

RETHINKING CHURCH

SESSION 1 | JUNE 4, 2017

WHY IS THE CHURCH?

THE CHURCH IS THE WORK OF GOD AMONG THE NATIONS IN THE CURRENT DISPENSATION.

Acts 14:27, 15:3

THE CHURCH IS THE MYSTERY OF GOD. EPH. 3

- Paul was taken as a prisoner to begin the new economy of grace. Vv. 1-2
- Paul was given a revelation of and insight into a mystery. Vv. 3-4.
- This mystery was completely unknown in the Old Testament. V. 5.
- The mystery is the inclusion of the gentiles *before the kingdom was given to Israel*. V. 6

IMPLICATIONS

- The purpose of the church is not...
 - Worship
 - Evangelism and Missions
 - Prayer
 - Fellowship
 - Ministry
- These are often *activities* of the church, but are not the *purpose* of the church.
- Why does this matter?
 - Activity based reasoning for the existence of the church will lead to activity as the primary function of the church.

FAULTY DEFINITIONS OF CHURCH

- *"The Church is a union of men who are united by the profession of the same Christian faith, and **by participation in the same sacraments** under the direction of their lawful pastors, especially the one representative of Christ on earth, the Pope of Rome."* -Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church
- *"The holiest moment of the church service is the moment when God's people—strengthened by **preaching and sacrament**—**go out of the church door** into the world to be the church. We don't go to church; we are the church." The founder of the "home church" movement in England, Canon Ernest Southcott*
- *The church is the "world's most powerful **weapon** against AIDS." Rick Warren*
- *"The local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to Scripture they **organize** under qualified **leadership**, **gather** regularly for **preaching and worship**, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and Communion, are unified by the Spirit, are **disciplined** for holiness, and **scatter** to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy." Mars Hills Church*

- "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is **preached**, and the sacraments be duly **administered**." John Wesley

The problem with each of these is that they focus on doing instead of being!

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

- Three Crucial words
 - Presbuteros—
 - Elder
 - A person characterized by maturity and dignity.
 - Episcopos—
 - *Epi (over) Scopos (watcher)*
 - Bishop
 - A person charged with a supervisory duty
 - Poimen—
 - Pastor
 - A person who cares for sheep
 - The words in Scripture: The words seem to be used in combination with one another.
 - Acts 20:17, 28
 - 1 Peter 5:2
- Three forms of church government (polity)
 - Episcopalian
 - Supervisory role from the top
 - Presbyterian
 - Supervisory role of representatives from the congregation
 - "Poimenian"
 - Leadership by a local pastor
 - Question—How many offices of the church are there?
 - Two: Pastor and Deacon?
 - Three: Elders/Bishop, Pastor, and Deacons?
 - Four: Pastor, Bishop, Elders, and Deacons?
 - Five: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors/Teachers, Deacons?