

## The Work of the Church (Edification)

### Introduction:

- I. We want to continue at this time our study of the work of the church. So far we have discussed the work of evangelism and benevolence. In dealing with both of those works, we have emphasized that the work must be done scripturally and in keeping with the pattern that has been set forth in the Word of God (**Heb. 8:5**).

In the denominational realm, people have concluded for years that it doesn't matter how we worship God, just as long as we worship Him somehow. Well, there are those in the church who have concluded the same about the work of the church. It doesn't matter how we evangelized, as long as we do it. It doesn't matter how we engage in benevolent work, just as long as we do it. But the fallacy in that kind of thinking is that we serve a God Who has always demanded that His people follow His instructions carefully and accurately (**Gen. 4:1ff; Lev. 10:1-3**). Now, when it comes to evangelism and benevolent work is there a pattern that must be followed? The answer is yes. And the pattern shows that the church never engaged in those things in such a way that violated the autonomy of the local church. Each church was an independent unit which was self-governing and that did its own work. Over the years local churches started to violate this pattern by setting up what we call sponsoring churches. This was a method in which many churches would send money to a sponsoring church and that sponsoring church would send money either to an evangelist or to a needy church. This is how it looked in evangelism (*chart on evangelism and the sponsoring church*). This is how it looked in benevolence (*chart on benevolence and the sponsoring church*). Now I want you to take note of the fact, that once a local church sends money to another local church to do a work, you have a situation where one church is overseeing a part of the work of another church. That is a violation of 1 Pet. 5:2. In the New Testament, the only time one church ever sent money to another church is when there was a benevolent need, and the reason for that was that there could be equality (**2 Cor. 8:8-14**).

- A church never sent money to another church for the purpose of evangelism.
- A church never sent money to a church with superior financial ability.
- A church never sent money to a sponsoring church to do a part of its work.
- Churches always sent money directly to the preacher in evangelism.
- Churches always sent money directly to the needy church in benevolence.

- II. Now we want to turn our attention to the third work that Christ has given His church to do and that is edification. Paul said that Christ gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers **for the perfecting of the saints**. The perfecting of the saints has to do with the edifying or building up of the local church. That this is the work of the church means that we can use God's money, i.e., the money that is gathered by the free-will offering of the saints upon the first day of the week, for the purpose of edification. This is what we want to look at for the rest of our time this morning.

## Lesson:

### I. The Work of Edification.

In **Eph. 4:16** we find that everyone in a local church should be involved in this process. The church should be growing, not only numerically, but also spiritually (**1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Cor. 14:26**).

### II. The Assembling of The Saints To Worship God.

Now, the primary source of edification for the saints of a local church is the weekly assembling of the saints (**Heb. 10:24-25**). Now, what we find in the New Testament is the church engaging in five avenues of worship when they assembled themselves together.

#### 1. Partaking the Lord's Supper (**Acts 20:7**).

We do this every Lord's day in order to remember Jesus and the sacrifice that He made for us on Calvary's cross. The fact that this is done upon the first day of the week shows a weekly observance of the Lord's Supper (*First month of the year would denote a yearly observance. First week of the month would denote a monthly observance. First day of the week denotes a weekly observance*). Also, this is one of the two acts of worship that are scripturally reserved for the first day of the week.

#### 2. Preaching or teaching (**Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 2:2**).

In this the Word of God is emphasized. The craze in the religious world today is social and recreational. Man thinks that a person has to be entertained in order to be build up spiritually. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is, the Word of God is the greatest source of edification that we have (**Acts 20:32**). Today we are blessed with having the written Word of God and we need to use it to our advantage in building up the local church. We need to strive to

have the best Bible classes possible. As a preacher, I need to be focused on teaching and preaching the whole counsel of God so that the church can be built up. The elders must be focused on feeding the flock. Remember, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (**Rom. 10:17**).

### 3. **Praying (Acts 2:42).**

Praying was something we find the church doing regularly (Acts 4:23-31; Acts 12:1-5).

### 4. **Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).**

Remember, all things must be done scripturally, and scripturally the saints in the first century sang. They didn't play a musical instrument, they sang. They didn't play and sing, they simply sang. That there were no instruments of music in the New Testament worship is a forgone conclusion.

- a. **American Encyclopedia**: "Pope Vitalian introduced organs into some of the churches in Southern Europe about A.D. 670.
- b. **History of Music, pg, 54**: "The church music was exclusively vocal" (Edward Dickson).
- c. **Evolution of Church Music, pg. 42**: "All music employed in their service was vocal" (Frank L. Humpries).
- d. **Music in Western Civilization, pp. 53-54**: "All our sources deal amply with the vocal music in the early church" (Paul H. Lang).

More importantly than these quotes is the fact that in all the scriptures that we find in the New Testament involving the church, all they did was sing. We must follow the pattern.

### 5. **Giving (1 Cor. 16:1,2).**

How did the church raise money? They did it by the free-will offering of the saints upon the first day of the week. Just like the Lord's Supper, this is an act of worship limited to the Lord's day.

## **Conclusion:**

Let's make sure that we continue to do the work of the church in the area of edification. Let's build up this local church, and let's do it God's way.