

What If I Wanted My Church To Be Stronger #2

Part 2 – I Will Make Others Stronger

Introduction; Some things are important.

- A. There are many things in life that are important.
1. Some are more important than others. The necessities of life are food, clothing and shelter. These are perhaps among the most important.
 2. Other important things are our family, our nation, our jobs and our freedoms. If we have these things we are very blessed. Many do not have all of these.
 3. Many would make other things very important. They would be things like leisure, pleasure, money, TV and movies and friends and a good future. While all of these are nice they are certainly not necessities.
- B. God's word tells us that other things are more important.
1. A **good name** in scripture is a good reputation and character. It is being known for our patience and righteousness and helpfulness. To the Jews the day of their death was better than the day of their birth if they had developed a good name.
 2. *Ecc1 7:1 A good name is better than precious ointment, And the day of death than the day of one's birth;*
 3. *Prov 22:1 A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.*
 4. Jesus acknowledged that we need food, clothing and shelter. He recognized that most of the world worried about those things. Yet he said to seek first **God's kingdom (the church) and His righteousness.**
 5. *Matt 6:31-34 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek, For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*
 6. Many make preparations for the future, and we should. Yet many live in the future and do not take care of the things of the present. We must be careful to not over prepare for this world and neglect **preparing for heaven.**
 7. *Lu12:18-21 "So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*
 8. We also see that **God's word** is very important. Martha though preparing food and serving was more important than listening to God's word. But she was wrong.
 9. *Lu10:40-42 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*
- C. The **Lord's church** should be very important to all of us.
1. The church is the **body of Christ** (Eph 1:22-23) and the **kingdom of God** —Rev 1:9, Matt 3:2, 13:31. It is the **family of God** (Eph 2:19) and the **army of Christ** —Eph 6:10 ff., Phil 2:25, 2 Tim 2:3.
 2. There are many others illustration of the church. They all signify how important it is. The Lord's church is made up of faithful Christians in all times and all places.
 3. To the world the church and God's word is foolishness —1 Cor 1:18-31. Yet to angels and spiritually

minded men the church displays God's great wisdom.

4. *Eph 3:10-11 ...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*

D. This means that our **local church** is very important.

1. The church on earth is local, independent, self-governing congregations. Some think they are part of the spiritual church but not a local church. This is wrong.
2. We must be an active part of a local congregation and do the things God commands the saints and local congregations to do. Paul knew how important a local church was.
3. *Acts 9:26-28 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.*
4. Paul did not get mad. He did not go off and start his own church. He did not just leave Jerusalem.
5. He worked to join the local church (after being added to the universal church when he was baptized —Act 2:41 & 47) and be an active part of it.
6. *1 Cor 12:12-14 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 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. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.*
7. The church is Christ' body. We are all members or parts. We all have obligations and work to do. If we do not do our part then the body (local church) is crippled.

E. We will consider making the church strong.

1. Last week we considered what we can do personally to make our church strong. We must strive to be stronger and more active and more useful ourselves.
2. Today we will consider making our church stronger by helping others to be stronger. The goal is to make the local church here in Clearwater stronger to do the Lord's will. The church here isn't as strong as it could be.

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1. **First, I would make myself stronger for the church.**

A. First we will review quickly the points from last week's lesson.

1. Just as we can grow stronger physically by eating better and exercising, we can grow stronger spiritually too. We should all want to be stronger as servants of God.
2. *2 Pet 3:18 ...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever.*
3. The church depends on me. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Am I the weak link? Our am I growing and working to pull my own weight?
4. I should be very active in the church. I should be putting into practice the things I learn from God's word. I should be a good example to others. **How active would my local church be if everyone did as much as I do?**
5. *Matt 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

B. What must I do to make myself stronger for the church? (From Rom 12:6-8.)

1. I will develop my skills as a **teacher**. I may not be a good public teacher. However I can teach privately or teach children.
2. I will try to **serve**. I will try to do more in helping others. I will phone the sick, send cards to the discouraged, visit the shut-in and help the needy.
3. I will work at **exhorting** or encouraging others. I will help them when they are weak or discouraged or overburdened. I will not just think of myself.
4. I will **give liberally** when I am able. If I do well in business I will liberally support the work of the church and the needy.
5. I will provide **leadership with diligence** if this is my talent. I will not do so for self-glorification or power but to do good for the Lord and His people.
6. I will **show mercy with cheerfulness**. The church needs members who are forgiving and kind. I will be like

this and not cause trouble and upset the group.

7. I recognize that there are many things that I cannot do. No one can do, nor should they try to do, everything. However I will find out what my skill or talent is and do it with all my might.
 8. Again, **how strong and active would the church here be if everyone was as strong and active as I am?**
 9. *Ecc1 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.*
- C. I must be active in the work of the Lord if I want my church to be strong and endure.

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11. Second, I would help others to be stronger for the church.

- A. There are some things I must do to make the church stronger by helping others be strong.
1. We are the body of Christ. We all have work that we should be doing. We are the family of God. We must be concerned about one another as a family.
 2. We must have unity and work together. This is based on the word of God. The N.T. tells us how to worship and serve the Lord. We need to do this together —Eph 4:1-7.
- B. God expects us to band together and work together.
1. God created man to be a social creature. He intended people to work together. In the very beginning He made Eve for Adam. God declared that man needed someone to help him.
 2. *Gen 2:18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*
 3. Even great men have sometimes been alone in the midst of many people. They have felt the burden of trying to do something alone.
 4. *Num 11:14-15 "I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. 15 If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now; if I have found favor in Your sight; and do not let me see my wretchedness!"*
 5. Moses was overwhelmed with the burden of caring for the Israelites about leading them out of Egypt. Jehovah told Moses to appoint 70 elders to help him with the work.
 6. Likewise one person cannot carry on all the work of the Lord in a local congregation. The more that help, the more work that can be done and the less discouragement of feeling alone.
 7. When Jesus sent out men to preach, He sent them out two by two. In the book of Acts most of the work was done by two or more Christians.
 8. *Mark 6:7 And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.*
 9. *Luke 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.*
 10. *Acts 8:14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,*
 11. Every Christian in a local congregation has work he can be doing. We need to work together and encourage one another.
 12. *Ecc1 4:9-12 Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*
- C. There are many things we can do to support and strengthen one another.
1. One important is that we can pray for one another. There are many needs that brethren have. We need to know one another well enough to be able to pray for each one's particular needs.
 2. Paul prayed for many people and many local congregations. He often asked them to pray for us him and those with him. He did not ask for prayers for support or peace but for opportunities to preach the Gospel. We need to pray this same thing for preachers and elders and teachers (and one another) today.
 3. *2 Thess 3:1-2 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.*
 4. *Eph 6:18-19 ...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints; 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,*
 5. Jesus taught us to pray for God to deliver us from evil (the evil one) in Matthew 6:13. We cannot do this

alone but only with the help of God. Jesus also prayed for His disciples to not fall but stand against Satan. We need to pray this for one another as well.

6. *Luke 22:31-32 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*
 7. John prayed that Gaius' health would prosper as much as his soul did. We should pray for one another's health. We may not want to connect the physical health of some with their spiritual health. They might get worse. It says a lot of Gaius that John could pray this.
 8. *3 John 1:2 Beloved (Gaius), I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*
 9. We need to give thanks for the brethren and for the church. If we were really grateful for the church we will try to do more in helping it grow and become stronger.
 10. *1 Thess 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,*
 11. Part of what we pray for the church is that the members be filled with knowledge, wisdom and spiritual understanding. We pray that each one of us to walk properly and put first things first in our lives.
 12. *Col 1:9-10 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*
 13. When Simon the sorcerer sinned Peter and John told him to repent and pray for forgiveness. He then asked John and Peter to also pray for him. We need to pray for each other's spiritual well-being.
 14. *Acts 8:24 Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."*
 15. There are many other things we can pray for each other. As brethren we need to be concerned for each other's well being, both physically and spiritually.
- D. If I want my church to be stronger I will attend the services faithfully and participate.
1. Whether saints should attend **all** the services of the Lord's body is a much debated topic among the Lord's people.
 2. Many question whether they either 1) **need** to or 2) **have** to attend all the scheduled services —usually Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening.
 3. Many feel that once on Sunday, to partake of the Lord's supper, is all that is required and all that they need —and/or want.
 4. Certainly there are other reasons that we come together as the church. Someone has therefore asked the question, **"Why wouldn't I want to meet with the saints whenever they assemble?, Why would I want to miss?"**
 5. Christians are those with whom we will spend eternity with. Shouldn't we want to spend more time with them here in this life?
 6. God expects His saints to spend time together. We cannot do the things God commands us to do to one another just seeing each other once a week. Likewise that cannot all be done in the public assembly.
 7. *1 Pet 4:8-10 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*
 8. *Heb 3:12-13 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*
 9. We assemble for many reasons. They do not all concern us personally. Some say they can learn more studying at home than attending Bible study. They are thinking too much of themselves. We should do both.
 10. *Heb 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*
 11. Notice that the writer does not say our assembling is just for ourselves. It is to stir up one another to love and good works. Many are encouraged by knowing they are not alone.
 12. We assemble to worship God as His people. We assemble to prepare ourselves for heaven where we will spend eternity worshipping Him —see Revelation 4 & 5.
 13. However we also assemble to exhort and encourage one another. We come together whenever we can because we love one another and want each one to be saved. We come out not just for ourselves but for others.

E. We see we must work together to strengthen one another to do the Lord's work.

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Conclusion: Having a strong church is very important.

A. This means I must work to make it strong.

1. I make sure I am strong and doing the things I should do.
2. I will encourage and help others be strong so the church can do the most it can in the service of the Lord.

B. I begin to make the Lord's church strong by becoming a Christian.

1. I must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. I then must repent of my sins and turn from them. I will then be buried with Christ in baptism to wash away my sins and become a new creature in Christ —Act 22:16, Rom 6:3-7, 2 Cor 5:17, etc. I must then grow stronger.
2. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
3. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

C. If we can help anyone in their responsibility to the Lord, please let us.