



All Citizens Christian Church Calgary

Bible Study: Thursday, February 26th 2015. **Topic:** THE DEATH OF THE CHURCH?

INTRODUCTION: The modern church is going through a major challenge and a shakeup that many of us are beginning to wonder if the church will make it till the return of the Lamb. I have heard some people say that this religion is fading away and its end is near. Indeed we have had world cultures and religion that came and faded away but I want us to note that Christianity had endured the test of time. The church is being bombarded from the external at a level as never before and unfortunately the internal is fueling and fanning doctrines that could easily annihilate it. For instance, the unbridled doctrines of prosperity and of grace are two doctrines that have the capacity to wipe off the church. The joy I have is that the church is not man's making and so man cannot destroy it. God will always preserve a remnant that will keep the church going. During the old Roman Empire, some thought that was going to be the end of the church but they were shocked when the church came up stronger than they ever thought. Even if it means using a heathen to keep the church going, the Lord will keep His body going until His return.

TEXTs: Matthew 16:17-19, II Cor11:1-4,

WILL THE CHURCH REALLY DIE?

Let us separate the Church universal from the church congregation

The Church Universal

The culture of Christianity is not man made and hence cannot be destroyed by man : Matt 16:18, Eph 2:18-22

Under so much stress we sometimes think we are alone. I Kings 19:13-14, 18, II Kings 22:8-11.

Modern history about the persecution of the church.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Christian_policies_in_the_Roman_Empire

The Church Congregation

1. In **Rev 3:1**, the church at Sardis was described as a "dead" church...
2. This reveals that churches can die - and they often do.
 - a. Where are the congregations we read of in the New Testament?
 - b. At some point in their history, they died

3. How can a church die?

- a. It may cease to exist
- b. It may die inwardly, even while it still lives outwardly

4. What can kill a church or what are the weapons Satan uses against the church?

I. PERSECUTION

A. SATAN HAS OFTEN RESORTED TO PHYSICAL PERSECUTION...

1. The Church in Smyrna - **Rev 2:9, 10**
2. He did so against many churches in the first century **1 Pet 5:8-9, 4:12**

B. PEOPLE RESPOND TO PERSECUTION DIFFERENTLY...

1. Some are silenced by it - **John 12:42-43**
2. Others rejoice in it - **Acts 5:41-42; Rom 5:1-5; James 1:2-3**

C. HOW WE REACT WILL DETERMINE OUR FUTURE AS A CHURCH...

A church that rejoices in persecution will not go unnoticed by the Lord - **Matt 5:11-12, Heb 11:35-38, Rev 2:13, Rev 3:8**

Experience has shown that persecution actually acts as a booster to the church. Discuss.

II FALSE TEACHING Rev 2:2, 6, Rev 2:13-15

SELECTIVE TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD. Jude 1:3, Eph 6:11

Discuss the effects of false and selective teaching on the church **Acts 20: 29-30; 2 Pet 2:1-2**

B. WHAT CAN WE DO TO GUARD AGAINST FALSE AND SELECTIVE TEACHING?

1. We must adhere to sound doctrine - **2Tim 4:3-4**

Sound doctrine involves preaching the word, which includes both negative ("rebuke") and positive ("exhort") elements **2 Tim 4:1-2**

What is 'POP Preaching' It is the preaching that entertains rather than instruct.

2. We must not support those who teach contrary to the doctrine of Christ – **2 John 9-11**
3. Act like the Berea Christians **Acts 17:11**

[When a church stands strong against persecution and false doctrine, that is certainly a good sign; but that does not mean Satan cannot yet kill it. Many "sound" churches have been destroyed by certain tools used by Satan.

WHAT ARE THESE TOOLS OF SATAN

I WORLDLINESS

HOW DOES SATAN USE WORLDLINESS TO DESTROY CHURCHES?

Influence of Jezebel - **Rev 2:20-23**

Fruitlessness due to cares of the world. **Luke 8:14**

C. WHAT CAN WE DO TO WARD OFF WORDLINESS?

1. We must have "the love of the Father" – **1 John 2:15-17, James 4:4**
2. We must not be conformed to this world - **Rom 12:1-2**
3. We must "watch and pray" -. **Luke 21:34-36**

A church can be very sound on some biblical issues and still be dead or dying.

II INDIFFERENCE (A SUBTLE, YET EFFECTIVE WEAPON USED BY SATAN).

1. It makes people to lose their fire and zeal for God." - **Rev 2:4**
2. It characterized the church at Laodicea, making it almost repulsive to Christ - **Rev 3:15-17**
Satan has found out that opposition actually strengthens the church so he employs slothfulness and indifference! **Prov 18:9; Matt 12:30**

MENTION SOME SYMPTOMS OF INDIFFERENCE...

1. Irregular attendance of services **Heb 10:25**
2. Lack of participation in the services (worship, Bible classes)
3. Consistently arriving late to services and caring less
4. Waning efforts to win souls to Christ and to defend your belief
5. No personal and private devotions (Bible study and prayers)
6. Lack of zeal to work in the church
7. Not interested in the growth of the church

FERVENT SERVICE IS THE ONLY ANTIDOTE TO INDIFFERENCE...

1. We must not grow weary in doing good - **Gal 6:9**
2. We must be diligent, and not become sluggish - **Heb 6:11-12**
3. We must hold fast the hope we confess by encouraging one another - **Heb 10:24-25**

CONCLUSION

We will be doing lots of disservice to the kingdom business if we fail to mention the lukewarmness pervading the church in our days. While it is not great joy to become a critic of the joy, it is not also in the interest of believers nor of the church for us to indulge the church.

"lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2Cor 2:11)

Note: This Bible study was prepared using the notes from Executable outlines by Pastor Mark A Copeland. <http://executableoutlines.com>