



WEEK 8: The Church—it's not just ancient history!

I. One Foundation

– The Death of the Apostles

- Paul's final years (61-67)
- Eleven out of Twelve Apostles martyred (Peter and Paul, 67)
- Destruction of Jerusalem and Temple (70)

– The Teaching of the Apostles

- Final Book: The Revelation of Jesus Christ (90-96)
- The Development of the NT Canon: Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397)

– The Spread of Christianity

II. Seven Threads

1. Christ-like Dependence (1:1—2:47)

- a. He provides the Plan
- b. He provides the Power (e.g. Acts 1:8)
- c. He provides the Results

It's not up to us! So what would happen if you pursued God's plan in His power?

2. Christ-like Perseverance (3:1—6:7)

- a. Dealing with Persecution (external threats) (e.g. Acts 4:29)
- b. Dealing with Purity Issues (internal threat)
- c. Dealing with Problems (internal threat)

It's not a country club! So what do we expect as followers of Christ in His Church today?

3. Christ-like Humility (6:8—9:31)

- a. Humility and Christ-likeness (Stephen, e.g. Acts 7:60)
- b. Humility and Obedience (Philip)
- c. Humility and Brokenness (Saul)

It's not a popularity contest! So who are we overlooking for service in the Church today?

4. **Christ-centered Unity** (9:32—12:24)

- a. Diversity w/o Division in the Church (e.g. Acts 10:28)
- b. Unity w/o Uniformity in the Church (e.g. Acts 11:26)
- c. God Glorified in the Church (e.g. Acts 11:18)

It's not who you'd expect! So who are you not expecting to see at church this Sunday?

5. **Christ-like Discipleship: Pt. 1** (12:25—15:35)

- a. First Journey
- b. First Letter
- c. First Council

It's not business-as-usual! So are you as willing as Paul to adapt for sake of the gospel?

6. **Christ-like Discipleship: Pt. 2** (15:36—21:17)

- a. Going
- b. Baptizing
- c. Teaching
- d. Christ's Authority and Presence

It's not a local thing! So how are you involved in making disciples, locally and globally?

7. **Christ-like Purpose** (21:18—28:31)

- a. Finding purpose in Christ
- b. Living purposefully in Christ
- c. Accomplishing Christ's purposes
- d. Becoming like Christ

It's not just about the destination! So what aspects of your life have eternal value?

The 8th Thread: Biblical Relevance

- a. In an unfinished building, even the newest stones are built upon the foundation.
- b. The apostolic teachings preserved in Acts and the epistles have direct relevance for us.

It's not just ancient history! So what difference will this study make in your life?



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But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. – 2 Timothy 4:5-8 NASB

Time can be a magic wand of sorts. Proponents of macro-evolutionary theory start with inorganic matter and end up with a human being. How? They simply wave the magic wand of time. Other people read prohibitions against immoral behavior in the Bible and end up justifying the exact same attitudes and actions in their own lives. How? Just wave the magic wand of time and all of a sudden the moral concerns of ancient cultures are no longer relevant to our complicated, modern lives. There's no doubt that time does change some things. But it certainly doesn't change everything. In Hebrews, we read that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!" Therefore, His teachings and commandments are no less important with the passing of time. If anything, with each passing day, we find ourselves that much closer to His imminent return. So before you relegate the Church to a museum, and relocate your Bible to a dusty bookshelf, you might want to reconsider who Christ is and what He's doing through His Church today. His promises still stand! The gates of Hell will not and have not overcome the Church. And He'll be with us even to the end of this age, which isn't here quite yet. So let's wake up and get engaged in the work of our Lord to which He has called each of us! And then, when it's our time to go, let's make certain the next generation of Church leaders is willing and able to take up the same banner in our stead.

- WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY?
 - **Titus**
 - **1 Timothy**
 - **2 Timothy**

- WHAT DID YOU HEAR BEN SAY?

- WHAT DO YOU HEAR GOD SAYING?

As you listen to the lecture and spend time in discussion with the men around your table, try and listen to what God may be trying to say to you. Write down those verses or thoughts that encourage or possibly convict you, so that you can remember them.

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- WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PRAY FOR?

If you heard God speaking to you today, it's vitally important that you take action. Maybe you need to confess. You might need God to clarify what He said or give you further direction. It could be that you simply need to express thanks to Him. During your prayer time around the table, be sure and provide one another with the opportunity to share a prayer request and to pray for them together.

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