FBCPANHANDLE

SERMON REFLECTION GUIDE

Christian Doctrine, Part 11: God's People (The Doctrine of the Church)
Acts 2:42-47, Ephesians 3:10 - October 25, 2026

SERMON OUTLINE

Intro - Is salvation *individual*? Or *corporate*? Or some form of *both*?
Hitting 104mph fastballs as a product of a lifetime of commitment and training.
Jesus makes big promises about the church on the basis of *Peter's Confession* - Matthew 16
The Holy Spirit keeps those promises about the church through *Peter's Preaching* - Acts 2

A. What Does the Church Do?

- Remarkably simple - from the beginning, the community of Jesus followers has been: *gathering* together in large and small groups, *teaching* the Bible, *praying/caring* for one another, *meeting needs*, *baptizing* the saved, *praising* God, taking *Lord's Supper*.
- In these simple acts - "through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to rulers and authorities in the heavenly places." - Ephesians 3:10

B. What is the Church NOT?

1. A State

- "My Kingdom is not of this world." - Jesus to Pilate (John 18:36)
- The early church was not recognized as legitimate (much less conflated with) by the Roman Empire or traditional Judaism.
- The Danger: *Christian Nationalism*, state-sponsored/required faith (theocracy)

2. A Business

- "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." - John 2:16
- The size of some churches requires them to operate like a corporation - requiring certain levels of revenue to keep the behemoth moving.
- The Danger: *Consumerism* - exacerbating individualism through entertainment, etc.

If the church gives in to either of these dangers, we lose our ability to be a ***disruptive witness*** in the world. We want a gospel that disrupts worldly structures, not to be in league with them.

C. What is the Church?

3. The Body of Christ

- Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. - 1 Cor. 12:27
- Different people with different gifts *work together* to accomplish the Great Commission.

4. The Bride of Christ

- The marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; - Rev. 19:7
- The church only has eyes for Jesus, and we await his return and our eternal union.

5. Brothers/Sisters in Christ

- Αδελφοί (*adelphoi*) - the plural for "brother", but representing all brothers and sisters in the church - this word is used for the church many times in the NT.
- …that [Jesus] might be the firstborn among many brothers. - Romans 8:29

If God is real, and the gospel is true, and the saints are called into the church… *why is lukewarm church participation the dominant American Christian position*?
Being an active, committed part of the Body of Christ is to be part of something significant right now that also reaches all the way into eternity!

A Call for Covenant Members & Non-Members of FBC!

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SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does being faithfully active in the church slowly prepare us to react as Christians as we go through life in this world?
2. How does the modern church resemble the early church in Acts 2? How does it differ? Does that matter?
3. What is the danger of conflating the church with political power?
4. What is the danger of operating the church primarily as a corporate or business entity?
5. What does it mean to be a “disruptive witness” in this world? How can the church maintain its ability to push back against sinful worldly structures?
6. If the church is the body of Christ, what is your gifting that would allow you to serve the body? Are you serving in that way?
7. Do you see your fellow church members as akin to family, brothers and sisters? Why or why not?
8. Is it important to be formally committed to and active in a biblically faithful local church?