

## “The Skeleton and the Flesh of the Church” Applied Pt. 13

CBC Congregational Update & Vision Meeting, October 25, 2023 II Timothy 3:10-17 We Worship Christ, Facing a Task

II Tim. 1:13, Titus 1:9 Concerned about? Doctrinal drift, words/definition shift Social gospel’s message is that “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.” H Richard Niebuhr **How does doctrinal drift/purpose drift take place?** **1. Look for easiest natural path** (not as much effort required, little eyebrows raised or opposition from you/others both inside and outside church, therefore looks reasonable, successful, “I get it”); **2. Pay more attention to what is right in front of you** (people, words, feelings) **rather than words/examples given from God** (ie. Strange New World vs. final sufficient trustworthy eternal Word); **3. Find alternate purposes inside true purposes**—13 part, only 2x a year but think so essential—dovetails w SS, ideas in membership class—if lost, please ask for notes, main message is that it is **dangerous to ignore where we focus as church**; **WHAT** is our identity, our purpose (individually/together must be able to answer this); **II Tim. 3:10-17** been working off the statement that the **why** leads to the “what” driving the “how” **the WHY? has already been determined** dividing line—God Himself—are you in fellowship with Him, under Him, or against Him, proved by being under someone/thing else; if He is the WHY, then HE determines the WHAT; **(what are His goals/purposes)** **IF** do NOTHING else together, Duty of People of God includes; **I. Worship God Together** Rom. 15:5-6 **II. Grow individually & corporately with a growth that comes from God** Eph. 4:15-16 **3. Protect/Defend the Name of God: His character and eternal purposes** II Tim. 1:13-14, verses telling what to do if people won’t stay in line w these doctrines (guard treasure entrusted) **4. Own the People in the Particular Expression of the Body of Christ where God has placed you.** I Cor. 12:18, 25, Eph. 4 **5. Spread the Glory of God** Hab. 2:14, I Pet. 2:9; **What is needed to head toward these goals together?** **Must NOT focus on methods to fix why/what issues until the why/what are FIRMLY established;** **why not?** methods focus on what we do; we care very much about what we do; remember that attitude, focus, precision, care all reveal where we are heading, what value; **if not clear on God’s why/what, we will choose methods that seem to be godly but will end with OUR why/what;** (food more than fellowship, friends who give/do/excite more than building co-workers in the gospel from real soul level relationships, expect people to affirm my thinking rather than examine my thinking, cover rather than expose character, put me in better light rather than consider how reflects on others/God Himself)—the methods must flow FROM the why/what—Happens piece by piece, slow/intentional; **need couple of boundaries/guidelines to ask about our methods** **1. Does this method show we are focusing on God, not us?** **2. Does this method show we are focusing on the “we” more than the “Me”?** PEOPLE—**I Pet. 2:4-5, 9-10,** church—place where living God dwells w His people **Eph. 2:19-22** THIS identity must bleed through EACH church—THIS provides tie, place of belonging—part of church, then you fit; **THIS identity is why general commands for all in how we act with one another in** Rom. 12, Eph. 4, Col. 3, Gal. 5—all these passages focus on unity as well as showing diversity through that unity; **I Cor. 12:14, 18-20** the forces that would pull people apart are SO great (interpersonal, backgrounds, focus for life and growth, cultural identities) that disparate people have to go back to God’s Why, What OR methods, though well-intentioned will produce greater focus on me than God’s we; **What would it take/what would be needed to avoid the pitfalls of me-centered methods driven by me-centered agendas/identities? Where should we focus more/less?** **1. God must get what He desires more than us getting what we desire;** (involves CLEARLY being able to articulate what He values/wants); **2. Including all the pieces God cares about leads to some methods that will seemingly not initially “work” for you.** includes people He puts in life (personalities/attitudes/biases/ fears) AND universal church both present & past (where are movements coming from, reacting against, toward); **including ALL will make it seem impossible to get where God is calling us—therefore, some of methods won’t produce immediately noticeable results that you/others want;** may include, but won’t be limited to methods that work for you **3. Must think through an eternal lens to determine appropriate value.** Col. 3:1-3 set mind on things above, Matt. 6 lay up treasure in heaven—while we should be able to get where God wants us to through couple of different methods, what would identify healthy “we” focused methods? OR What would show we care more about “we” than “me” with methods? **1. Something that includes you, but doesn’t necessarily “fit”** (unless you are totally sinless, Jn. 17 One w Trinity); **fits w God’s goals** **2. Something that calls us to look farther** (ie. When feels like “not working,” look beyond what it DOES for us—farther than personality, background, your emotions--annoy, make happy; EVEN past—“they” are getting/not getting something; **looking only at you/them NOT far enough;** If THEY only growing because of their method, then NOT dependent on God alone for life, love, service, dependent on THAT method); **what does eternity do to this issue? What is God thinking about that I am not; valuing that I am not;** Even when start to collect these answers, both leaders and members need to think--how are they not like me, what am I expecting of them, what are THEY not seeing that you assume; what they not seeing that enables you to keep going—methods looking for a path forward, NOT necessarily path desired that focuses on **God’s perspective/dependent on His resources** **3. Something that fellowship with God allows us to grow to participate in with joyful obedience;** ie. whether it works for us or not, able to turn it around a few times to see where it lives and support roots—ie. Looking to glorify God—shows by looking to Him for direction/provision—obedience, movement; **what is glorifying God in this that I can look to do,** but **joyful** (glorify God and enjoy HIM forever—this is eternal focus) **His commandments are not burdensome;** practically, **WATCH focus on sideshows** (yes, they need to wear clothes to church, yes, should be respectful, yes, should care for everyone in here, yes, should forgive, **but what is the common goal, hunger, purpose?** how do we cultivate that in a way that fear of God produces the external result we see out of line; FOCUS THERE and on the God who gives it WHILE dealing w sideshow OR it becomes focus; **Watch what stand against**—Scripture tells us we face enemies—WHAT exactly IS the common enemy to guard against, what will bring us together instead of tear us apart (think covid, gluten, exact fix for government, how handle fantasy/mythology, how handle “in world but not of it” ARE THESE TRULY OUR COMMON ENEMIES/PLACES TO FOCUS?); **thoughts as you listen? What would it take**

to grow/head in this direction of methods that foster “we” more than “me”? ALL this going through whatever method—God’s methods include not getting it, faster/slower than we want, etc. because must care about ALL He wants and ALL people He gives which complicates; Much inherited—why slow to get rid of? b/c don’t have clear, articulated foundation in gospel, gospel purposes—slow to change OR change based on self/culture—but also, part of foundation “what received” Look through current “how” at this church—where do you see attempts at these focuses, EVEN in things that you might see as “not a big deal” and ask God for growing desire for fellowship w Him and dependence on Him so His kingdom will come and His will be done is chief desire of our hearts!

### 3. Does this method show we are focusing on the Task Assigned, not the Climate Desired

**1 Corinthians 12:14, 18-20** For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>18</sup> But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> But now there are many members, but one body.

**Ephesians 2:19–22** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

**1 Timothy 3:14–15** I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; <sup>15</sup> but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

**2 Timothy 1:13** Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

**Titus 1:9** holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

**1 Peter 2:4–5, 9-10** And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, <sup>5</sup> you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

### 4. Does this method lift up not merely the results, but the Holy Spirit as its source of life?