

Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning
Understanding the Church
The Mission of the Church (Part Three): Corporate Testimony

Corporate Witness: The effects and implications of the gospel on display in the life of God's people collectively.

Main Idea: Jesus calls the church to a corporate life of love, unity, joy, and purity in order to display and commend the gospel to each other and to the world.

The Corporate Witness of Love

Read John 13:31-35

1. What is the "new commandment" Jesus gives to his disciples (vs 34)?
2. What makes this commandment "new" is the manner in which it is to be done. In what manner are the disciples to love one another (vs 34)?
3. What does it mean to love one another as Jesus loved us?
 - a. How does Jesus's love for us motivate us to love one another?
 - b. How (specifically) might this take shape in visible/ recognizable ways?
4. What does Jesus say will be the result if we love one another (vs 35)? Put that in negative form... what is the result if we don't love one another?
5. Consider Galatians 6:10 and 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12... How does a higher priority of love for the church family clearly testify to the effects and implications of the gospel?

The Corporate Witness of Unity

Read John 17:17-23

6. What does Jesus ask for those who will believe in him through the disciples' word (vs 21)?
7. For what purpose does Jesus ask that the disciples would be one (vs 21, 23)?
8. In verse 17, Jesus prays that his church would be sanctified in the truth, which is the word of God. Keep that in mind and consider the following texts: 1 Corinthians 1:10, Rom 12:16, Rom 15:5, Philippians 1:27, 1 Peter 3:8.
 - a. What does this teach us about how we should strive to be "one" or be unified?
 - b. Why is this sort of unity critical for our corporate witness?

The Corporate Witness of Joy

Read Psalm 149:2, Philippians 2:17-18, 3:1, and 4:4

9. It is evident that Joy/ rejoicing in the Lord is commanded of God's people throughout the scriptures (there are dozens of examples). Why would that be the case?
 - a. What does a lack of joy say to others?
 - b. In contrast, what does having joy say?
10. How does Christian joy differ from a carnal or worldly understanding of joy? (2 Cor 6:10)
11. Why is our joy an important aspect of our corporate witness?
 - a. Why is this an important element of our discipleship and teaching obedience to Christ?

The Corporate Witness of Purity

Read 2 Peter 2:9-11

12. According to verses 9 and 10, what has been the status change of the believer? (Notice the corporate aspect)
13. What have we received according to verse 10?
14. What are we to abstain from in verse 11? Why?
15. What are we to do in verse 12? Why?
 - a. What is the final result according to verse 12?
16. How would it hinder our evangelism and discipleship if our church was filled with people who lived like non-Christians?
17. Related to this subject of purity, why is the practice of church discipline an important aspect of our mission together?

Summary:

Our mission is not only to proclaim the gospel to the lost and to teach one another to obey Jesus, but to live lives that are worthy of that calling and together testify to the saving and transforming work that God does in His people by displaying a corporate life of love, unity, joy, and purity.