



Adult Education Winter 2018 – Marks of Maturity

CLASS 6 – FEBRUARY 25: THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

“When a person becomes a Christian, he doesn’t just join a local church because it’s a good habit for growing in spiritual maturity. He joins a local church because it’s the expression of what Christ has made him—a member of the body of Christ.” (Mark Devers)

I. Review of Course – Marks of Maturity (How do we define maturity?)

- A. **Basic Understanding of Theology/Vocabulary:** Trinity, Christ, Incarnation, Man, Sin, Revelation, Atonement, Justification, Sanctification, Providence, Eschatology, Evangelical, etc.
- B. **Growing Understanding of the Old Testament:** Basic contents of the canon, major themes of God’s Kingdom and Covenants, important elements of genre and historical timeline and context.
- C. **Growing Understanding of the New Testament:** Basic contents/dates/authors of the canon, importance of genre, understanding of God’s revelation and the new covenant in Christ.
- D. **Church History Survey:** early church, medieval era, Reformations, age of mission, modern era.
- E. **Calling:** Christians should understand and seek to develop their unique gifts and calling for ministry; ministry in the world and in the church are of equal worth.

II. The Role of the Local Church: Active in Worship, Fellowship, and Witness

“The first thing my family did when we moved was join the local church. The second was to go to the library and get library cards.” (John Grisham)

- A. **What images of Scripture do we have of the “local church”?**
- B. **Acts 2:42-47: How is their Worship described? Their Fellowship? Their Witness?**
- C. **Do we learn any lessons from Church History about forms that the church has taken?**

*“The Christian life is not just our own private affair. If we have been born again into God’s family, not only has he become our Father but every other Christian believer in the world, whatever his nation or denomination, has become our brother or sister in Christ. But it is no good supposing that membership of the universal Church of Christ is enough; we must belong to some local branch of it. Every Christian’s place is in a local church. sharing in its **worship**, its **fellowship**, and its **witness**.” (John Stott)*

III. The Church is Active in corporate Worship (praying, praising God, meeting together...)

- A. **Where do we see corporate worship in Scripture?**
- B. **Where do we see this in the worship and liturgy Anglican tradition?**
 - 1. **Example: Creeds: (One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church...)**
 - 2. **Where else do we see corporate participation of the church in our liturgy?**
 - 3. **“Five solas” of the Reformation, but no “solo Christians”!**

IV. The Church is a Fellowship committed to Discipleship and to Relationships

- A. What characterized their Fellowship? (apostles' teaching, breaking of bread, eating together)
- B. Relationship with the Lord
 - a. Intimacy with Jesus as his Disciple
 - b. Growing Maturity: Growth in understanding God's word and being sharpened by it
- C. Relationship with others
 - a. Consider all of the "one anothers" of the New Testament!
 - b. Being Discipled, Meeting with other Disciples

*"The life function of [the local church] is to love the God who created it - to care for others out of obedience to Christ, to heal those who hurt, to take away fear, to restore community, to belong to one another, to proclaim the Good News while living it out. The church is the invisible made visible."
(Charles Colson)*

V. The Church is a Witness to the weary and watching world:

- A. The Local Church seeks to make God's love in Christ visible

*"As I look around on Sunday morning at the people populating the pews, I see the risk that God has assumed. For whatever reason, God now reveals himself in the world not through a pillar of smoke and fire, not even through the physical body of his Son in Galilee, but through the mongrel collection that comprises my local church and every other such gathering in God's name."
(Philip Yancey, p. 68, Church: Why Bother?)*

- B. Whose job is it to Witness? To Minister? To Serve?
- C. With a broad view of calling, every Christian has a role in the local church
- D. Do you agree with these statements about the local church? Why would some disagree?

"The local church is the hope of the world." (Bill Hybels)

*"Jesus is the hope of the world and the local church is the vehicle of expressing that hope to the world."
(Andy Stanley)*

VI. What does the the "Local Church" look like here at Christ the King? What does it look like to be a growing Christian in this church family?

VII. Looking Ahead:

- A. March 4th: Engaging in Spiritual Conversations
- B. March 11th: Resolving Conflict
- C. March 18th: Personal Devotional Practices and Daily Bible Reading