

THE CHURCH

The Church Being Built Up 2 Corinthians 5:1-11 Week of January 23, 2022

Before Connect Group

- 2 Corinthians 5:1-11
 - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

2 Corinthians 5:1-11, ESV

Sermon Notes

Your greatest fear identifies your greatest reality. Your greatest fear reveals the most powerful entity in your heart.

Over the past several weeks we have been working through Biblical Church Growth model. The reason we are making a big deal out of this, is because Church Growth is a very popular term in today's culture. We are inundated with models and programs to "help" the church grow. When we look out at the Church today, many will look at what is happening in the mainstream church and then look down at their Bibles and just know that something isn't right. When this happens, the immediate response is "reject the mainstream idea and move the opposite direction". We call it unbiblical and throw it out. In this series, we are actually making the claim that Church growth is a very Biblical idea, but you aren't wrong if you have looked out over our culture and feel like something is just off.

When someone describes a church that is growing today, you will hear them say something like "This church is really something special. From the moment I walked through the door they were so nice and engaging. They are Biblically sound and engaged in the community. Their pastor is great and teaches the Bible in a way that I can understand. They are making a difference and they seem to be the real thing..." I would hope that this might be the experience of many people as they walk away from visiting a church. However, hunting this kind of review has dictated the "models" of Church growth that we follow.

Acts 2:37-41 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

What model do we follow to see this in the church again today? That is exactly what we have been chasing down in our driving text from Acts 9:31 *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.* Our first week we talked about Peace, last week we talked about being built up, and today we turn our attention to "walking in the fear of the Lord".

Fear of the Lord in Scripture.

- For many, when you think about "Fear" you think of it in a negative term.
- So we end up qualifying it by adding the word "healthy"... We need to live our lives with a healthy fear.
- We struggle with having Fear of a God who is Love. However, when Scripture describes those who fear the Lord, it does so in blessing.
- *Deuteronomy 6:24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day.*
- *Psalms 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.*
- *Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it*

have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

- We are not just talking about the general concept of the fear of the Lord. I want to place this in the context of our Church Growth Model from Acts 9:31.
- *Acts 9:31 (Revised) "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and this led to their being built up, which in turn, caused them to walk in the fear of the Lord and experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, the church multiplied."*
- Our claim in this series is that each of these things are key foundational aspects of a Biblically growing church. We must start with Peace. The peace of the Gospel in each one of our hearts that overflows and is authentically visible in our lives. That peace lays the foundation for our being built up. Being built up in Christ can sometimes be the hardest thing for the believer, because being built up assumes getting torn down. However, this Gospel work in us naturally leads to "walking in the fear of the Lord."
- *2 Corinthians 5:11: "Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others."*
- Here at the end of our text, Paul makes this statement. The way this is framed, you know that the "therefore" points backwards and is describing "knowing the fear of the Lord".

You Are A Part of Something Bigger Than Yourself

- 2 Corinthians 5:1-2
- Before we knew Christ, we were consumed with ourselves. The only thing we feared was that which threatened our narrow view of reality.
- When the Gospel is received, there must immediately be an expansion of Reality and a first time understanding of Truth. This naturally shifts the world view of the believer.
- When you become a follower of Christ, your citizenship is transferred and your understanding expands to greater things than your own passions.
- *Philippians 3:18-21 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*
- The scope of our understanding will dictate the placement of our fears.
- The Gospel in your life is more than perspective, it is a reality and truth that you did not have access to until Christ revealed himself.
- When all we can see is us, our greatest fear will be dictated by the greatest threat to our reality. When we come to the truth of the eternal Gospel, our greatest fear must shift.

Realization of the Sovereign Power of God

- 2 Corinthians 5:4-5
- The movement in these verses is from the groaning burden of this life, being "swallowed up by life".
- Don't miss that this language speaks to the power and victory of God in Jesus Christ over sin and flesh of this world.
- This is one of the harder things for Christians to fully grasp. Though we would claim that we understand, it is very hard for us to live it day to day.
- The true and ultimate victory of God over all sin and flesh has changed the way we live in and engage this world. May I take it a step further and say that the sovereign power of God in your life has put you at odds with this world.
- This immediately places the Christian in a reality that must be checked daily.

- Your greatest fear identifies your greatest reality. Your greatest fear reveals the most powerful entity in your heart.
- This is why Scripture continuously curses those who do “not fear God”, and praises and heaps blessing upon those who do.
- This is a hard exercise for us to navigate and honestly assess in our own hearts. But it doesn’t stop there... This is a hard reality for the Church as a whole to assess within its focus and structure.
- The Fear of the Lord is foundational in Biblical Church Growth, because it elevates the churches thinking and reality to fear and depend only on the sovereign power of God and no other power or entity on this earth.
- The gift of God is his preparation within us to shed the temporary burden of this world and enter into the eternal joy of Life... This changes the way we navigate and view the life we live here and now. We are prepared for greater.
- The author describes our time in this life as a “tent”.
- **Temporary** - the implication of someone living in a tent is that they do not plan to stay. And as such, all of their plans and investment is focused on their destination, not their current situation.
- Peter does an excellent job of describing this in the opening of his first letter...
- *1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion.*
- **Defenseless** - A tent is not set up to protect. This is a tough one. While we live on this earth, we will take shots. Things will seem like they aren’t going our way. Just when things seem to be going well, something swoops in and knocks it all down.
- The believer not only knows this, but expects it. “groans and burdens”... It changes the way we process and the perspective we have about circumstances around us.

Realization That The “Fear of the Lord” is Our Only Source of Joy

- 2 Corinthians 5:6-9.
- “We are always of good courage” What a powerful statement. I want to be “always of good courage”.
- Let me navigate this point by starting off with this statement... Fear and obedience are always tied together.
- What you fear the most will demand your obedience.
- Many fear their financial provision, thus they work 70 hour weeks.
- Many fear their reputation, thus they will labor to construct their outward perception.
- Those who fear the Lord will wake up each day with a driving desire to obey Him.
- *Deuteronomy 6:1 -3 “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.*
- Obedience attached to fear is the downfall of humanity... and in this point is the fullness of the Gospel.
- The greatest fear of man has been dictated by sin in the heart. Survival, riches, lust, etc., we became obedient to sin.
- Christ came and displayed and offered freely the saving power of God over sin in our hearts.
- That we might transfer our “fear” from the groanings of this world into the grip of the

grace of God through Christ.

- The evidence of this faith, is none other than obedience.
- Our Biblical Church Growth Model describes this as “walking in the fear of the Lord”.
- Here is the truth about this. You don't wake up one day and say “I think I'm gonna be obedient to the Lord today”. As if it something you are gonna try out for today to see how it goes.
- Walking in the fear of the Lord is third on this list.
- *Acts 9:31 (Revised) “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and this led to their being built up, which in turn, caused them to walk in the fear of the Lord.*
- The church who is living in daily obedience, is the church who is growing.
- Please brothers and sisters, let's not set aside obedience in the name of acceptance, or comfort.

Realization That We Will Stand Before Him in Judgment

- 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
- This is the pinnacle of this point of church growth.
- Church growth exists because of the coming judgement.
- *Isaiah 45:22-23 “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: “To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.”*
- This Salvation is at the heart of the great commission.
- *Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

2 Corinthians 5:11 The fear of the Lord is not only a critical step in Biblical Church Growth, but it is both the measuring stick of your personal obedience as well as the motivation for the very mission of the Church. Where are we in this?

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- What is our relationship with the church and with the body of Christ? How do we fit in with the rest of the church? Where do we find our place in the history of the church?
- What is the sovereignty of God? Why is this quality of God key to our fear and to our trust in the Lord? How does this change how we live in and change the way we deal with this world?
- How are joy and the fear of the Lord related? How does our fear of the Lord pruce the foundation of joy we need to grow in Him?
- Why should our obedience be rooted in Jesus Christ and in Him alone? What happens to those whose fear is not in the Lord at the final judgment? What happens to those who fear is in the Lord at the final judgment?
- What is the outflow of the Gospel work in our lives to fear the Lord and fully submit to and obey Him?

Challenge For The Week

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We fear the Lord through our submission to Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of all of our life.

- Where are you not living in fear of the Lord by indulging sin and something
- Who have you been praying for this week? Fear the Lord and follow Him by sharing your story with the person you have been praying for during the past few weeks.

