

What Kind of Church? Part 2 "Then There Were Eight!"

Doing a short "defining" add-on!

So far... **We want to be a Church that gets in the way of evil without falling into it!** Easy to get smudged when you are "reaching into the fire" but must hate having your garments spotted by the flesh." **Jude 1.23** We want to go into the furnace and come out without the smell of fire!" **Dan 3.27**

Without falling... "We were chosen out of the world! We are in it but we are no longer of it!" **J15.9 17.15ff** "Once we have escaped the pollution of the world through Jesus we should not be entangled in it again!" **2Peter 2:20** "We are new creatures with a ministry of reconciliation sent in to influence our culture!" **2Cor 5.17**

"When it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to!" –Falkland

Want to be a Church that is soul winning w/o being one-dimensional! "I use all means to save some. And I do it for the sake of the gospel... and don't you know that runners run to receive a prize so run to obtain it (them)! Every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things... I run with certainty... I keep my flesh in check so that when I have preached to others, I don't get cast aside!" **1Cor10.22-27 framework of evangelism!**

"We use all the notes on the scale... all the colors on the palette... to draw people to Jesus!"

Want to be a Church that stands up thru anything and that falls for nothing! Stands by the power and grace of God in tough, tougher and extreme times! And falls for nothing because we are properly equipped by God's with His Spirit, power and discerning mind! We have the mind of Christ **1Cor 2.16**, and we mind the things of the Spirit! **Rom 8.5** "The Lord is my refuge... He will deliver me... I will not be afraid of terror in darkness nor attack in the daylight. A thousand will fall at my side, and ten thousand at my right hand; but it will not come near me because the Lord is my refuge!" **Psalms 91.2-9** "Many false prophets will rise and deceive many. And because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold." **Matt 24.11,12**

Want to be a Church that is discerning without being condemning! We judge behavior/words but we try no one to pass judgment (condemnation)... Because there is now no condemnation! People can make you mad, sad, and deeply disappointed... But never judge them as "finished" or count God out!

Let's also be a Church... That stands as a refuge without becoming a resort! "Come as you are" is a true value for us... whosoever, whatsoever, however! **J3.16** We are a safe place, but on the move! "I do not condemn you; go and sin no more!" **J8.11** (neither do we/let's go!) God has an expectation that every graft He makes, grows and bears fruit! We are the "Branches on the Vine" of life! **J15.1-8** "Herein is God glorified, that you bear much fruit... and that your fruit remains..." **John 15.8,15**

So, we are a refuge for people "as they are," and we help them, 1Peter 4.10, to be transformed into the image of Jesus!

That loves Israel without being Jewish! Never called to be Jewish converts! Paul was willing to be separated from Christ if it meant his brothers could be Christians! **Romans 9.1-5** Not called to keep the rituals! "debtor to do the whole law!" **Gal 5.3** The entire book of Galatians written to keep us in the freedom of Christ! "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" **Ps122.6** *Not absence of trouble, but peace in it!*

The promise that God will "bless those who bless, and curse those who curse..." was made to Abraham *the father of all who respond to God by faith!* **Romans 4.11,12** The Chosen People (**Deut 7.6-11**) were not chosen because they were special... they became special because they had a covenant promise, one that we have inherited!

Let's also be a Church... That is loving without being enabling! Caring is what God does best! "We cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us!" **1Pet 5.7** Benevolence is embedded in caring but it is not the original entitlement plan! We give to those in genuine need... We do not glean our fields... **Deut 24.21**

When you harvest the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean after the reapers: leave the left-overs for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And I command you to do this thing so that you will remember that you too were slaves (and hungry) in the land of Egypt. **Deut 24.21,22** "Don't be *wicked* and withhold, give with *a willing heart* because for this very thing the Lord will *bless* you in all your works and in all you put your hand to. You will never be without the poor so I command you to *open your hand wide* to your brothers and to the poor and to the needy in the land!" **Deut 15.11**

"The poor you always have with you, and whenever you want to you can do them good!" **Mk 14.7** They will "never cease:" NOT BECAUSE GOD CREATED THEM TO BE POOR... But because there is always someone broke, broken, breaking, devastated, victimized, distracted...

The Good News is that they don't have to stay that way!

We will always help the genuinely needy... But we are discerning of our entitlement society... Where many can make more "asking" than working! "If a man will not work, let him not eat!" **2Thess 3.10, Gen 3.19** If a person can afford cigarettes and beer, cable and smartphones at today's prices... He has *sources* enough for food/gas!

That is real without compromising for societal relevance! "You're killing my ADHD!" "If you can't say it in 20, you don't know what you're saying!" "If you can't say it in 20, catch me next time!" But we can watch a movie for two hours, play a game for six and text endlessly! "*Study to show yourself approved...*" **2T2.15** His words are *spirit and life!* **J6.63**

We can change the words we use to deliver the gospel... But we can't change, or exclude, the whole truth of the gospel! The American Selfie Gospel would make the hedonistic Corinthian Church blush! The early Church would have a hard time identifying the gospel in America! WW Church knows nothing of the American "misapplied grace" gospel!

There's obviously more... but let's be the church that looks like it belongs to Jesus! [Communion]