



1. REVIEW:

- a. Week 1: theology – the doctrine of God
- b. Week 2: condescension
- c. Week 3: sin and the doctrine of man
- d. Week 4: Christ – His claims and person
- e. Week 5: Christ – His work of salvation

2. “Ecclesiology” – from the Greek word “ekklesia”, meaning congregation or church

- a. the word “church” can be used in various ways...

3. QUESTION: In what different ways do we use the word “church”?

- a. building
- b. organization/institution
- c. spiritual sense
  - i. global
  - ii. historical
  - iii. earthly element vs. heavenly element

4. QUESTION: Can you name a few other commonly used descriptors of the church?

- a. communion of saints
  - i. Psalm 85:8: “Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to **his people**, to **his saints**; but let them not turn back to folly”.
  - ii. Matthew 27:52: “The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of **the saints** who had fallen asleep were raised...”
  - iii. Acts 9:32: “Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to **the saints** who lived at Lydda”.
- b. the elect
  - i. Titus 1:1: “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of **God’s elect** and their knowledge of the truth...”.
- c. body of Christ
  - i. 1 Corinthians 12:27: “Now you are the **body of Christ** and individually members of it”.
  - ii. Ephesians 4:12: “...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the **body of Christ**”.

5. DISCERNMENT

- a. QUESTION: do we know that all who are present on a Sunday morning are actual followers of Christ?

- i. Matthew 7:17-23: “So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”
- b. QUESTION: what does this passage teach us?
  - i. ‘fruit’ in people’s lives
  - ii. Some among us may seem like believers, but will prove not to be
- c. QUESTION: can we KNOW who do and do not belong to Christ?
  - i. only God knows who the elect are

## 6. VISIBLE & INVISIBLE CHURCH

- a. these terms not in Scripture, but help draw a distinction in how we look at the scope and purity of the church
- b. not two churches, but two perspectives
- c. Visible church: the communion of all living men and women who profess faith in Christ, and their children.
  - i. It’s a mixed community. Both wheat/tares, sheep/goats, true believers/non-believers
  - ii. A physical, tangible covenant community. All receive spiritual benefits – even those who are not actually elect
- d. Invisible church: the elect (past/present/future) - the ones whom God alone knows are truly His
  - i. “invisible” does not mean “unreal” - emphasizes that only God knows their identities
- e. these terms of visible and invisible church are also very helpful in understanding other Reformed doctrines including covenant baptism and perseverance of the saints.

## 7. “OTHER” TERMS RELATED TO THE CHURCH

- a. Militant: prior to return of Christ, the church engages in holy warfare in a hostile world. Spiritual and declarative in its warfare, not physical and not legislative.
- b. Triumphant: those who have passed away and gathered to Christ prior to the resurrection. Their battle has been won, they’ve “finished the race”, and now worship Christ in full glory until the end of the present age.

## 8. WORSHIP

- a. QUESTION: what comes to mind when you hear the word “worship”?
  - i. Exodus 4:30-31: “Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and **worshiped**”.

- ii. Exodus 34:8-9: “And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and **worshiped**. And he said, ‘If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance’”.
  - iii. Matthew 2:11: “And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and **worshiped** him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh”.
  - iv. Matthew 15:7-9: “You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they **worship** me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’”.
  - v. Luke 2:37-38: “...she did not depart from the temple, **worshipping** with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem”.
  - vi. John 4:23-24: “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true **worshippers will worship** the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to **worship** him. God is spirit, and those who **worship** him must **worship** in spirit and truth”.
- b. Worship not confined to a single geographic location. Post-Christ, no need for the temple
- c. Spirit & Truth
- i. “Spirit”: means engaging the whole heart, having a passion for God
  - ii. “Truth”: means it must be properly informed
  - iii. *“Both are necessary for God-honoring worship. Spirit without truth leads to a shallow, overly emotional experience that could be compared to a high. As soon as the emotion is over, when the fervor cools, the worship ends. Truth without spirit can result in a dry, passionless encounter that can easily lead to a form of joyless legalism. The best combination of both aspects of worship results in a joyous appreciation of God informed by Scripture”* (author unknown, quote from [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)).
- d. QUESTION: how do we know HOW to structure a Sunday morning worship service?
- i. Normative Principle: anything not specifically prohibited in Scripture
  - ii. Regulative Principle: may only include elements which are expressly commanded in Scripture (or appear to have God’s approval). God is offended by anything in his worship that is not prescribed in his word
  - iii. Deuteronomy 4:1-2: “And now, O Israel, **listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live**, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. **You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you**”.
  - iv. Deuteronomy 12:28-32: “Be careful to **obey all these words that I command you**, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you **do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God**. When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land,

take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.' ***You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it***".

- e. Denominations that tend to follow the normative principle of worship:
  - i. Lutherans
  - ii. Methodists
  - iii. Anglicans
  - iv. charismatic churches
- f. Denominations that tend to follow the regulative principle of worship:
  - i. Presbyterians
  - ii. Reformed Baptists
  - iii. many Anabaptists

## 9. REGULATIVE PRINCIPLE OF WORSHIP

- a. Elements (required in a service)
  - i. prayer
  - ii. preaching of the Word
  - iii. sacraments (baptism & Lord's supper)
  - iv. singing
  - v. reading of Scripture
  - vi. collection of tithes/offerings
  - vii. reciting beliefs (creeds)
  - viii. oaths/vows/laying on of hands
- b. Circumstances (flexibility & latitude)
  - i. style of music and types of instruments used
  - ii. format of service (order of service, high/low liturgical)
  - iii. form of prayer (spontaneous vs. written/read)
  - iv. style and length of preaching
  - v. frequency of communion (weekly, monthly, quarterly)
  - vi. time of the worship service
  - vii. songs to sing (psalms only, hymns, new songs, etc.)
  - viii. use of PowerPoint, bulletins, voice amplification, etc...