

# the **History** and **Work** of the **Church**

a 9-part Bible study series  
considering God's establishment  
and perfect design for the church

*presented by the*

**Monte Vista**  
**church of Christ**

*in Phoenix, Arizona*

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[montevistacoc.com](http://montevistacoc.com)



# **The History & Work of the Church**

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This material has been developed for those seeking the truth.  
Feel free to copy and distribute this material as needed, *“that we  
might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”*  
(1 Corinthians 2:12)

# The Origin & Establishment of the Church

## Lesson 1

### The Prophets & Angels Wanted to Know About the Kingdom

*“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” (1 Peter 1:10–12)*

- More prophecies of the kingdom – Isa 2, Daniel 4, Joel 2 & Micah 4
- Often called the “Last Days” – Heb 1:1-2; Acts 2:16-17

### Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream (600 BC) – Daniel 2:31-35

- **Babylonian Empire** (Fell in 530 BC) – *Head of Gold*
- **Medo-Persian Empire** (Fell in 330 BC) – *Breasts & Arms of Silver*
- **Macedonian/Greek** (Established in 323 BC) – *Belly & Thighs of Brass*
- **Roman Empire** (Established in 30 BC) – *Legs of Iron & Feet of Clay*

### The Kingdom of God Established During Roman Empire

*“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” (Daniel 2:44)*

*“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”” (Matthew 3:1–2)*



## **The Kingdom Established**

- *“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”* – Matt 10:7; Mark 1:15
- *“Till they see the kingdom of God”* – Mark 9:1

## **The Beginning**

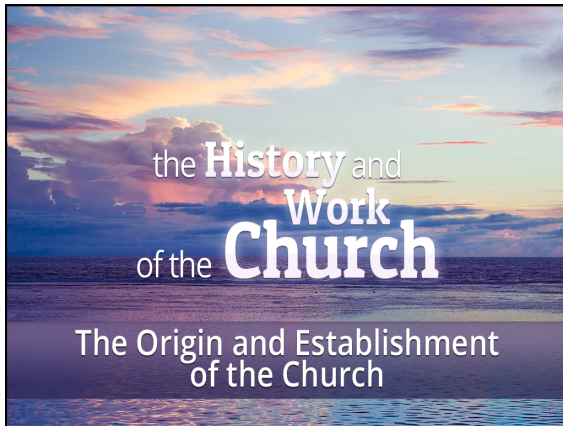
- Kingdom was to begin in Jerusalem – Isa 2:2-3; Luke 24:47
- Pentecost was called ‘the beginning’ – Acts 11:15
- Kingdom was to come with Power – Mark 9:1
- Power was to come with the Holy Spirit – Acts 1:8
- The Holy Spirit Came at Pentecost – Acts 2:1-4

## **Conclusion: The Kingdom Came at Pentecost!**

### **Pentecost Marks the Beginning** – Acts 11:15

- of the **New Covenant** – Heb 8:8; 9:15-17
- of the **Church** – Acts 2:47
- of the **Preaching of the Gospel** – Acts 2
- of the **Preaching of Remission of Sin** – Luke 24:47

**After Pentecost** the church is always spoken of as **IN EXISTENCE** – Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1; 11:22; 13:1; 14:27



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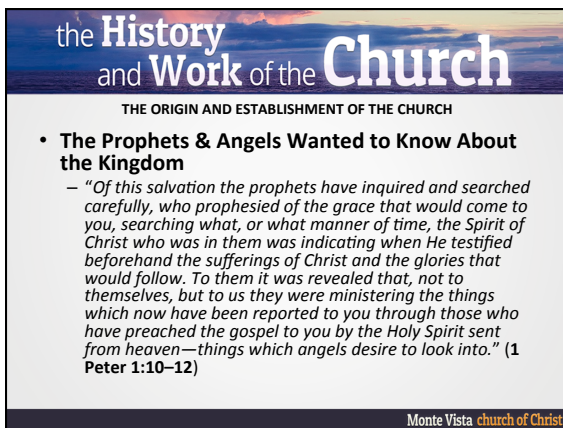
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the **History**  
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THE ORIGIN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

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# The Spiritual Nature of the Church

## Lesson 2

*“Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36)*

### Soap, Soup, and Salvation

- Today’s motto for many churches
- Many view the church as a physical institution with a little religion thrown in to make us feel good about God

### The Church is ...

- God’s spiritual heritage – Eph 1:11-18
- the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham – Acts 3:25-26

### Truth: The Conquering Power of His Kingdom

*“... for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” (John 18:37)*

- The Truth would make one free – John 8:32
- Jesus said, “**I am the truth**” – John 14:6
- The Word of God is truth – John 17:17

### Only Those in the Church Receive Spiritual Blessings

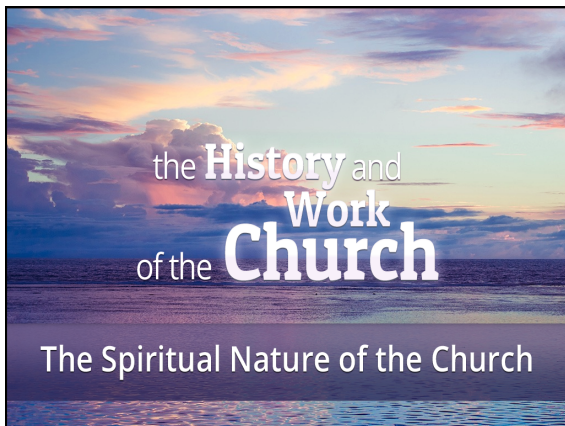
- All spiritual blessings are **in Christ** – Eph 1:3
- Those in Christ are in the body of Christ – Gal 3:26-27; 1 Cor 12:13
- If all spiritual blessings are in the church, then those outside the church do not enjoy spiritual blessings

## **The Character of the Church is Spiritual**

- We are born again by a spiritual birth – John 3:1-7
- We walk after the Spirit – Gal 5:16
- We engage in spiritual worship – John 4:23-24
- We serve in the newness of the spirit – Rom 12:1-2
- We engage in spiritual warfare – Eph 6:10-18 – with spiritual weaponry – 2 Cor 10:4

## **Those in the Church Receive Spiritual Reward**

- Our inheritance is incorruptible – 1 Peter 1:3-5
- We will receive a spiritual body – 1 Cor 15:52-53



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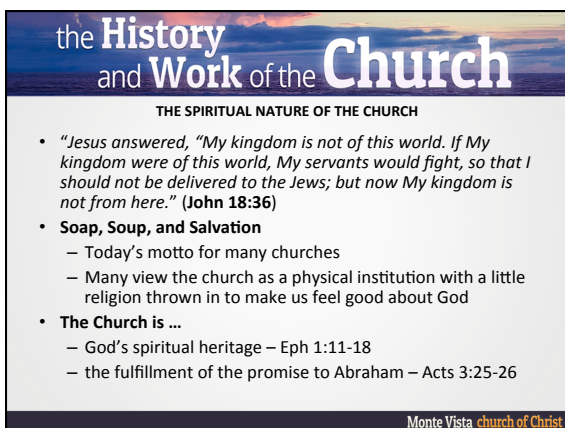
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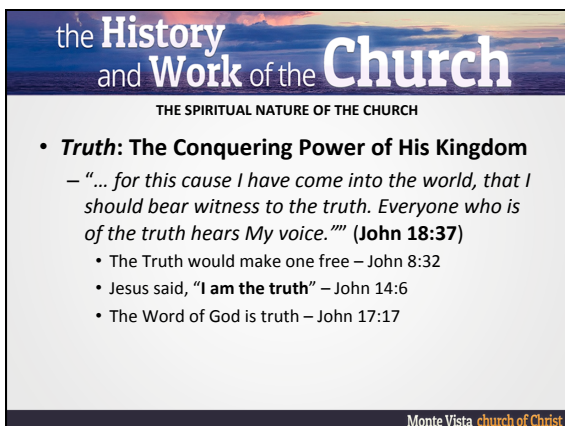
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THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- **Only Those in the Church Receive Spiritual Blessings**
  - All spiritual blessings are **in Christ** – Eph 1:3
  - Those in Christ are in the body (church) of Christ
    - *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:26–27)*
    - *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13)*
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THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- **Those in the Church Receive Spiritual Reward**
  - Our inheritance is incorruptible
    - *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3–5)*
  - We will receive a spiritual body – 1 Cor 15:52-53

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# **The Work of the Church**

## **Lesson 3**

### **The Church of God is a Place of Work**

*“It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.” (Mark 13:34)*

*“God will render to each one according to his deeds” (Romans 2:6)*

### **‘Fighting the Good Fight of Faith’ – 1 Tim 6:12**

- Preaching the Gospel
- Teaching its own members
- Caring for needy saints

### **The Church Must Have Authority**

*“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Colossians 3:17)*

### **We Must Glorify God as the Church**

*“to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.” (Ephesians 3:21)*

### **The Work of the Church is NOT**

- Involved in political action or lobbying groups
- Going into business to make money
- To promote secular education by building schools or supporting them from the church treasury
- To provide recreational or family life centers
- To cure society of its social ills



- ***Where is the scripture for such work?*** – “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

### **The Work of the Church is to Preach the Gospel**

- Preachers must be sent – Rom 10:14-15
- Only local congregations were the medium through which this work was accomplished
- It was their primary responsibility
  - **Macedonia** – 2 Cor 11:8-9
  - **Thessalonica** – 1 Thess 1:2-8
  - **Philippi** – Phil 4:14-20

### **The Work of the Church is to Edify its Members**

- Churches were focused on Spiritual Growth
  - Putting on the Whole Armor – Eph 6:10-18
  - “*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” (2 Peter 3:18)
- The elders are charged with feeding the flock
  - Bible classes, special studies, men’s classes, ladies classes, teachers classes, gospel meetings

### **The Church Must Grow**

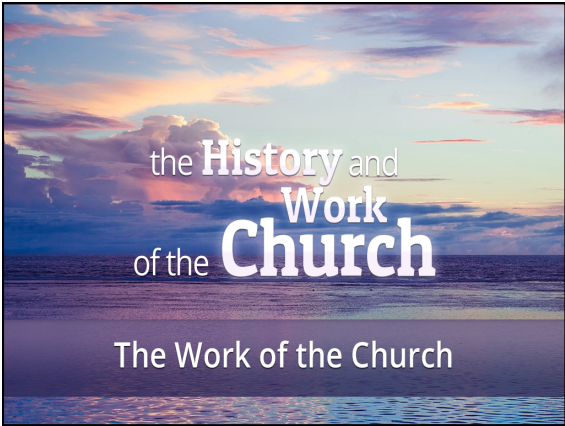
“... *grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ ...*” (Ephesians 4:12–16)

### **The Work of the Church is to Minister to Poor Saints**

- The Greek Widows – Acts 6:1-3
- Sending Aid to Other Churches – Acts 11:27-30; Rom 15:25-27

## The Church Can Only Aid Needy Saints

- Since we have no other example – 2 Cor 9:1; Rom 12:13; 15:25-26; 1 Tim 5:16
- We still have **individual obligations** to unbelievers
  - “*Let us do good to **all** ...*” (Gal 6:10)
  - “*... visit orphans and widows ...*” (James 1:27)



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the History and Work of the Church

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# **The Worship of the Church**

## **Lesson 4**

### **What day do we assemble for worship?**

- The Sabbath? – *No*
  - The Sabbath was given to the Jews – Deut 5:15
  - God said it would cease – Hosea 2:11
  - When the Law was nailed to the cross – Col 2:13-17

### **The First Day of the Week is the Lord's Day**

- The day of His resurrection – John 20:1,19; Luke 24:1,7
- Church was established on Pentecost – Acts 2:1-4, 41
- Pentecost was the first day of the week – Lev 23:15
- New Testament Churches worshiped then – Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2

### **Acts of Worship: The Lord's Supper**

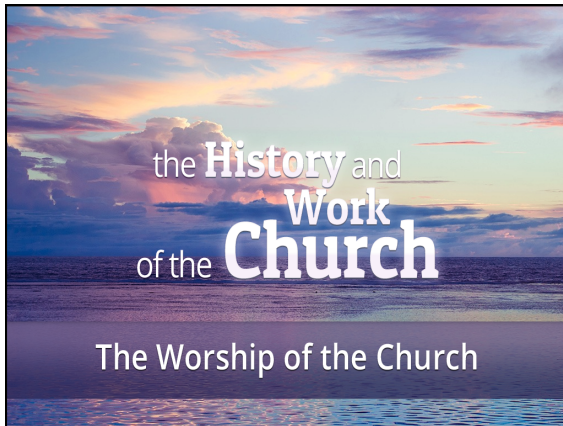
- **We Eat the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day**
  - Christians took it on the first day of the week – Acts 20:7
  - Eating of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine were commanded by Jesus Himself – Matt 26:26-29; 1 Cor 11:23
- **Has a special design and purpose**
  - According to the pattern – 1 Cor 11:24-32
  - Done in the **proper manner** – *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."* (**1 Corinthians 11:28**)

## Acts of Worship: Giving

- **We Give of Our Means on the Lord's Day**
  - Christians are commanded to give on the first day of the week – 1 Cor 16:1-2
  - Our contribution comes from the heart, not with a set percentage or amount
  - The attitude of our giving – *“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows **bountifully** will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he **purposes in his heart**, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a **cheerful** giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6–7)*

## The Spirit of Our Worship

- Must be in spirit – John 4:24
- Worship with grace in our hearts – Col 3:16
- Sing with the spirit and understanding – 1 Cor 14:15
- Make melody in our hearts – our hearts accompanying the song of our lips – Eph 5:19
- Our hearts must be in our worship – Matt 15:7-9
- Singing is the only type of music – Col 3:16; Eph 5:19
- We must pray to God – Acts 2:42; 1 Tim 2:1, 8
- We continue steadfastly in worship – Acts 2:42
- Not to be neglected – Heb 10:25
- Abiding in Christ's doctrine – *“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.” (2 John 9)*



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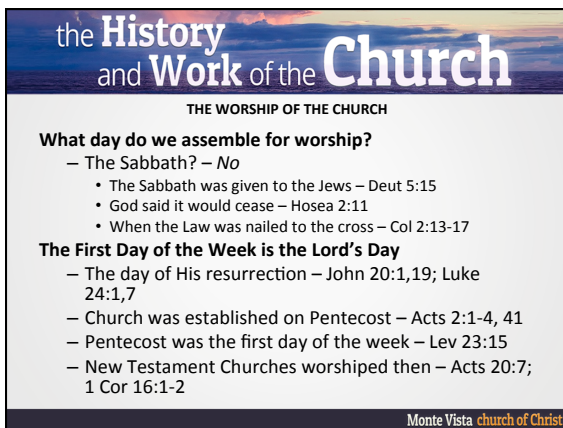
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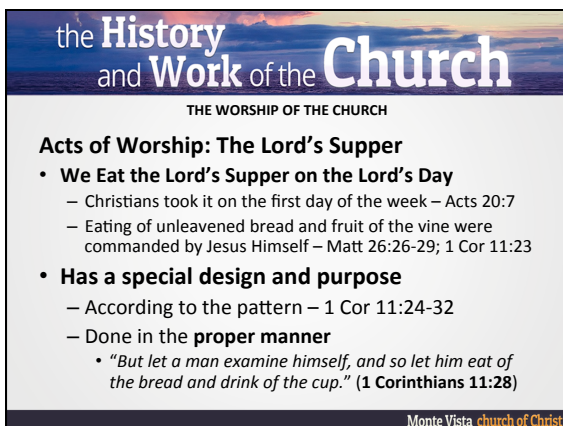
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# Discipline in the Church

## Lesson 5

### Discipline is not a bad word

- Necessary for an orderly society and the church
- Discipline is **commanded** and **expected** by God
- Keeps “*spots or wrinkles*” out – Eph 5:27

*“But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” (2 Thessalonians 3:6)*

### Discipline Defined

- “*training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character*”
- **Instructive Discipline**
  - An elder feeding the flock – Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2
- **Corrective Discipline**
  - Involved chastening – Heb 12:5-13; Rom 16:17; Titus 3:10; 1 Tim 5:20

### Personal Offenses – Matt 18:15-20

- **Admonish** the one who sinned face to face
- If he refuses, **bring one or two others**
- If he refuses, **tell it to the church**
- If he *still* refuses, treat him as a tax collector

## Withdrawing from Unrepentant Brethren

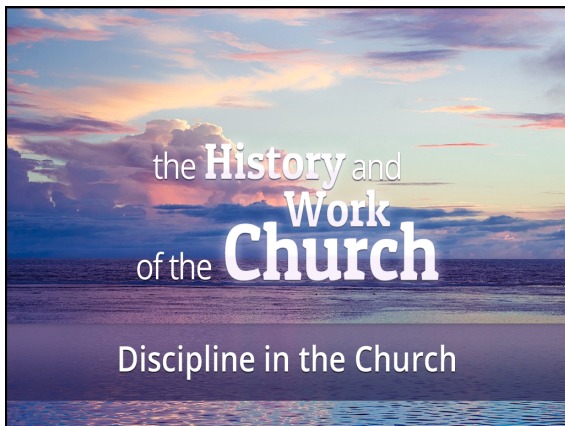
- **Withdraw, Note, Shun** those who walk disorderly that they are ashamed – 2 Thess 3:6-15
  - Not counted as enemies, but as a lost one
- **Put Away** those living immoral lives, in public, severing social relationships with them – 1 Cor 5
- **Mark** those who cause division – Rom 16:17-18

## The Purpose of Discipline

- Keep the church pure – Eph 5:25-27
- Keep sin from spreading – 1 Cor 5:6
- A church that tolerates sin will attract those who live in sin or are sympathetic to it
- To save the soul of the guilty – 1 Cor 5:5
- **NOT** for embarrassment or mean-spiritedness

## What Should the Erring Brother Do?

- Repent! – Acts 8:22
- Develop godly sorrow – 2 Cor 7:10
- Confess his sin to God and man – James 5:16; 1 John 1:9
  - Publicly if necessary
- Pray to God for forgiveness – Acts 8:24; James 5:16
  - God forgives those who sincerely repent
  - Consider even Ahab – 1 Kings 21:27-29



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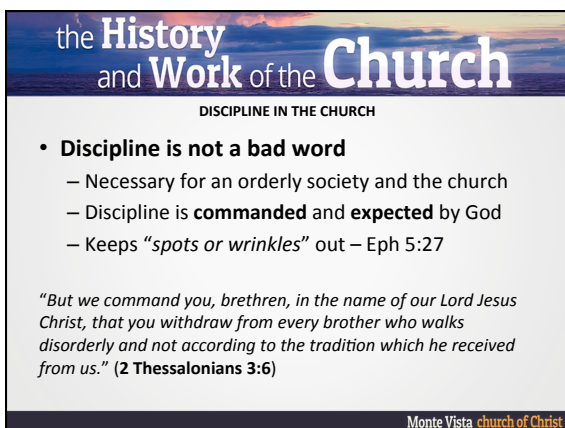
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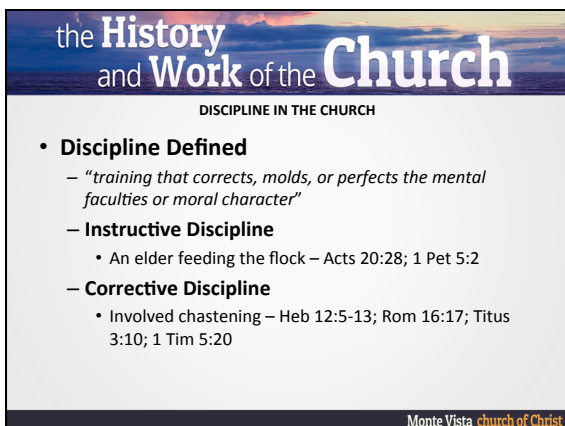
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the History and Work of the Church

DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

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the History and Work of the Church

DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

- **Withdrawing from Unrepentant Brethren**
  - **Withdraw, Note, Shun** those who walk disorderly that they are ashamed – 2 Thess 3:6-15
    - Not counted as enemies, but as a lost one
  - **Put Away** those living immoral lives, in public, severing social relationships with them – 1 Cor 5
  - **Mark** those who cause division – Rom 16:17-18

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the History and Work of the Church

DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

- **The Purpose of Discipline**
  - Keep the church pure – Eph 5:25-27
  - Keep sin from spreading – 1 Cor 5:6
  - A church that tolerates sin will attract those who live in sin or are sympathetic to it
  - To save the soul of the guilty – 1 Cor 5:5
  - **NOT** for embarrassment or mean-spiritedness

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the History  
and Work of the Church

DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

- **What Should the Erring Brother Do?**
  - Repent! – Acts 8:22
  - Develop godly sorrow – 2 Cor 7:10
  - Confess his sin to God and man – James 5:16; 1 John 1:9
    - Publicly if necessary
  - Pray to God for forgiveness – Acts 8:24; James 5:16
    - God forgives those who sincerely repent
    - Consider even Ahab – 1 Kings 21:27-29

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# The Church & The Individual

## Lesson 6

*“If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.” (1 Timothy 5:16)*

### The Church vs. The Individual

- Some say, *“What the individual can do, the church can do also”*
  - There is a difference between the collective church and the individual Christian
  - There is a difference between the collective family unit and individuals in the family

### The Church: Refers to the Body of People

- Called the assembly or congregation – Matt 16:18; Acts 7:38; 19:32
  - A single person was never used to refer to the church
  - Individual Christians were identified as *“Christians”* – Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16
  - The individual was never called *“a church of Christ”*
  - The church was never called *“a Christian Church”*

### Jesus Made a Distinction Between Individuals, a Group of Individuals, and the Church

- Jesus taught about discipline in Matthew 18
  - Go **by yourself** – Individual
  - Take **one or two** more – A Group of Individuals
  - Bring it to **the church** – The Congregation
- There is a difference!

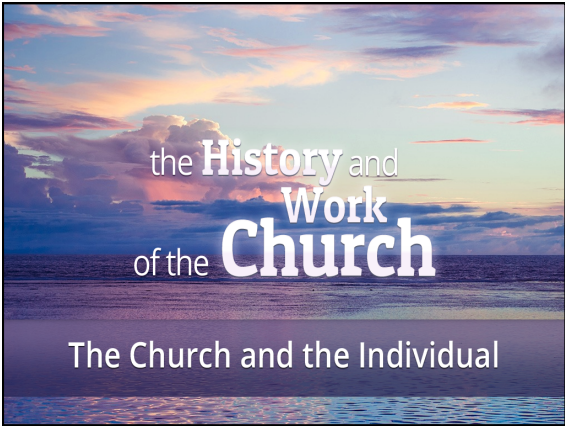
## Paul Made a Distinction Between the Church and Individuals

- In teaching about benevolence – 1 Tim 5
  - *“If any believing **man or woman (individuals)** has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the **church (congregation)** be burdened” (1 Timothy 5:16)*
    - Widows were to be cared for by their family
    - If there was no family, they were to be cared for by the church (if they met certain qualifications)
- There is a difference!

## What the Individual Can Do but the Church Cannot

- To earn a living and provide for family – 1 Tim 5:18
  - The church has no authority to go into business
- To eat, drink, enjoy social activities – 1 Cor 11:22; Rom 15:17
  - The church has no authority to supply these activities
- To run for political office
  - The church has no authority to be involved in politics





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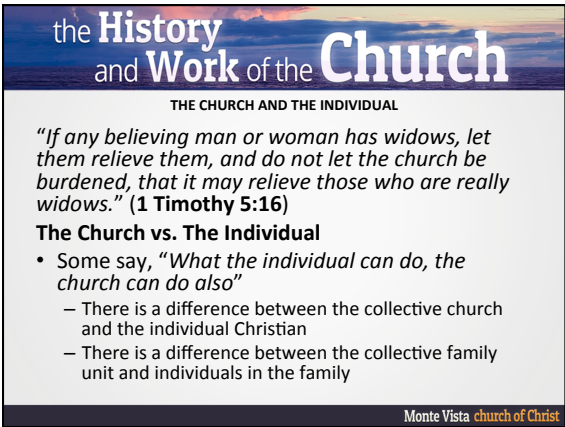
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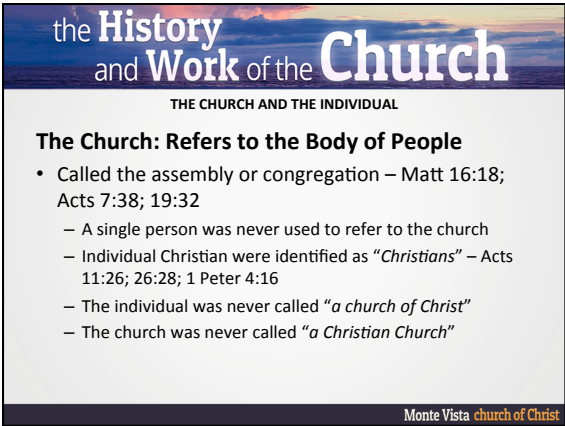
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the History  
and Work of the Church

THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL

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# The Unity of the Church

## Lesson 7

*“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)*

*“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3)*

### Brotherly Unity

- The church of Jesus Christ is not a denomination
- The standard for our authority is the Bible
- Unity can only be obtained by following it

### The Importance of Unity

- Christ prayed for it – John 17
- Demanded by Paul – 1 Cor 1
- Ephesians urged to maintain it – Eph 4:3
- Division dishonors Christ
- ***Let's work together to be of the same mind***

### The Basis for Unity

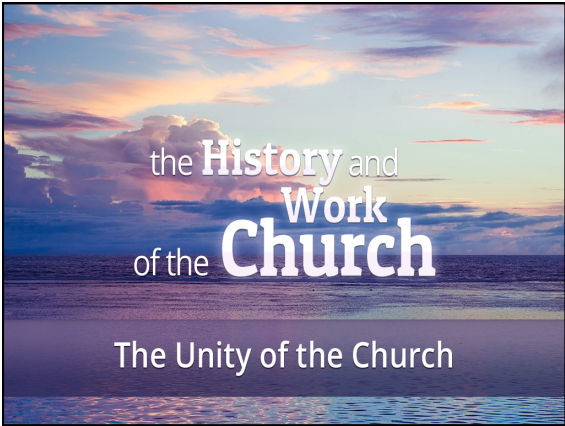
- The Word of God – John 17:17, 20-11
- Believers gathered as **one body** with others – Eph 1:10, 23; Col 1:18, 24

## Unity in the New Testament Church

- “*As many as gladly obeyed the word*” – Acts 2:41
- “*They were added to the church*” – Acts 2:47
- “*They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine*” – Acts 2:42; 4:32
- Paul taught the same thing in all churches – 1 Cor 4:17
- Early churches did not have different names, doctrines, works or worship

## Unity Can Be Maintained Today

- It will take effort on our part – “*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ... **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.*” (Ephesians 4:1–3)
- Remember the One-ness of God – “*There is one **body** and one **Spirit**, just as you were called in one **hope** of your calling; one **Lord**, one **faith**, one **baptism**; one **God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*” (Ephesians 4:4–6)



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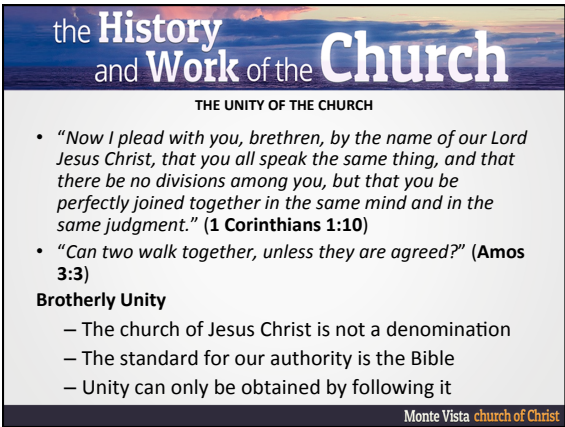
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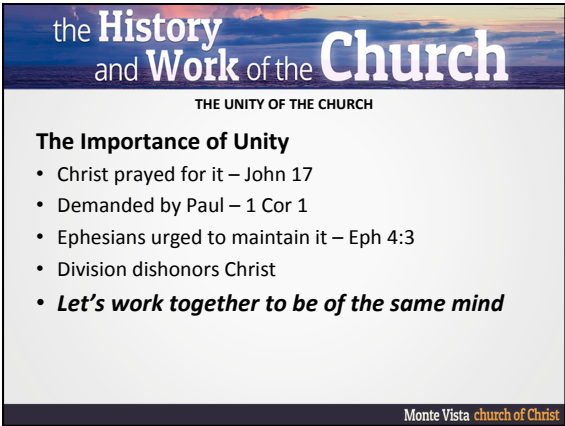
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the History  
and Work of the Church

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

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# Faithfulness in the Church

## Lesson 8

*“... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)*

### Faithfulness is Demanded

- God expects faithfulness until we die
- More than just *“getting on the church roll”*

### Faithfulness Involves

- Trust
- Reliability
- Steadiness

### Faithfulness in Our Attendance

- Coming together for the **Lord’s Supper** – Acts 20:7
- Meeting for **mutual encouragement** – Acts 2:42, 46
- Forsaking is a **habit of some** – Heb 10:24, 25
- We honor Christ and build up each other when we assemble, *why would we want to miss that?*

### Faithful to God’s Word

- God’s Word is our **standard for authority** – Matt 28:18; John 16:13; Eph 3:3
- God’s Word is **sufficient for every good work** – 2 Tim 2:16-17
- We cannot go beyond God’s Word – Gal 1:6-9
- The church is the pillar and ground of the truth – 1 Tim 3:15

## Faithful Stewards of God's Blessings

- We've been entrusted with blessings – 1 Cor 4:1-2
- We must be good stewards – Matt 25:14-30
- Busy working for the Lord – Luke 12:42-43
- Using material resources to glorify God – 2 Cor 9:6-8; Eph 5:28
- Using time wisely – Eph 5:28
- Elders are considered special stewards – Titus 1:7

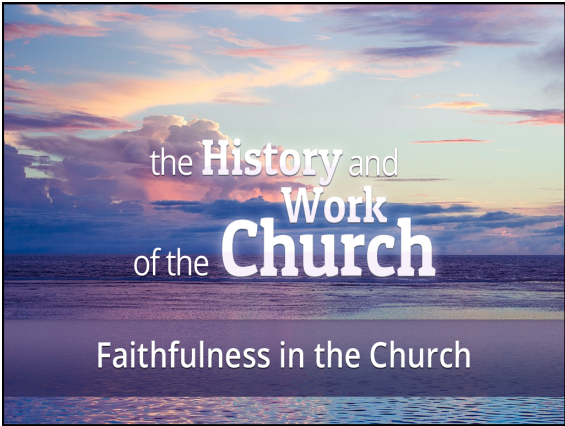
## Faithful in Our Daily Lives

- We're living sacrifices **daily** – Rom 12:1-2
- Faithful in our homes – Acts 8:1-3
- Faithful in our business dealings and relationships – Rom 12:11-17
- ***The world is watching, and so is God!***

## Faithfulness Involves Spiritual Growth

- No one can be faithful **and** stagnant
- Christians who are not growing are not okay – Heb 5:12-14
- Grow in the Word like little babies with milk – 1 Pet 2:2
- No longer babes in Christ – *“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)*





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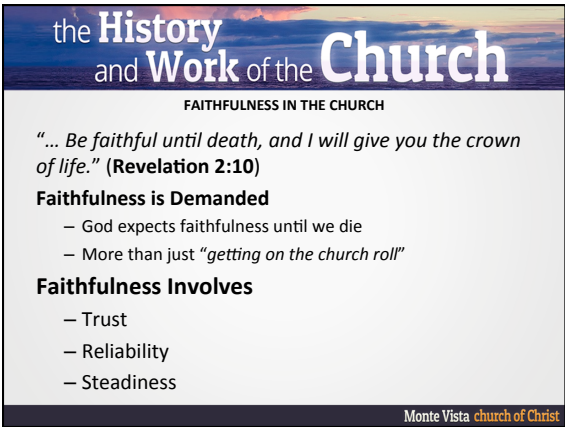
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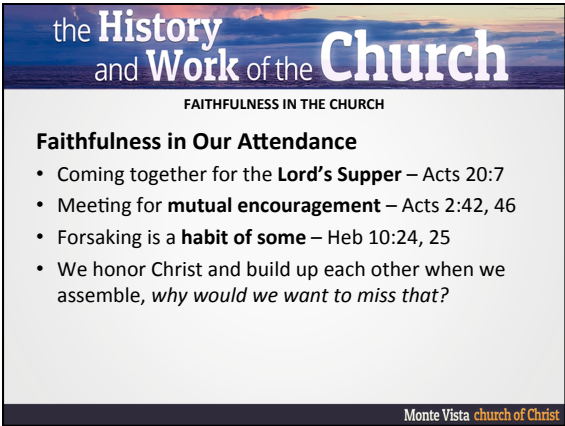
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the History  
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# Dangers to the Church

## Lesson 9

*“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.” (2 Peter 2:1)*

### The Dangers of Liberalism/Institutionalism

- Liberalism: *“a loose attitude regarding the authority of the scriptures”*
- We must have a pattern – Heb 8:5
- Liberalism appeals to the **silence** of the scripture
  - *“It doesn’t say that we can’t do this or that”*
  - *“Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”—**to whom we gave no such commandment**—” (Acts 15:24)*
  - Liberalism looses where God has bound – Matt 16:19

### The Dangers of Traditionalism

- The Pharisees were guilty of this
  - *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:8–9)*
- The attitude that says, *“I’ve always done it this way so it must be right”* and *“If we change the way we do things, we’re wrong”*

## The Dangers of Worldliness

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15)*

*“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)*

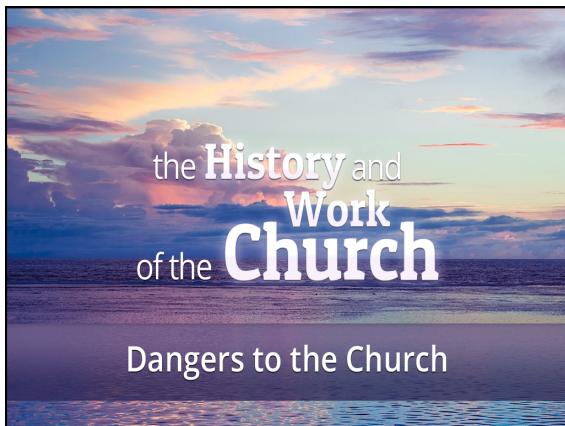
- The rich young ruler allowed **things** to stand in his way – Matt 19:16-22
- Demas forsook Paul, *“having loved this present world”* (2 Tim 4:9)

## The Dangers of Formalism and Emotionalism

- **Formalism**: worship becomes stale and stagnant
  - Just *“going through the motions”*
  - Without feeling or meaning – John 4:23-24
- **Emotionalism**: a misunderstanding of spiritual things
  - Seeks testimonies so faith rests in emotional stories
  - Believes in spiritual gifts like tongue-speaking
  - Showing **zeal** without **knowledge** - Rom 10:2
  - Spiritual gifts have ceased – 1 Cor 12-14

## The Dangers of Indifference

- Something we can all struggle with – 1 Cor 10:12
- The **lukewarm** will be spit out – Rev 3:15-16
- Some are indifferent toward
  - Worldliness – 1 John 2:15
  - False Teachers – Matt 7:15
- Preachers, elders, and all the members need to be on guard – Acts 20:28



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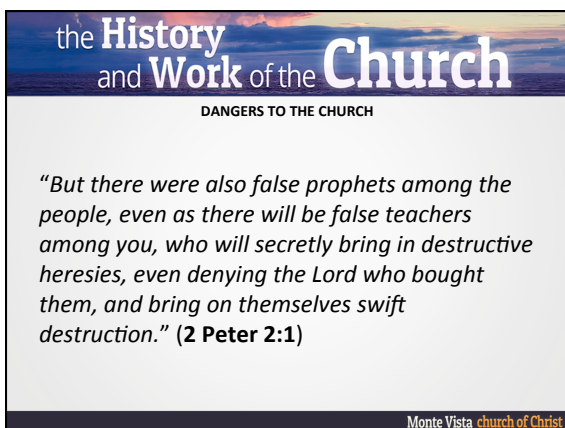
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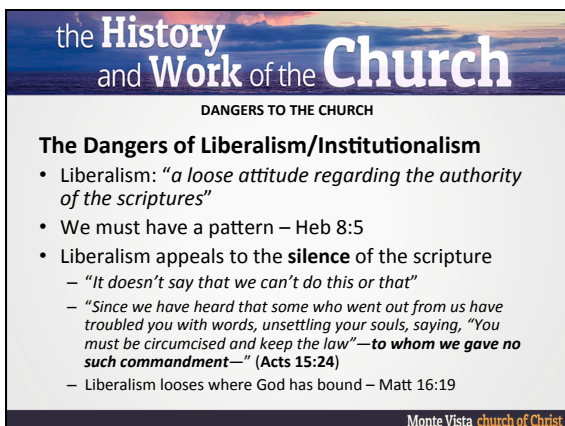
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