

# ☞ Why the Church?

F.O.C.U.S.

## ☞ Purpose of the Church... Reach the Lost

1. Go with Good News & tell others about Jesus
2. Go here, there, and everywhere (even next-door)

What is church all about anyway? Why do we gather on Sunday? Why do we have small groups? What has God called us, the Church, to do?

God has a purpose, a calling, for each and every one of us. Conversion and calling are inseparable. To be saved is to be called.

## ☞ Ephesians 4:11-13      Our F.O.C.U.S.

Until – indicates continuance to a specified time, place or degree

*--David Ravenhill... God uses people as his instruments of purpose, and each generation calls for new and different methods. Though the instruments change and the methods vary, God's purpose always remains the same. So what is God's purpose? Ultimately, his purpose is to fill the earth with his glory. (Numbers 14:21; Habakkuk 2:14)*

## 1. ☞ Unity

Unity = oneness

Having the same mind; being one; not uniformity. This is one of the goals of church life. As we grow closer to Christ we can't help but grow closer to each other. We are to make every effort to maintain unity.

☞ What does unity look like?... **love!**

John 13:34-35

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

*-- George Macdonald... Division has done more to hide Christ from the view of all men than all the infidelity that has ever been spoken.*

*--Ronald J. Sider... What happens when God grants the gift of genuine Christian fellowship? Deep, joyful sharing replaces the polite prattle typically exchanged by Christians on Sunday morning. Sisters and brothers begin to discuss the things that really matter to them. They disclose their inner fears, their areas of peculiar temptation, their deepest joys.*

There are numerous Scriptures on love and unity

We all reach unity = everyone; not just some; not just believers (so this encompasses last week's message about reaching the lost)

☞ In the faith & knowledge of the Son = to know him personally = **every human being becomes a Christian**

☞ **2 Peter 3:9**

**He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

This is the mission of the church as we discussed last week: to reach the lost. God wants everyone to be saved, so until he returns, the church exists to reach the lost. "Until we all reach unity;" everyone is saved and loving each other as God loves us.

## 2. ☞ **Spiritual Maturity**

Become mature = **complete; fully grown**; not lacking any moral quality; typically this deals with one's behavior – to behave like an adult

Usually translated "**perfect**"

Here is another goal of church life. We are to help everyone come to maturity and complete wholeness. This is the outcome of the process we call "sanctification."

☞ **Colossians 1:28**

**We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.**

The church will exist until Christ returns or until everyone comes to complete maturity and is perfect. Talk about job security!

What does this spiritual maturity look like?

☞ **James 3:2**

If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is **a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**

Luke 8:14 (contrast lack of maturity)

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

Ephesians 4:14 (**not deceived**)

☞ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

James 1:4

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything

--Erwin W. Lutzer... *There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity. It takes time to be holy.*

--Warren W. Wiersbe... *To be "spiritually minded" simply means to look at earth from heaven's point of view. The spiritually minded believer makes his decisions on the basis of eternal values and not the passing fads of society.*

Hebrews 5:14

☞ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to **distinguish good from evil**

--Charles R. Swindoll... *One of the marks of spiritual maturity is the quiet confidence that God is in control ... without the need to understand why he does what he does.*

--John MacNaughton... *Maturity begins to grow when you can sense your concern for others outweighing your concern for yourself.*

--Oswald Chambers... *Maturity is the stage where the whole life has been brought under the control of God.*

"Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature;" complete; fully grown; perfect.

### 3. ☞ **Fullness of Christ**

Fullness = a total quantity; abundance; filled with the presence, power, agency, and riches of God and of Christ; comes from the idea of filling a ship before a voyage

Here is the ultimate goal for all believers: that we may be completely filled with and ☞ **overflowing with God himself.**

Attaining the whole measure = complete height; not short of anything

What does fullness look like? To be some filled with Christ that we think like him and behave like him in every situation, without fail. It means dying to self so that Christ can live through you!

☞ **Galatians 2:20**

**I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.**

Luke 9:23-24

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

### ☞ John 3:30

**He must become greater; I must become less.**

This is a life-long process.

*A father and his small son strolled down the street in Chicago past the place where a skyscraper was being constructed. Glancing up, they saw men at work on a high story of the building. "Father," said the little boy, "What are those little boys doing up there?" "Those are not little boys, son. They're grown men." "But why do they look so small?" "Because they're so high," his father answered. After a pause the boy asked, "Then, Father, when they get to heaven there won't be anything left of them, will there?" ...The nearer we come to Christ the less others see of us and the more they see of Christ.*

Let's take a closer look at what this fullness looks like.

- ☞ **The mind and attitude of Christ is one of humility and service.**
- **The will of Christ is to always please the Father.**
- **His heart is compassionate and merciful.**
- **The work of Christ is found in Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**
- **Similar to his work, we find the purpose of Christ in 1 John 3:8 which says, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."**
- **In the book of Revelation we find Christ's eyes to be like a blazing fire. Many commentaries say this is a descriptive way to say that he is all-knowing. Now, this is a quality that can only be attributed to God. However, his fullness in us could be ☞ described as one of discernment and wisdom. Also, his eyes are constantly watching the Father to see what He is doing...**
- **The mouth of Christ is filled with the Word of God.**
- **Christ's hands were hands of healing and miracles.**

☞ What is the fullness of Christ?

- **His Passion**
- **His Purity**
- **His Power**

This is another part of the mission of the church; to help people become completely filled with Christ; his passion, his purity, his power.

-- Leadership Magazine... The Scriptures often exhort us to be filled with various godly virtues. How do we know if we are "full of goodness" (Rom. 15:14), for example? Think a moment about a water-saturated sponge. If we push down with our finger even slightly, water runs out onto the table. We immediately know what fills the interior pockets of the sponge. The same is true of ourselves. We can tell what fills us on the inside by what comes out under pressure.

So, think about it. Are you filled to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ? When you're under pressure, do you still think and behave like Jesus?

*"To be like Jesus; to be like Jesus; all I ask, to be like him.  
All through life's journey; from earth to glory; all I ask, to be like him."*

☞ This is our **F.O.C.U.S.:** **Fullness Of Christ; Unity; Spiritual Maturity**

All three of these goals are 1) individual 2) church 3) universal

Unity: between you and God; amongst believers; amongst all mankind as we come under the Lordship of Christ

Spiritual maturity: I need to grow; our church should mature; all mankind will mature under the Lordship of Christ

Fullness of Christ: I need to be filled with Christ; our church needs to be filled with Christ; the world needs to be filled with Christ

So, why the church? What's our purpose? To achieve all three of these. To help individuals and the whole world come into unity under God and become spiritually mature, until everyone is completely filled with Christ.

Lacking unity?

- Ask forgiveness from those with whom you are divided
- Ask God to fill you with his love for others, including the lost

Lacking maturity?

- Ask for power to overcome the pressures of this life
- Ask God for perseverance, wisdom, and self-control
- Submit yourself to God

Lacking fullness?

- Ask for grace to crucify your own sinful nature
- Ask God for the fruit of the Spirit in your life
- Ask God for his glory to completely fill you and overflow