

## THE FORMATION AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

Taught by Ted Wood

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...of Luke. It says, "Now Jesus was praying in the certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples, and Jesus said to them 'When you pray, say...,' let's say it together, 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

We're back to this...well, I just thought it was important. We don't, almost ever say that together.

*Audience Member: And this is not an argumentative point, but in their trespasses, on others its debts.*

Right. I think a good translation is [UNCLEAR], which means sins. I think it says forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Very consistent with using an older language. I'm not going to try to dissect the Lord's Prayer today, which is...

*Audience Member: [UNCLEAR] good question.*

I mean, eventually I will, the year's starting, yes.

*Audience Member: [UNCLEAR] in relation to what he's teaching about. How's that?*

I just want...yeah, that's okay. Yes. Whew! I haven't even said...I could have had a V8. Yes, go ahead.

*Audience Member: The book that, Let Us Pray, in Bruce Bickel's message on page 166, he speaks of and goes into detail about your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6). He does a fantastic [UNCLEAR...it's powerful.*

If Bruce were to emphasize your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, this is very consistent with all of Bruce's theology, all his thinking, which is the focus on the sovereignty of God, and that you're praying that, "your kingdom, you rule, oh God, will come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," so that makes a lot of sense.

*Audience Member: I remember him saying to us, "your kingdom come" should be our battle cry, and he emphasizes that. It's interesting how he explains it. Your kingdom come.*

I was asked to teach on the area of, on some area within Bruce's past teaching. I started to read the transcript from the Friday I was not here; I was out of town. In that transcript, Bruce talks about what he calls the keys to the kingdom. I'm going to pick up on that and kind of go through it as a way of stimulating discussion. I don't have a lot to teach on, and I'm hoping this will stimulate discussion. Let me just lay this out for you.

Jesus says in Matthew 16:18-20, "I tell you, Peter," and of course, this is after Peter has said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God," where Peter correctly identifies who Jesus is, "and who do you say that I am," Jesus says when he looks at Peter, and Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and Jesus answers him, "and I tell you, you're Peter, and on this rock I will build my church. 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.”

We could unpack that verse and we’d be here for days. The Roman Catholics have one way of understanding that. Protestants have another way of understanding it. Protestants always have a number of other ways of understanding that. Without getting into that, I was intrigued because Bruce picks up on this and he says, “When Christ gave the keys to the kingdom,” he’s referencing Matthew 16, “he gave three things. First of all, the preaching of the Gospel, the doctrines of grace; secondly, the ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism; third, church discipline. When you have a biblical view of conversion, you will preach all three of those.”

I wanted to pick up on that because I think this is an area that most of us do not think about, and yet it appears to be critical to understanding what a healthy church is. We can go through lecture after lecture after lecture, and Bruce is doing it in talks, teaching, about what makes a healthy church. But basically these are the three elements—the preaching of the Gospel, the sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism and church discipline. Those are the three areas.

In what’s called the Belgic Confession...now there were a number of statements of faith at the time of the Reformation. The Belgic Confession was one that was generally agreed upon by the Protestant Reformers. Many of the Protestant Reformers agreed with the statements in the Belgic Confession. It was done shortly after the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Under the heading of the Marks of the True Church, the Belgic Confession says, “the true church can be recognized if it has the following marks—the church engages in pure preaching of the Gospel, it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them, it practices church discipline for correcting faults. In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it.” Once again, the early reformers, the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, they held that these were the three marks of the true church.

Now I just think for most of us, when we go to a church, like a new church or we’re looking for a church, or even look at our own church, we don’t think about these things. We may say, “Yes, we want the Gospel preached,” but how many of us think, “Are the sacraments being correctly delivered or administered? Is there correct discipline in this church?” We kind of have a...we have three parts there, we kind of think about the first part a lot and not about the other two parts.

It’s interesting, the first part is critical. You see in Romans 10:14 that, “how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed and how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard, and how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent,” etc. So the idea in Romans 10 is Paul is saying people are not going to believe unless the Gospel is preached to them in some fashion.

Now this could be at a sermon or at a lesson, but there are also other ways the Gospel is preached. But nonetheless, people believe because of the Word. One of the prophets—I can’t think of what it is right now—promises (this is either Ezekiel, Jeremiah or Isaiah) that God’s Word does not go forth void, but will accomplish what God purposes. When the Word goes out, things happen, and Bruce has told us that. He has told us that how do you know there’s success in a worship service? How do you know you’ve had a good, successful worship service? Bruce says, “We know it because the truth was proclaimed.” It has nothing to do with the number of people that showed up, the number of people that responded, etc.

***Audience Member:** I used to think that if the minister didn’t deliver a good sermon that really told the story of the Gospel, at least in the Anglican church, that the liturgy would save the day, because the liturgy was so strong when you went through communion especially, that it outlined the Gospel. Would*

*you agree with that or [UNCLEAR]?*

I would agree with that.

***Audience Member:*** *Even though it's not the preached Word.*

It is the preached Word, because if you look in the Anglican liturgy, you're going to find that the, well there's been a statement made that 90% of the book of common prayer is Scripture or a paraphrase of Scripture, and there is so much Scripture in that service that if you are not converted by it, you're condemned by it, because you can never say, "I never heard it," because you do get in that.

One ablation of himself once offered. One ablation—that's an offering or sacrifice. He's talking about what Jesus said on the cross, right in the middle of the communion service, one ablation of himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, ablation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Now I don't know if after hearing that Sunday after Sunday you wouldn't begin to say, "There is only one sacrifice for sin, and it's Jesus Christ. He did it one time. It's totally one ablation of himself, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, ablation offering, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." I mean this, I mean that, it's shot through with that.

Of course, the preaching is the way of unpacking the Word for us, and we all have to do that. That's why it's very important that when the Word is unpacked, that we have people who are trained, not only trained, but love the Word and have studied it and digested it and worked on it and wrestled with it all the time to give us the best unpacking. But nonetheless, yeah, I believe, in the right kind of liturgy, you're going to get the full proclamation of the Gospel.

***Joe:*** *I just wanted to pick upon on Sig's comment as an Anglican minister. Cranmer said that the sacraments were visible words, and so you're right on. What baffles me, or maybe some of you who grew up in Episcopal churches or whatever, is that so many people could sit, Ted, like you said, week after week after week and hear those words mouthed by someone and never, and I was one of them, never somehow come to the conclusion that I needed, or those words were for me, personally. That just continues to baffle my mind. And the fact that the Episcopal Church, even after saying those words for 100+ years in this country, has gone over the edge and completely lost the Gospel is just baffling to me. But you're right on in one sense.*

Well it's not only the Word. It's not only the reading of the Word, the unpacking of the Word, that is the preaching and exposition of the Word, but it's also the work of the Holy Spirit. As I said, the preaching of the Word and the liturgy and the correct worship will either convert you or condemn you. The condemnation comes when God says on the judgment day, "Why didn't you believe?" and you will say, "I never heard," and God will say, "Yes you did hear. You heard it every single Sunday." Now, therefore, it takes the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. As Joe has said, I mean, before I believed, I only believed when all of a sudden it struck me that what Steve [Gaskins] was telling me in April of 1967 on the campus of William and Mary, what he was telling me was for me. I mean, all of a sudden, it was no longer a thing you had at a B.S. session in your dorm. It was no longer philosophy. It was no longer kind of entertaining thoughts.

On the third day, Steve sat and explained to me the Gospel. I sat in the room, my dorm room at Yates Dorm at William and Mary, and all at once, it struck me that we're talking about you, Ted. We're not talking about theory or philosophy or entertaining conversation or what's your opinion or what's your opinion or what's your opinion. All of a sudden, it struck me that that word was meant for me.

***Audience Member:*** *You went over two things that, if they're a diversion then forget about it, but one of*

*them is the role of liturgy in a worship service some churches have it or something...*

All churches have a liturgy. All churches have a liturgy. It can either be done correctly and biblically or it can be done incorrectly. I would say that. That bothers me, and they say, "Well, we're going to have a liturgical service." I'll tell you, I can go into the low church Baptist church and I can already predict to you what the order of that service is going to be, and I can predict to you what brother John is going to say when he, "Brother John, would you please lead us in prayer." I know what he's going to pray for. It's predictable.

**Audience Member:** *But the Anglican/Episcopalian liturgy is based upon the Catholic liturgy? It's a Reformation...*

The early Christian liturgy. That's correct. Then as revised and reformed by the Reformers.

**Audience Member:** *The second thing that, it's [UNCLEAR] you just talked about full, sufficient and perfect sacrifice. Itself is a whole theological statement that there was only one sacrifice.*

That's correct.

**Audience Member:** *Which is a little bit at odds with our Catholic brothers, in the...*

Well, it's also at odds with our Protestant brothers who think that after they're saved they still have to act good enough to be acceptable to God. Basically Roman Catholic teaching, I believe is, and actually R. C. Sproul said it, which made me feel great because I've always believed it, that basically Protestants beat up on Catholics for saying, "Well you need faith plus works." But what Protestants often say is, "Oh no, I'm saved completely by faith in Jesus Christ, but then I really gotta act good from this point on." Both are under works. Both don't understand.

**Audience Member:** *You had mentioned about the pursuit of the Holy Spirit, and I think just even, I don't know, a few months ago when Bruce had mentioned about being pursued by the Holy Spirit, and I really didn't have a clear understanding of that, I was thinking of James 4:8 where as we draw near to him, he will draw near to us. I think the Holy Spirit pursues us so just even for me, just remembering back whenever I said, "God help me! God help me!" and it wasn't that someone had told me the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but then later on, the Gospel just, everything just came alive.*

Right. Why did you even say, "God help me"?

**Audience Member:** *Because I was broken.*

Yeah. And who broke you?

**Audience Member:** *The word.*

Yeah right.

**Audience Member:** *Who broke me? When you say who broke me, I mean, just it would have to be God who broke me.*

Yeah he did. Right. So all the things you were going through, that you thought were just bum luck or lousy circumstances...

**Audience Member:** *Well, they were of my own making a lot of them.*

Oh sure. Absolutely. And the Lord was withdrawing his protection from you so you could suffer the full consequences of what you were doing.

**Audience Member:** *Right.*

And at that point, you were faced with a dilemma. Either I'm going to keep doing the same thing I did before, or there's a better way.

**Audience Member:** *Yes.*

**Audience Member:** *What he was saying, read about Saul. When Saul disobeyed God, he number one, he performed the sacrifice which was Samuel's to do as the priest.*

Right.

**Audience Member:** *And then he didn't [UNCLEAR] and everything else and Samuel, once he took, I forget the king's name, and he said, "The glory of the Lord has been lifted off of you." The next 15 years Saul was miserable. And that'll tell you, without the Holy Spirit, you have [UNCLEAR].*

That's right.

**Audience Member:** *You have a phone there and it's got a battery. Take the battery out and see what good it is. That's the Holy Spirit [UNCLEAR].*

Actually supernaturally I did take it out and it still worked, which has....no...

**Audience Member:** *I have been raised Roman Catholic.*

Good.

**Audience Member:** *I have been, it's because of my children, to the Episcopal church, a Lutheran church, and now I'm a member in one Protestant church, but I sing in the choir of another Protestant church. Now, you brought up the Holy Ghost, that one says Holy Spirit, one says Holy Ghost. So we're back to my original question about debts and trespasses. Was it in the Old Testament that it said sins?*

It's in the Greek. It's in the original language.

**Audience Member:** *The original Greek. Okay. Alright.*

Yes. The original Greek for ghost and spirit is pneuma. We get our word pneumonia from that.

**Audience Member:** *Sins or holy ghost?*

Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit. Holy Ghost—one of the problems in using the King James Version of the Bible, there are 300 words in the King James Version that no longer mean the same thing today. Ghost is one of them. Another good one is prevent, which means to stop something from happening in 21<sup>st</sup> century English, but in 17<sup>th</sup> century English, it means go before—pre vent, [UNCLEAR], [UNCLEAR], coming, so it's coming pre, before. So prevent, actually, if you break down that word from its etymology, it's before coming. But now we mean it to stop something. Before they meant when you said

prevent, the Lord prevents you. Well that means, no, it doesn't...do you see what I'm saying. It's just, this happens, I mean, English is a very...I can read French passably, 14<sup>th</sup> century French I can read; 14<sup>th</sup> century I English cannot read because French has stayed very similar; English is rapidly changing all the time. But that's another subject completely. One of my pet subjects...

**Bill:** *Getting back to the discussion originally...*

Oh really.

**Bill:** We know that light comes before faith.

Yes.

**Bill:** *In the organized church, we have a visible church and we have an invisible church. In the church, [UNCLEAR] find that we have a visible church, which we can see, and we have an invisible church, which is made up only of the elect true believers, which we cannot see, and they're all mixed together. What Ted is talking about is if you're brought up in this liturgy which sticks to the Scripture and people that are dead in their trespasses and sins do not have the ears it to hear what is being said, they're dead. The people that have the ears to hear will hear it and welcome it. That's on an individual level. On a corporate level, I think we're talking about we look at the way that people that have a correct liturgy, Anglicans in particular, and Episcopalians, look at where they're at today. We're not looking at all the keys to the kingdom. To me, they may have the preaching of the Gospel, then they have the administration of the sacraments correctly, but if there's no church discipline, you see what happens in the church.*

Yeah, that's good. That's good, Bill. Thank you.

**Audience Member:** *I'm part of a new church plant, a new church plant up in Mercer, and we've got a lot of new people, and a lot of new believers coming in. And that's a good thing. But it also is there's a lot of people that have been unchurched for a long period of time, that have a lot of those habits that we know to be wrong. It's not always easy finding a way to apply those things or when these people are ready to hear those words. The Holy Spirit reveals things to us, all the time, I mean, you know, I might have been able to watch a TV program five years ago that today I just can't watch. The Holy Spirit is always revealing those things. It's a question of when do you apply church discipline. What is the cutoff there? I mean if we know somebody maybe drinks a little too much or something like that, at what point do you confront them with that?*

I believe all behavior, and I believe Bruce would agree with me, all behavior arises out of thinking, what we're thinking about. Are we thinking correctly or incorrectly? All behavior arises...it's not independent of how we perceive reality. That's why, when Bruce taught the series on the 28 attributes of God, that was so powerful in terms of changing behavior because it gets our thinking right about God and our thinking right about us and how we relate, man/God, and how we relate. Therefore I think it's critical that in new churches where you have lots of young believers, or inexperience...those believers, those young believers, are coming with all kinds of baggage. They have a particular way of thinking about God and thinking about life and thinking about themselves that may be absolutely incorrect. The problem is not so much their behavior, which has to be dealt with at some time if it's outrageous or what they used to say in the old prayer book, grievous sins...little sins are okay, we'll overlook those, but the grievous ones we go after.

**Audience Member:** *Intolerable.*

The intolerable. We need to work on how they think about God. Many churches, churches that are new, or churches that are contemporary, don't deal with the basic teachings about who God is and who we are and how that relationship is. This is so critical. I was thinking about. Somebody says, "Well don't talk about election because it only turns people off." Well you've got to talk about what the truth is, all the time. I think about that great story where Paul was up preaching. It's in Acts of the Apostles. Remember the young man fell out the window. He fell asleep and he fell down. Remember that story? The young man went to sleep during Paul's preaching because Paul preached late...

***Audience Member:** Eutychus was his name.*

It was Eutychus. Great. So Eutychus falls out the window. But I'm thinking, Paul preached so long that evening, that's one evening in his entire preaching, he taught so long, the young man actually fell asleep and fell out a window. So I'm thinking, think about the content that must have been there, and the content was more than simply Jesus loves you, has a wonderful plan for your life, that you're a sinner, you need to accept Christ as your Savior so you have a place in heaven; you do that and then start coming to church, read your Bible and pray. He could have said that as fast as I just said that, but obviously, there was huge amounts of content that Paul was pushing across the table, and I think that's what we need to do. The behavior will follow. The problem is we don't have good content. We're very wide but shallow. Bruce keeps talking about let's be narrow and deep. Remember—we've got to remember this—Jesus was asked, "Are there few that will enter the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate, for many will seek to enter and will not be able to." So we have a sense that everybody who raises their hand or says the sinner's prayer is a converted, born again person. I'm saying that's not true, because that defies the whole understanding of there are few that enter through that narrow gate. So we're very content with cheap and narrow and shallow conversions, and that's what we...

***Audience Member:** I'm a little bit involved with this, and I was thinking about at the point of membership, having a discussion about being willing to be instructed about your sins. I can't tell you how many churches I've joined. You go in and you go through the membership class 101 or whatever it is at that church, and they cover and they go through do you believe in the blood of Jesus covers you sins. They go through those basic things, but they never touch on where you're going to go spiritually from here and the fact that there is no accountability there.*

There is accountability. Boy, this raises so many issues. There's accountability to the body. But then I would say about your new church plant who are they accountable to.

***Audience Member:** It's not part of...*

Yeah, see, they're not accountable to anybody. So what we say to people in our church, "You be accountable to the elders here at this church. Okay, elders, who are you accountable to?" "Oh, I'm only accountable to Jesus." Well maybe that individual is only accountable to Jesus. You see, it's like a line that flows. I mean we get to Jesus to the apostles and you just go right down a line of accountability and authority. This is an area, and Bruce and I may disagree with this because he's a congregationalist and I'm not, but in the end, I do not believe the ultimate authority rests with the congregation. It must have a higher authority. We are all under authority in some fashion. Independent churches pop up left and right all over the place without any accountability or under anybody's authority except their own.

***Audience Member:** You gotta finish that. What are you suggesting then? That there should be a bishop over a [UNCLEAR]...?*

There has to be some system of accountability. I think it's biblical.

**Audience Member:** *Yeah, but then who is he accountable to? [UNCLEAR]*

[UNCLEAR...OVERLAPPING SPEAKERS]

Let me answer that question. I think he's accountable as we find in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts where they took the issue that Paul and Barnabas went down to Jerusalem to ask the apostles and the elders...so there was a council to which they were ultimately accountable. And Presbyterianism, not the Presbyterian Church, but Presbyterianism, rule of elders, sees that as critical, a council of elders, and those who also believe in a council of bishops. That's where it ultimately rests. Independent churches kind of function, they're out there floating around, doing their own thing.

**Audience Member:** *Isn't that what Baptists do?*

A Baptist, that's what they believe in, and that's why Bruce and I are probably at odds on this issue.

**Audience Member:** *...two or three weeks ago [UNCLEAR] Bruce did touch on that, ... and it ended up they deal with somebody, that they had like, what was it, 3, 6, 7 weeks of evaluating themselves basically going through [UNCLEAR] and then they went. I thought that was wonderful.*

Well it is.

**Audience Member:** *Just to listen to that was good...that's the one thing...if I [UNCLEAR] and the other is, when this information and accountability of [UNCLEAR], by the time you get from the information here and with the head of the church and you get over here, often times, it looks like an information club, which, you know, who's interested in information, just an information club. They're looking for meat and potatoes, and when they find meat and potatoes, they're going to want to do what you're saying [UNCLEAR] do the right things.*

What we have often in independent churches is that a person can be in grievous sin and be disciplined, but all they gotta do is go over to another independent church. And now they're...they tell their story, "I was treated wrong. I was not to blame..." "Oh yes, welcome brother, welcome sister," and nothing's happened because there's no connectedness, there's no saying, "Well you need to check with that other church to see why that person was disciplined." People do this all the time. They hop all around. I know of a situation in our own church now in which a member...let's see if I can disguise this as much as possible...there is a, a couple is married. They were very active in our church. One of those partners left their other partner, I mean the husband left the wife because he, the wife got very ill and sick and he didn't want to take the time, he didn't want to ruin the rest of his life by taking care of her. I mean, it's egregious. The husband said those very things. This person is going to drag the rest of my...I have a lot of life left to live; I'm not going to be dragged down by this, my wife's sickness. So now the husband has left, gone to another church, has been welcomed with open arms, and there's no accountability.

**Audience Member:** *[UNCLEAR] the local church or structure has any affect on that. The whole New Testament church was independent.*

No, I don't believe it was.

**Audience Member:** *No. it wasn't.*

**Audience Member:** *They had Paul going [UNCLEAR] Baptist church or Methodist church [UNCLEAR] but I don't think there's any less accountability in one or the other and you put any faith in*



*this group or this body that sits up there, you've got to be crazy. [UNCLEAR]...*

I don't do it for a practical... I don't see it necessarily as a pragmatic reason, I see it as a biblical and theological reason. It's part of the whole process in the New Testament and in the Scriptures of accountability and authority.

**Audience Member:** *And we agree on that point. [UNCLEAR] some Episcopal body or some Catholic bishop body or anybody else or the Southern Baptist Convention.*

**Audience Member:** *Ted, I think the problem is a lot of us have been burned by that system working poorly, and it's natural to abandon it. My heart's out for anyone that's been burned that way. But I think it's pretty clear that the apostle himself sought the council in Jerusalem as a kind of a...he wasn't a loose cannon. He was definitely accountable to those apostles.*

**Audience Member:** *[UNCLEAR] suggesting that everybody on these boards or these hierarchies are either. I just don't put any faith in them because they're men like everybody in this room. [UNCLEAR] take a look at the problems in those bodies, every one of [UNCLEAR] you can't depend on them.*

And also problems in independent churches. We all have the same problem. It's not so much pragmatically where the problem is, it's what fits a more biblical model, is in essence, the kingdom of God kind of a great democracy, or is there a sense of hierarchy in the kingdom of God.

**Audience Member:** *People who have kind of proved themselves.*

Right. That's the conclusion I've come to.

**Audience Member:** *There are two thoughts. The first is [UNCLEAR] some of the hierarchy that helped put Jesus to death. Right. I mean [UNCLEAR] [OVERLAPPING]...*

Sure. Absolutely. Right.

**Audience Member:** *The second is that [UNCLEAR] to someone's point, I go to an independent Baptist church. I'm not here to defend it. It's [UNCLEAR] thought about in these context; however, I was a deacon at a church, or an elder at our church at a time when our pastor suffered moral failure. Our pastor fell to moral failure, had an affair with the secretary of our church. This is back a couple of pastors ago. I was involved in the dealing of that, actually had to sit down and we removed him. So there was accountability, within the body [UNCLEAR] type of authority...*

And you don't have to go to a hierarchy if it works on a congregational basis. But it's more like a sense... I see this as a sense of when Jesus talks and prays in John 17, he talks that the whole body may be one. Now do we mean that purely theoretically or kind of philosophically? Or is there actually a visible sense of the oneness of the body. I've thought a lot about this point. We've gotten so used to doing our own thing. I think the independent thing is fueled by the American sense of independence. Our culture is just shot through with, "I'm going to do my own thing. I don't want to be under that pastor's teaching. I'm going to go off and do my own thing. He doesn't do it as good as I..." You see, our society is not one that in essence says, "I may not know. I have to submit myself to someone greater than what I know." I tell you, guys, I really don't want to get off on this. I apologize for having done that. There's other things I really want to talk about here.

**Audience Member:** *This is very important, okay. You are obviously a very learned person...*

I try to come across that way. [LAUGHTER]

*Audience Member:* He knows the names...now wait...there's many in this room...he knows the name of the young man that fell out of the window while Paul was teaching.

Bill knows obscure things.

*Audience Member:* He has his knowledge. He has his knowledge. Bruce and I have our own thing. I am a Marine, and I don't need a microphone to be heard. I think they can hear me back there.

*Audience Member:* We wouldn't tell you if we couldn't.

*Audience Member:* Bruce and I, he is Navy. He walks [UNCLEAR] around in a white uniform. [UNCLEAR] [OVERLAPPING]...now wait, listen to me.

Have I lost control of this group, or what.

*Audience Member:* No, no, no. I'm covering your point. In the Navy is an elite force called the Navy Seals. Everything is good as the Marines. Everything is good as many learned people in this group. But they answer to their leader, "Yahoo Master Chief," and that's what I say to Bruce. That's why Bruce stands up there. He is the Master Chief. There's much in here...but we're here to learn. He's the teacher. He is the Master.

He is the teacher. I wouldn't call him the Master Chief.

*Audience Member:* You are the qualified one. He's qualified. He's qualified. He's qualified. But there has to be a Master Chief.

Okay, that's good. Good point. Excellent. Thank you.

*Audience Member:* Not too many weeks ago, I heard Bruce say that the doctrine of the church when he was introducing Bishop Rogers [UNCLEAR] and he commented that the doctrine from the Gospel should be known by all the congregation so they can keep the elders accountable.

They can hold them account...

*Audience Member:* [UNCLEAR] accountability. So the congregation is to keep the elders accountable.

Right. That was the second point he made. The first point he made was that we are under the elders, that we are, that we owe submission to the elders. That was the first point. The second thing is that our work is to hold the elders accountable to the stated doctrine, because the doctrine is greater than the elders.

*Audience Member:* Yes, and the doctrine is based on the Gospel. R. C. Sproul and Dr. Wayne Grudem agree that the Gospel is the entire Bible, everything that's in it. It's the Word of God breathed. So to ignore any part of the Bible is wrong.

That's right, but it all has to be put in the proper order of things and unpacked.

*Audience Member:* Yes, that comes back to what Bruce is teaching that the coming of the kingdom, and the kingdom should be visible as a means to do that. And it's the Gospel.

Brothers, let me get beyond this because I don't want to be stuck on this. Actually, the points I raised that everyone objected to so strongly was, actually the very last point, where Bruce Bickel says church discipline is not something, that's on the last page, you do to a person, it's something that God works in the heart of the person. I simply raised the question of accountability and authority. Church discipline involves not only correction, reproof and encouragement, but also the way a church is organized to do this, ultimately by local congregational members or presbuteros, that is the Greek word for elders or episcopos, which is the Greek word for overseers, the New Testament word. So that what I was dealing with there.

Let me get back...we talked about preaching and the necessity in Romans 10:14 of the fact that the Gospel needs to be preached. There needs to be preaching for people to believe. That takes care of one of the marks, or as Bruce would say, the keys to the kingdom. The second mark would be the sacraments. He dealt specifically with the Lord's Supper. Bruce said, "Who participates in the Lord's Supper? What does it signify? What's going on when it happens? The Lord's Supper is the most intimate expression that the body of Christ can ever honor and participate in?" That's a very strong statement, and it's something we don't think a lot about.

We don't think about, really, what's going on at the Lord's Supper. I once went to...my daughter, through high school, was in Irish step dancing, and she got quite good. We went to a competition in Ohio. The great thing about doing Irish step dancing is there are so many Catholics in it that if ever the competition is on Sunday, they always have mass first, which I think is wonderful. You start...8:00 mass, competition starts at 9:00. I mean, how many times do your kids play in soccer or football or something else on Sunday and there's no recognition that this is the Lord's day? At least the Catholics get it right on that point. They say we have mass at 8:00, competition starts at 9:00.

Well for those who aren't Catholic, they had a Protestant service, so I went to that Protestant service. It was a very evangelistic service. The pastor spent, I would say, an hour of that service, 50 minutes was spent on singing and preaching. Then at the end of the preaching, I thought the service was over, but the pastor says, and he has several hundred people under this tent, before the competition started, he said, "Okay, now we're all going to join together and have the Lord's Supper." We passed out these little like, you know, the creamer cups that you get. We had these little, with grape juice in them, and he passed all them out. Everybody got bread. Okay, let's, Lord, you said, on the night you were betrayed you said that, and then it was, in ten minutes, they introduced the communion, they distributed the communion, they partook of the communion, and they finished it up in ten minutes.

I didn't participate. To me, it was almost blasphemous. I base that on what Paul says here in 1 Corinthians 11:23. Paul says, "I receive from the Lord what I also deliver to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said this, 'This is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also, he took the cup after supper saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as oft you drink it in remembrance of me,' for as oft as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Going on, "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself then and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup, for anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill and some have died, but if we judge ourselves truly we will not be judged." And then also in 1 Corinthians 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, "the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation," a koinonia is the word there, "in the blood of Christ. The bread that we break is it not a koinonia in the body of Christ because there is one bread who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread."

Those three Scriptures, and we could go on in other areas, talking about the absolute importance and

how significant this...this is one of the three marks of the true church. Is the sacrament being presented, delivered and participated in, in a worthy fashion? Or is it seen as simply, this is something, "Hey guys, we're all together here, we've got a great preaching service, people have raised their hand, accepted Jesus, now let's do a quick communion service." I'm just opening that up.

**Audience Member:** *What was our objection? I don't understand what your objection was. Just so everybody knows, I belong to this church, so we go through our communion service here. Are you talking about how long it took or what? Because ours takes 30 seconds. [UNCLEAR] 20 minutes is the who congregation walks up, but you're at the rail for 30 seconds, I take a sip out of the cup...and I'm not being disrespectful of the Lord's Supper, and I get a wafer that somebody hands me and then I'm back in my seat. How is that any different than the little juice glasses that they pass out typically at Baptist churches or Presbyterian churches or whatever have you? What's your objection to that?*

I'm just going to open it up to discussion, because otherwise...

**Bill:** *I just read that part in John Roger's book on communion and it's interesting that, not being brought up in the Anglican tradition, that the Anglican has a tradition of what they call lesser and greater excommunication. In the lesser excommunication, if a person is not worthy to take communion, if they are openly and unrepentant sinners, and have sinned against the body of Christ or a particular member in the body, they can be withheld communion.*

**Audience Member:** *Yeah, I understand that.*

**Audience Member:** *Well listen, in a lot of churches, that's not the case.*

**Audience Member:** *Well how is it the case at our church?*

**Bill:** *Well, I have problems at our church because what he just read is not read in our church. And Bruce says, "was truth proclaimed." And if a warning isn't given before communion, immediately truth is not proclaimed. What I like about the discipline in the Anglican tradition is that you can withhold communion from an individual and that's very easily done in that tradition because you go forward and you receive it individually. The person giving you the bread and wine can refuse you. In a lot of congregations, it's passed down the row. There's no one that's going to refuse you communion.*

**Audience Member:** *Well Bill, have you ever seen anybody refused at our church?*

I think there have been a few instances of it.

**Bill:** *I don't know. And it's not for me to know. Really. If what Bruce is saying, it's the Holy Spirit that's doing the discipline. What I'm saying is discipline, bottom line, is Jesus said, "God loves his children, and whom he loves he disciplines." If we don't discipline our members, we don't love them. That's the bottom line of discipline. You have to ask why discipline before you ask what you discipline for and when you discipline.*

**Audience Member:** *I have heard the warning.*

Yeah, we have the warning.

**Audience Member:** *Absolutely, it's there.*

**Audience Member:** *In the Catholic tradition, there's a thing that...I used to be in the Catholic*

*[UNCLEAR] and I bring this up, it's called examination of conscience, and this is calling on the Holy Spirit for you to look inward, just exactly what you said, okay, it may not be, I don't remember because it was read prior to communion, but I love that, and I teach Sunday school in our Baptist church, and I have a Bible study at my house and I brought that up and I said it's take that personal relationship with Christ, ask the Holy Spirit, you look inward, and if you know by the power of the Holy Spirit that you're not worthy, then stay away from it.*

Right. That's good.

**Audience Member:** *I just want to go back to your point here, the point that you read, and address Bill's, too, because while I realize that church discipline may take somebody out of the congregation, and I subscribe to that, whether it's done through an upper body, a congregational body, or whatever have you, the part that you quoted here says, "let a person examine himself." If nobody is taken out of a church congregation because of a disciplinary reason, when I walk up there, and there have been days when I have not taken communion for this reason, if I'm not right with God, that's upon me, not you, because you have no way of knowing it.*

But I may know it.

**Audience Member:** *Then that falls to the church disciplinary process. The point is, is that if you don't, it's on every one of us. Find the Scripture.*

I agree. I agree. That's where it should start. Sometimes it doesn't go from there.

**Audience Member:** *[UNCLEAR] how does that...*

Okay, let me tell you...

**Audience Member:** *...with the little cup and the way the Baptist or whatever church you were in did it, [UNCLEAR] how does it differ from what we say here, if you're part of the body you may participate or if a guy stands up in front of a church and says, "If you're a part of the body you may participate in the passing of the cup, what's difference?"*

**Audience Member:** *I think you're missing the whole point of it. I think what you're talking about, what they were doing is saying, "Oh, by the way, we'd better do this communion thing and just pass out these cups real fast, and these wafers," without taking the seriousness of what the communion is.*

That's the point I was trying to make.

**Audience Member:** *I think that's the point Ted was trying to make, and I would have agreed with Ted in that situation. It's an, "Oh, by the way, we'd better have communion before we end the service," instead of thinking about what the purpose of the communion is.*

**Audience Member:** *In the Episcopal Church, half of the service is communion, and it's really like 50/50.*

Yeah, it is 50/50.

**Audience Member:** *The first half is the Word and the sermon; the second half is the offering and the communion. It really, it takes, if it's an hour and a half service, it's whatever, half and half. Really, the communion service is that important.*

All I'm trying to say is that what we often find, in Protestant churches, is that we find a heavy emphasis on the Word, as it should be, because people come to be converted through the Word, and they grow through the Word, and the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. This is absolutely critical. But we tend to dumb down the sacraments and the discipline. To me, the sacraments are very precious and holy times. It's more than simply a symbolic something or other. Something is actually going on in those services that is more than simply a reminder. It's a koinonia, it's a fellowship, with the Lord and with His body, and we need to give it that proper reverence, in the same way we give proper reverence to the reading of the Word. I get very concerned when I hear readings done sloppily or readings that are done by someone who's unprepared, and they get up and they stumble through it, they mispronounce names. This is God's sacred Word. It changes lives. We ought to approach it almost with fear and trembling.

***Frank:** I think the key word in the sacrament is remember. I think throughout the whole Scripture, God tells Israel to remember how he took them out of Egypt. If you ever do a study just on the word remember, you realize how many times God has asked his people to remember who He is and what He's done. I think that's the main thing of the communion service is to remember. Remember the sacrifice that He's given and made for us.*

***Audience Member:** Yes sir. You were talking about the mind, Ted.*

The mind.

***Audience Member:** The sacraments can take us from the mind to the heart. It doesn't get to the heart, it won't beat. If there's no gratitude...[UNCLEAR]...grace. And remember that. What we don't remember takes us away from the understanding of grace, and then we lose appreciation and the love that can come from that, for Jesus. If you don't have that in your heart...but the sacraments, I agree with you. It should be emphasized to that point. It's got to reach our hearts, and then it can reach our hands and then our feet, and then we start behaving. Behavior doesn't come automatically.*

Well I think in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, he talks about three things a sacrament is. It's a remembrance, it's a proclamation and it's a participation. Those are the three things. I'm going to stop there because we've gone overtime.

Let us pray. Lord God, we pray and give you thanks that you have given us the freedom and the love to be able to talk about things that often we disagree about. We pray that as we seek to find the truth of these things, we plumb your Word and we rely upon that Word and also look to our brothers to help us understand that Word. We pray these things in your Name. Amen.