

# A Strong Church

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11/11/2007

## **Introduction**

Our goal should be to help our congregation become a strong church. We better appreciate the need for a strong church when we consider its high cost (Acts 20:28), its holy purpose (Ephesians 3:10-12), and its exalted mission (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

What makes a strong church? There are many misconceptions in this regard. One has only to consider God's estimation of the churches of Smyrna and Laodicea to realize that his standard of success is often quite different from ours (Revelation 2:8-11; 3:14-19). A strong church is not measured by its numerical size. A congregation may claim hundreds or thousands of members, but be filled with half-converted people. A strong church is not measured by its financial wealth; an abundant offering can mask a meager faith. A strong church is not measured by the social standing of its members; a cultured, highly educated, affluent membership is often quite materialistic in its outlook. Therefore, let us consider what the Bible says on this subject.

## **A Strong Church Must Be At Peace**

A strong church must be at peace. The kingdom of God is not based upon carnal considerations, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:16-19). Walking in a manner worthy of our calling, let us diligently preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3). Laying aside selfishness, let us be of the same mind, maintain the same love, being united in spirit, intent on one purpose (Philippians 2:1-4). The perfect bond of unity exists when we develop godly dispositions (Colossians 3:12-14).

## **A Strong Church Must Be Active**

A strong church must be active. Let us busily engage in the work of sowing and cultivating (Luke 8:11-15; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9). Consider the magnificent example of the Macedonians, who not only generously contributed of their means (2 Corinthians 8:1-6), but also sounded forth the word of God (1 Thessalonians 1:2-8). Note the commendation of the Ephesians, who could not tolerate evil men, but tested those who call themselves apostles, and were not, and found them to be false. Manifesting a spirit of perseverance, they endured much for the name of Christ, and had not grown weary (Revelation 2:1-3).

## **A Strong Church Must Be Pure**

A strong church must be pure. Christ desires to present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless

(Ephesians 5:25-27). To be counted as strong, a church must be pure in its membership (1 Corinthians 5:1-8). Worldly conduct must not be practiced, permitted, or pardoned. To be counted as strong, a church must be pure in its work (Ephesians 2:8-10). God has ordained that the church engage in the work of evangelism, edification and benevolence. To be counted as strong, a church must be pure in its worship (John 4:23-24). The New Testament reveals that Christian worship involves prayer, singing, the Lord's supper, preaching, and free-will offerings. To be counted as strong, a church must be pure in its organization (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11-13). Each congregation must be independent and autonomous, with elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers and active members. In order for the church to be strong, it must be pure in its teaching (Acts 20:17-27). The whole counsel of God must be faithfully proclaimed. We should not shrink back from declaring anything that is profitable.

## **Conclusion**

We have wasted our time, talent and energy if we produce big churches, but not strong ones. Having a strong church depends upon our actions. God has done his part: He provided the plan. We must implement it. Is our local congregation strong in the eyes of God? Are we helping to build it up, or tear it down?