

Be the Church

Be the Church Philippians 2:12-13

Introduction

- I remember the old nursery rhyme about the church: “Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors, and see all the people.”
 - As much fun as that is to say, it’s only partially correct.
 - Churches have doors and steeples, but they aren’t the only place to find God’s people.
- The church is a body, not a building; a decision not a destination; and a people not a place.
 - This is a hard lesson to learn for those who have grown up in the church and have so many positive memories associate with the church building.
 - UBC is alive & well even though we are worshipping from home today.
- This may be an odd and unusual time, but it’s not the only God’s people have not been able to meet together like they want to.
- The Apostle Paul planted churches all over Asia Minor before he was arrested for disturbing the peace.
 - The NT books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are referred to as the “Prisons Epistles” because he wrote them while under house arrest in Rome.
 - Paul was open in these letters about his desire to meet in person.
- One of the most moving passages is found in Philippians 2:12-13.
 - I invite you to open your Bible and read along with me.
 - This comes from a passage urging us to glorify JC for His sacrificial death on the cross and to emulate His humility. (*Read passage*)
- Paul was separated from the believers in Philippi, yet he was concerned for their spiritual welfare and their gospel witness.
 - Paul urged them to be the church, even though he couldn’t meet together with them corporately as the church.
 - In this season where we are aren’t able to meet together in one location, I want to challenge each one of you to be the church.
- This needs to be our goal during this unsettling time in our nation’s history.
 - I’ll share 4 specific ways we’ll tackle this goal near the end of my message; but first, I want to explain what it takes to be the church.
 - **In order to be the church, we must put our salvation into practice.**
 - **In order to be the church, we must pay attention to 2 essential truths.**

Body

I. Know that God is Watching Us (v. 12)

- A. The believers in Philippi were passionate about the gospel and responsive to Paul’s HS inspired teaching (1:7).

1. But— there was a risk they would shrink back and fall away while he was gone and they were separated.
 2. You know what they say: “When the cat’s away, the mice will play.”
- B. Paul challenged believers in all generations to “work out” their salvation.
1. We know from Eph. 2:8-9, that Paul is not talking about works-based salvation. (“not of works, lest any man should boast”)
 2. We know from James 2:26, that works are a necessary by-product of salvation (“faith without works is dead”).
 3. **In other words, if we are saved, we must put our salvation into practice in real and tangible ways.**
- C. The motivation for this comes from God Himself, not the praise we get from other people.
1. We must put our salvation into practice with “fear & trembling”
 2. This isn’t terror, but fear in the sense of respect & reverence.
 3. It’s silly, but my mind goes to the scene in *Monsters, Inc.* where Mike Wazowski is trying to get out of his paperwork. And Roz says, “I’m always watching you Wazowski, always watching.”
- #### II. Know that God is the One Working in and Through Us (v. 13)
- A. Paul encouraged the Philippians to lean into their relationship w/ God.
1. They might have been isolated from each other, but they were not isolated from God.
 2. The first dedicated church building wasn’t in use until the middle of the 3rd century A.D., so they were probably still meeting in a network of house churches.
- B. God is the one who empowers our Christian service and God is the one who speaks and acts through us.
1. Putting your salvation into practice means living with grace, mercy, conviction, and love.
 2. This is the filter for you to use to figure out God’s good pleasure and will for your life.

Conclusion

- **In order to be the church, we must put our salvation into practice by paying attention to 2 these essential truths.**
- We will still love, learn, live out, and share the gospel, but it will have to look a little differently for a little while.
- In order to be the church in the coming weeks, we will:
 - **Reach out - meet needs**
 - **Pray actively - pursue spiritual growth**
- I will be developing this theme over the next 6 weeks in our times together.
- In the meantime, ask yourself, “How can I be the church while I can’t attend church?” (Stay safe, stay connected, and share your experiences on SM with the #UBtheChurch)