

07-15-18

Series: The Book of Romans

FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD

(94A)

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[Romans 3:21-5:21](#)

(Continuation from 07/08/18)

II. The Purpose of the Church –

What are we supposed to do?

Introduction: The purpose(s) of the local church are derived by looking at New Testament commands given to the disciples (who were the “**foundation stones**” of the church – [Ephesians 2:20](#)) and other instructions given to individual churches or church leaders.

[Ephesians 2:20 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁰ “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*.”

A. Central Passage – “The Great Commission” ([Matthew 28:19-20](#))

[Matthew 28:19-20 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

– [Matthew 28:19-20](#) (and the similar “commissions” in [Mark 16:15](#); [Luke 24:45-47](#) and [Acts 1:8](#)) are central to the church’s purpose.

[Mark 16:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

[Luke 24:45-47 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴⁵ “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

⁴⁶ and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

[Acts 1:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

They were spoken by Christ, the Head of the church ([Matthew 28:18](#)).

[Matthew 28:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

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They were spoken to the first leaders of the church ([Matthew 28:16](#)).

[Matthew 28:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“**But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.**”

And these words were spoken at the crucial time just after Christ arose and before He ascended.

– [Matthew 28:19-20](#) is examined here because it is the most comprehensive of the “**commission**” passages.

[Matthew 28:19-20 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹“**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,**

²⁰**teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**”

1. The Command – “**Go and make disciples**”

a. These two words combine to make a single command that describe what we, the church, are to be doing. (“**Go**” is a participle and some preferred to translate it “**going**.” But its position in the sentence before the command makes it grammatically linked to “**make disciples**.” Thus, it is probably meant as a double command – “**Go and make disciples**.”).

b. “**Go**” means that we must take the initiative. Evangelism is required to accomplish the task of disciple-making.

c. “**Make disciples**” means “**make followers, learners**.” This seems to include the entire process of helping a person understand the gospel of salvation through Christ and then to help them grow as a Christian.

The church (every person in it) is responsible for carrying out this command. Every ministry in a church must be part of the process of disciple-making.

2. The Means – “**Baptizing, Teaching**”

- **How are disciples made?** It’s more than just sharing the gospel. When a person trusts in Christ as Savior, he/she has just begun to be a disciple. These two words explain the means by which Christians grow as disciples.

a. “**Baptizing**” – Public identification with Christ

- This refers to water baptism, since it is the disciples who are doing it. Water baptism in the New Testament follows salvation and publicly shows our identification with Christ. This is a necessary step in disciple making. In fact, one does not find an unbaptized believer in Scripture after the church begins ([Acts 2:41, etc.](#)). Baptism will be discussed more under “**Ordinances**.”

[Acts 2:41 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴¹“**So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.**”

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b. “Teaching” – Learning the scripture for the purpose of applying it
- The teaching of God’s Word is with the goal that people obey it (“teaching them to observe” = do).

2 Timothy 3:15-17 – “know the Holy Scriptures” -----> “reproof, correction, training”

2 Timothy 4:2 – “Preach the Word” -----> “reprove, rebuke, exhort”

James 1:22 – “doers of the Word and not hearers only”

James 1:22 (NASB)

²²“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

B. A local church purpose statement

- A local church is responsible to carry out, among its people and in areas of influence, the purposes that God has for the universal church. Baptizing is one part of that responsibility (to be discussed). The rest of the church’s purpose involves teaching the Word of God to accomplish various goals. The following is a suggested purpose statement of a local church.

STATEMENT: To Glorify God by *Reaching* people with the gospel, *Building* them in their relationship with God and *Involving* them in God’s plan (example).

To “**Glorify God**” is the overall purpose. The Bible says “*Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*” (**1 Corinthians 10:31** NIV).

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NASB)

³¹“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

In other words, any effort of a church must serve not to promote itself but God’s greatness.

However, a local church should seek to glorify God in the following ways:

1. Reaching (Acts 11:19-21; Ephesians 4:11)

Acts 11:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹“So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.

²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and *began* speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.

²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.”

Ephesians 4:11 (NASB)

¹¹“And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers.”

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God has provided the way so that a person can go to heaven and know it. Christ died to pay for our sin. We can go to heaven if we place our trust in Christ's death for us ([John 3:16](#)).

[John 3:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

That truth is central to why a church exists. A church must effectively present the Gospel in various ministries and train others to do so personally. Part of the task includes taking that message around the world through missionaries.

But once a person is *reached* with the Gospel, God obviously has more in mind for their life...

2. Building ([Acts 11:22-26](#); [Ephesians 4:11-16](#))

[Acts 11:22-26 \(NASB\)](#)

²²“The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch.

²³ Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and *began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord;*

²⁴ *for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.*

²⁵ *And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul;*

²⁶ *and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”*

[Ephesians 4:11-16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

¹² *for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*

¹³ *until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

¹⁴ *As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;*

¹⁵ *but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,*

¹⁶ *from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”*

“**Building**” refers to the spiritual process of God bringing the growth and change that we need in our lives. How can a church help to encourage that work of God?

Worship – We exist not for our benefit, but God’s glory. So worship must please God by giving God the credit He deserves for His greatness. God cannot “**grow**” us without an intimate relationship with us. Personal and group worship encourages us to develop that relationship with God.

Instruction – The food we need to grow spiritually is God’s Word the Bible ([1 Peter 2:2](#)). That’s why Bible teaching must be central in a local church. A church must provide biblical truth that each person needs and even more importantly to encourage people to study God’s Word for themselves.

Fellowship – Real spiritual growth requires more than just information. It requires relationships. God has designed that believers need one another to grow. It is through the frustration and diversity of relationships with people that God can best bring us to maturity. So it is essential to have ministries that go beyond a worship service. Personal interaction lets us in on the struggles, joys of other Christians and gives us an opportunity to support each other.

3. Involvement ([Acts 11:27-30](#); [Ephesians 4:11-12](#))

Acts 11:27-30 (NASB)

²⁷ “Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

²⁸ One of them named Agabus stood up and *began* to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the *reign* of Claudius.

²⁹ And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send *a contribution* for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

³⁰ And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.”

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”

Sometimes people in churches assume that ministry is the job of paid professionals – the pastors and staff. It’s not. God has called every believer to be involved in ministry. He has given every person certain “**spiritual gifts**” – supernatural abilities to serve/help others in some way. Instead of leaders *doing* most of the ministry, their real role is to *equip* people for ministry ([Ephesians 4:11-12](#)). Ministry is not an issue of mere duty. It’s a matter of gratefully using the gifts/abilities God gives us.