

# Pr Mark Turner: The Purpose of the Church (28/4/18)

Matthew 16:17,18 - Jesus promises that He will build *His* church. This assumes that He identifies the church as His own.

That does NOT mean that there are no problems in the church! There are plenty!! But this does not mean that it is not Jesus' church (just because there are problems in it).

## Paradigm Shift:

Pr Mark saw a magazine when he was with a friend years ago which changed his perspective. There was a quote on the cover that said:

"It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

It was like the voice of God encouraging Him to stay with the organised church (instead of cursing it).

Matthew 16:18b - "The gates of Hades (death) will not prevail against it."

- The church is in a conflict
- The gates of hell represent Satan's Kingdom
- The church is on the offensive - as an army
- The church is now militant, but will one day be triumphant. It will go "conquering and to conquer" (to use the language of the book of Revelation)

As a church we should see ourselves as having a mission!

## Our Official Mission Statement:

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to call all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting gospel embraced by the three angels' messages (Revelation 14:6-12), and to prepare the world for Christ's soon return.

## Main Points:

### 1. Our Message: Revelation 14:6-12

Christ is the central theme of our message

The 'Good News' is spelled out in verse 7

- Most of the verse is 'good advice:' *Fear God, Give Glory, Worship Him.*
- But the 'Good News' is *The hour of His judgment is come.*
- Revelation 6:9,10 - This is the context for the good news - justice in the context of oppression.
- Revelation 14:7 - "to those who dwell on the earth" = a technical title in the book of Revelation for God's enemies (if you look up every reference to this phrase in Revelation you will find that it is constantly talking about those who oppress and oppose God's people).

- Revelation 6:10 - "those who dwell on the earth" = enemies.

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them. Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, "even at the doors." Let us read and understand before it is too late." - Ellen G White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol 9, pp. 19-20

Babylon falling is the result that we, as a church, are to be preparing 'the people of the earth' for.

## **2. Our Mission: Luke 1:17**

Luke 1:15-17 - Repentance, warning, preparation for the second coming - these are our mission.

- 1 John 3:2,3 - Upon the second coming we will be "like Him" (character)
- Matthew 5:8 - Pure in heart will see God
- Hebrews 12:14 - Peace and Holiness

"It is not the main job of the church to turn out a lot of work, to list a long string of members, or raise a lot of money. It is the main job of the church to fashion people who behave like Jesus Christ — and they cannot be hewn out of the mediocre mass wholesale, but only one by one." - Sam Shoemaker

- Christlikeness is the goal
- This happens one by one - not wholesale

## **3. Our Method: Matthew 28:18-20**

- Making disciples is the method
- Training, teaching, coaching, mentoring

Mark 3:13-15 - Jesus called, appointed, asked them to follow Him, *then* sent them out.

"We learn to follow Christ by following the example of His people." Pr Mark (1 Corinthians 11:1)

"We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organisations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organisation. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men." – E. M. Bounds – *Power Through Prayer*

**Commitment:**

Mentored and mentoring.

**"The Parable Of The Lifesaving Station"**

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea. With no thought for their safety, they went out day or night tirelessly rescuing the lost. Many lives were saved so the station became famous.

Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding areas, wanted to become associated with the station. They gave of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews were trained, and the little lifesaving station grew.

Some of the new members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. They replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building.

Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it as a sort of club. Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on lifesaving missions, so they hired life boat crews to do this work. The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the club's decorations, and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where club initiations were held.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet and half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick, and the beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities because they thought it was unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club.

But some members insisted that lifesaving was their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still a lifesaving station after all. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast, which they did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another lifesaving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that coast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent, but most of the people drown.