 10:1-10 (read)
- 2. Phil 2:14-15 -- Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, (NAU)

C. How to be positive about the church

- 1. Change the way you think about the church to something positive, godly, and holy
- 2. Change the way you talk about the church
 - a. stop grumbling and complaining – it’s childish!
 - b. stop any constant criticism and learn how to recognize good things
 - c. stop bad-mouthing the people Jesus died for – you’re going to have to explain to him why you think his people are so crummy!
 - d. start talking up the church to everyone you know
- 3. Change the way you behave toward the church
 - a. get involved and help make it better
 - b. attend – attend – attend: you can’t help the church by staying away and practicing absentee membership
 - c. be supportive of every effort of the church

CONCLUSION

A. Here are a few things to deal with:

- 1. We’ve got something good going and we’ve got a lot to offer people
- 2. We can help people find a better life than the one they have now
- 3. We can help people change their eternal destiny
- 4. We can help people deal with all sorts of difficulties and hardships

5. We can help people connect with God and learn how to serve and worship
6. There is far more to be positive about than to be negative about

B. Invitation

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