

The World in Need - The Church in Need (Part 3)

1. We have seen some startling statistics the past few weeks about churches in America.
 - Over 3,700 churches a year are closing their doors in America.
 - Over 50% of all Protestant churches will have fewer than 75 people in worship on Sunday.
 - Only 21% of Americans attend church each week.
 - It is estimated that 53,000 people leave churches each week and never go back.
2. Certainly there is a problem. But what exactly is the problem? The church has lost sight of the world outside its walls. We have become “churches for us” instead of “churches for others.”
3. In the past two weeks we caught a glimpse into the heart of our Savior and we saw clearly in God's Word that our Savior had a heart for others when He walked this earth.
4. But we must understand that His heart has not changed. He is in heaven now and He is yearning for people to come to Him and trust Him as their Savior.
5. But today He works through His body, the church. We are His ambassadors, His representatives on the earth. Christ demonstrates His love and compassion **through us!**
6. If there is one thing that is abundantly clear in Scripture it is this: Our God is a missionary God. God moves out in love toward the lost, the aimless, the poor, the oppressed, the sick, and the lonely. 1 John 4:9-10
7. God is a missionary God and the church must be a missionary church.
 - We exist to participate in God's mission.
 - Without a mission there is no church.
8. The church does not exist so we can have a social club, entertainment program, or lots of activities to keep ourselves busy.
9. We are here for others. We are to reach out with the love of Christ. We must be a church for others. Why?

First, because it is a mark of godly maturity

Second, because it is a mark of Christ-like love

Third, because it is a mark of Spirit fullness

1. God has called us to participate in His mission, but the good news is that God has also enabled us and equipped us to do it. He has indwelt us with His Spirit! Ephesians 4:6 (The Father), Colossians 1:27 (Son), 1 Corinthians 3:16 (Holy Spirit)
2. According to Ephesians 1:13 this divine indwelling takes place the moment you believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - At that moment, your spirit and God's Spirit becomes one.
1 Corinthians 6:17

- If God's Spirit doesn't live in you, Romans 8:9 teaches that you don't belong to God.
 - When the Holy Spirit entered into our hearts, He did not come to simply be resident; He came to be president! He came to take over and transform us into the image of Christ.
3. Once you enter into God's family, everything in your life really boils down to two choices:
 - You either choose to be filled with God's Spirit... (Ephesians 5:18)
 - ...or you choose to quench the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19
 4. What does it mean to be filled with God's Spirit? It simply means that the Spirit of God has total control of your life.
 5. Did you know that Spirit fullness always manifests itself in the form of a servant's heart?
 - Christ epitomized a Spirit-filled person and His life was characterized by serving others. Matthew 20:27-28; Philippians 2:4-5
 - Jesus had a heart for others. He wasn't self-focused, but others-focused. The Bible says, "*Let this mind be in you....*"
 - A Spirit-filled church is a church for others, and its members are not preoccupied with self, but continually manifest hearts for others.
 6. How does this "others" attitude reveal itself? Turn to Acts 8. This chapter revolves around a man by the name of Philip.
 - Philip was one of the first deacons in the early church (Acts 6), but when persecution came on the early church, believers scattered from Jerusalem and Philip became a traveling evangelist (8:5). He epitomized this "others" attitude.
 7. This is significant because, up to this point, the good news of Jesus had not gone to this region called Samaria. The Jews considered the Samaritans unclean (half-breeds) and were very prejudiced toward them.
 8. But Philip didn't; he saw beyond people's racial heritages. He saw them as souls for whom Christ died. He preached Christ to them and multitudes came to Jesus and believed on Him.
 9. Why did Philip care so much about these people? According to Acts 6:3, he was a man "*full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.*"
 - When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you don't see the color of a person's skin, what they are wearing, how they smell, or what kind of house he lives in. You see a precious soul for whom Christ died. And you love him as Christ would love him.
 10. Here is what is interesting: They were having an incredible revival in Samaria, but God told Philip to leave and go into the desert. vs. 26
 - Notice the immediate obedience of Philip. vs. 27a
 - Why would God do a thing like this? vs. 27b-29
 - There was **one** person that God wanted Philip to reach. He was a man from Ethiopia that was seeking after God.
 - In verse 29 the Holy Spirit led Philip to go and join himself to this guy. Look at Philip's response in verse 30. "*He ran thither*" means "to hasten to meet."

11. Did you know that there are people like this Ethiopian man that are in our church every Sunday?
- There are people who are confused, that need help, and that are searching for God. They need a Philip. They need someone who will hasten to meet them. They need somebody that is filled and controlled by God's Holy Spirit instead of controlled by his own self-centered preoccupations.
 - Do we come to church with yieldedness to God's Spirit like Philip?
 - Do we pray during the week, "God, guide me to somebody at church this Sunday who needs me?" Are we looking for people in need?
 - Or do we quench God's Spirit in our lives because we are so busy talking to people in our clique, running to our ministries, or just doing "our thing" on Sunday?

In Conclusion:

1. Maybe our thought is, "The preacher will reach them with his message today."
2. When people are reached for God, do you know how they are usually reached? By another person who is filled with God's Spirit and has Christ-like love and compassion.
3. In verse 31, the Ethiopian man said, "*How can I except some man should guide me?*"
4. Philip became that man (vs. 35), and because he was willing to be that man, this Ethiopian man believed on Christ.
5. A church for others begins with Spirit-filled members. It begins with people who come to church each Sunday with a ministry mindset. Our prayer becomes, "Lord, may we be a church for others and may it begin with **me**."