

Extreme Church

- What does extreme mean? dictionary definition

(Extreme/ik-`streem) Existing in a very high degree. Exceeding the ordinary, usual and expected. Maximum, radical, to the greatest possible extent. Beyond normal, beyond the norm.

Extreme implies to me – exciting, challenging, cutting edge, out of the comfort zone, doing what other's may fear to do, challenging the status quo (including the established way of doing things)

I'd like to ask you some questions:

- Church - what does church mean to you? [building? Group of people? Both?]
- Why do we need an extreme church?
- What is an extreme church - what are it's characteristics/what does it look like? (Alien visitor's view) What is an extreme church not?
- Who would you find at an extreme church - what characters would you find there? (Who would you allow in, who would you turn away?)
- What would God be delighted to see/not see in an extreme church (Ref Revelation Ch 2-3 - letters to the 7 churches)
 - 1. Ephesus – doing quite well, but - forsaken their first love (Love they once had for one-another and/or for Christ)
 - 2. Smyrna – Church was persecuted by hostile Jews and demands for Roman Emperor worship, yet they remained faithful. Stay faithful and I will give you the crown of life.
 - 3. Pergamum – They were compromising their faith – eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality
 - 4. Thyatira - They were compromising their faith – eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality
 - 5. Sardis – mostly dead church
 - 6. Philadelphia – Doing good
 - 7. Laodicea – luke warm – spit you out!

- If Jesus were to walk in the room right now – what kind of score card would he give us?

- Let's look at: Luke 18:9-14 (passage Dan chose for this evening) - someone read

parable of tax collector/Pharisee – [self-righteous vs. Humble. How do we view other people or visitors to our church? What sort of attitude do we have towards them? Do we sometimes behave like the Pharisee?]

v9 The Pharisee had great confidence in his supposed own righteousness + looked down on everyone else. There are some people in the modern day church who are like this – are you one of them?

V13 “O God be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.” The tax collector recognized his position before God.

God wants people who recognize their need of his mercy.

But this also about how we view others – Romans Ch14 v 1-11 WE MUST NOT LOOK DOWN ON OR JUDGE OTHER PEOPLE. V4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant?

- Why don't we see many extreme churches?
- How do we become an extreme church?
- What are you personally prepared to do to bring about - The Extreme Church? [Rhetorical question – ask yourself in your own time]
- Who would you invite to the extreme church?

Let's Pray

- Won't just be a lukewarm church
- Let's get serious with him as a church

Matt 16 v15-19 [me to read]

V16 Simon Peter answered: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Those who confess Christ, those who honour him- he will honour.

Peter in the name of the church had confessed Christ.

God had a church in the world from the beginning – built upon the rock of the promised seed.

Genesis 3:15 KJV “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

A future offspring from Adam would overthrow the Devil – Jesus!

[read]

Jesus – the seed had come. The church had a new chapter.

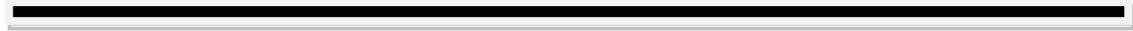
1. Christ is the head of the church [Not the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Pope] – Jesus.
 - a. He is the supreme ruler
 - b. All power is derived from him
 - c. Salvation is through him alone
 - d. We have access to father God, only because of him and what he accomplished on the cross
 - e. All judgement is committed to him
2. Christ would build his church upon a rock
 - a. It is not our church, but Christ’s!
3. Jesus is the builder/maker of the church v18 I will build it
 - a. The materials and workmanship are his – through the working of his Spirit and preaching of his word – he adds souls to his church → he builds the church up with living stones
 - b. Foundation on which it is built – this rock
 - i. Rock – HIGH – not upon a level with the world
 - ii. Rock – LARGE – extends far, as does the foundation
 - iii. Rock – FIRM – lasts forever

4. There are different interpretations on what Christ meant v18. Looking to Matthew Henry's commentary, I believe this means:-

"Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." [read again] : This is the great truth on which Christ will build his church.

1. Take away this truth – universal church falls to ground. If Christ be not the Son of God – Christianity is a cheat. We are wasting our time preaching. If Jesus isn't the Christ – those that own him are deceivers and deceived.
2. Take away the faith and confession of this truth from any church → no longer part of Christ's church. This confession of the church is, "The main hinge on which the door of salvation turns."
3. Christ promises to preserve and secure his church when it is built (v18). "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Neither against this truth nor against the church which is built upon it.
4. The implication here – the church has enemies that fight against it.
5. Gates of hell – the powers and policies of the devil's kingdom.
6. How do they fight against the church?
 - a. Opposing gospel truths
 - b. Corrupting the gospel truths – Does the bible really say that?
 - c. Persecuting good ministers and good Christians – enticing them by clever tricks, etc to become impure/unholy
7. But – it says quite clearly in this passage from scripture: Enemies of church shall not overcome it.
8. There will always be a church on earth as long as the world stands.
9. Some particular churches may cease to exist, through their own corruption, etc, but in the main battle it shall come off more than a conqueror.
10. V19 Keys: Not just given to Peter.

11. Ministers derive their authority from Christ → All their power is to be used in his name
1 Cor 5:4



Finally: putting church in it's place:

I've heard a wise person say that they believe the following is the biblical view of where church falls in our life's priorities:

[draw on flipchart]

1. Priority #1 - Your personal relationship with Jesus.
2. Priority #2 – your family [God invented the family – neglect it at your cost! Children can resent mummy or daddy who may spend all their lives supposedly busy at church!]
3. Priority #3 – paid employment [Your means of supporting your family and the church in it's mission]
4. Priority #4 – your work in the church



Conclusion:

Jesus went to the extreme for you! [hold hands out in shape of cross]

Go to the extreme for him – you will never be put to shame.

Let us close in prayer.

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