

“Will The Lord Find Faith? #2”

Introduction. In Luke 18:8, Jesus asked, “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” God is concerned about the future and we must be too.

We can be assured that the church will always exist in the future, but to what extent? Will the church be strong and growing when Christ comes, or will there be just a remnant remaining? In the previous lesson we examined four areas critical to the preservation of the Lord’s church, and we will review four final areas in this lesson.

I. It Depends On The Quality Of Elders Within The Church

- A. Every institution is a reflection of its leadership. No stream can rise above its source. Every congregation that does not have elders must not accept this as a permanent situation. The Lord intended for there to be elders in every church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) and every congregation needs to work toward them with men who qualify (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-8).
- B. Churches need elders who know their Bible, are uncompromising in their convictions, who have hearts of love and compassion, who recognize error and have zero tolerance of it, who are bold as lions but meek as lambs, who put the spiritual interests of the church first, and who have respect for Bible authority (Hebrews 13:17).
- C. Every congregation should regularly stress that men need to develop the character and qualifications of elders; it takes time to prove oneself. Congregations without elders need to pray that they will one day have men qualified to serve as elders. Within young men, this needs to begin early. Elders should constantly study to retain the character and Bible knowledge needed for arguably the greatest work within the church.

II. It Depends On The Example The Church Sets

- A. We are to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13; cp. 2 Corinthians 9:2; 1 Peter 3:1). Salt has a preserving quality. When not enough salt was found in Sodom and Gomorrah, God destroyed them (Genesis 19:24-25). Indeed, our future is tied to our being a preserving influence on the world.
- B. Salt permeates the substance it is applied to while at the same time retaining its distinct nature. We are in the world to influence it for good, but we cannot become of the world (John 17:11-15; Romans 12:2; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17). Israel’s demise goes back to their desire to be like other nations (1 Samuel 8:5).
- C. Can a difference be seen between us and the world in the apparel we wear, the recreation we enjoy, the words we speak, the priorities we choose, and the habits we form and exhibit?

III. It Depends On The Church’s Devotion To Evangelism

- A. Evangelism is a do or die matter; it is not optional. A family that does not bear or adopt children will cease to be. The Lord intended for evangelism to last until the end of the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). In 2 Timothy 2:2, the gospel passes through four hands, and by implication, on and on.

- B. We should imitate the desire of first century Christians in bringing people to hear about Jesus (John 1:40-42, 44-46; Acts 8:3-4). Jesus was a great example when dealing with the Samaritan woman in John 4. He caught her attention (vv. 4-9), created an interest (vv. 10-15), showed her evidences (vv. 16-19), and produced results (vv. 27-30, 39-42).
- C. The “church growth” movement now occurring now among churches encourages the forsaking of Bible principles in lieu of molding the church to what people want rather than what God wants. More liberal churches of Christ are embracing this philosophy but we must reject it and work with the plan God gave.

IV. It Depends On How United The Church Remains

- A. Jesus said His disciples have to be united (Mark 3:24-25). If we are not united, then congregations cannot thrive. If we cannot overcome petty disputes and bickering, we cannot manifest a united front against the world (1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-3, 31-32).
- B. However, remaining united may sometimes mean remaining united against error, even though it appears to be division. Division for the cause of truth and the cause of Christ will sometimes be necessary (1 Corinthians 11:19; 2 Peter 3:17; 1 John 2:19). Churches cannot, under any circumstances, compromise the divine, revealed truth.
- C. We are not to divide over matters of opinion (Romans 14:1-5). Matters of faith and opinion must be clearly delineated. Matters of opinion must be left as such and not be made into issues which cause the division of Christ’s body (Romans 14:19-20).

Conclusion. When the Lord comes will the church be strong, vibrant, thriving and growing; or, will there be just a remnant? The answer all depends to a measurable extent on the matters we have just discussed. What part will we individually play? Will we be passionate or passive, indifferent or involved, livid or lethargic, active or apathetic, a voice or a victim? If the present and succeeding generation will resolve to leave the church for the next generation just how the New Testament describes it to be, the Lord will find faith on the earth when He comes.