

SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

“The Mind of Christ”

Scripture Reading: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14-16

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 7**. We are in a sermon series “*Shepherd the Flock.*” I have titled today’s message “*The Mind of Christ.*”
-) 1 PETER 5:1-4 instructs the elder (pastor) to shepherd the flock. He must care for the people in the congregation. The most important care I can give you is care for your soul. And to do that, I must feed you the Word of God.
-) In TITUS 2:1, Paul says this to Titus: “*You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.*” Why? Because feeding on sound doctrine (the Word of God) leads us to having the mind of Christ (1COR 2:16). And every Christian is to pursue having the mind of Christ.
-) But I am convinced, however, that not very many church people have the mind of Christ. Why? Because there are too many church people who really have no clue what this Book says. I understand that baby Christians are on a learning journey, but some of these church people have been in church for decades and do not know the truths contained within this Book. To them church is just a social club.
-) It is my responsibility to teach you the truths of this Book. I am to shepherd the flock. So, I must ask: Are these people ignorant because they fail to pay attention to sound doctrine when taught or are they are never fed sound doctrine from the pulpit? Either way, the truth is I sincerely question their Christianity.

-) Which leads me to a current event I want to speak about today. And that issue is what is happening in the UMC. There is a serious problem in the UMC and 2020 is going to be a difficult year for that denomination. A split is inevitable. Over what? Over the LGBTQ issue.
-) There are some who want to approve and condone of same-sex marriages and the ordination of gay and lesbian pastors, because in their mind they do not consider homosexuality a sin. It is a lifestyle choice. Well, the Bible calls it a sin. Fortunately, there are others in the UMC who want to maintain what they call a “*traditional*” format. In other words, there are some who believe what the Bible teaches.
-) One article I read says that the UMC denomination will be pro-LGBTQ and if the “*traditionalists*” want to defect, they will be given \$25 million to leave under an amicable split. In other words, here’s \$25 million. Go believe your Bible.
-) I am not certain of what the details may be today, but I assure you there will be a split in that denomination this year. And it will not be pretty.
-) Here’s what’s going to happen. Senior pastors will disagree with their associates. Church boards will argue amongst themselves. Pastors will disagree with congregations, and people in congregations will disagree with each other. There will be nothing amicable about the events of this year in the UMC.
-) I heard one member of the UMC say that he did not know what direction he would take when the time comes. He was first going to see what the pastor says and then see how his friends feel about the situation. Clueless. Sad. I ask again, do these people know the Word of God? Did the pastor shepherd the flock?

-) Is this what the Body of Christ looks like? No. How did they ever get to this point? Let me stop here for a second. I'm not just picking on the UMC. This kind of heresy is happening in many churches and in many denominations.
-) But this is what happens when a shepherd does not lead those under his care into having the mind of Christ by preaching sound doctrine. Satan doesn't want to fight the church. He wants to join it. He does his best destruction from within.
-) Gail and I attended a UMC for about 12 years. We made many good friends in that church. Many of those friendships continue today. But I saw this coming 20 years ago. And that's why we left the UMC. But my heart goes out to these people that they will make a wise decision based on the truth of the Word of God. And I want to let them know there will always be a place here at BGCC for those who want to pursue the truth and who have a desire to have the mind of Christ. Amen?
-) But let's talk a little more time here this morning to talk about how failures like this happen in a church.
-) Tell story of the song "Shades of Gray" by the Monkees.

Today there is no day or night.

Today there is no dark or light.

Today there is no black or white.

Only shades of gray.

-) I don't know exactly who wrote that song, but I believe they hit the nail on the head. I can't tell you much about the world in 1967, but in 2020 those words are very true.
-) I understand secular society moving in that direction. In the secular world today, there is no black or white, there is no dark or light, there are only shades of gray. So why is today's world like that?

-) Because the “*shades of gray*” mindset doesn’t offend anyone. It makes people feel comfortable. There are no absolutes anymore. Let’s all embrace our shades of gray.
-) In the 21st century, the secular world wants to apply the “*shades of gray*” mindset to things spiritual. You have your belief system and I have my belief system. I’m OK. You’re OK. After all, all paths lead to God. Right? Just be sincere.
-) However, when it comes to spiritual things, Jesus has a different view. And His view is always right. With Jesus there are no shades of gray. Everything is black and white.
-) Jesus says this in LUKE 11:23: “*Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.*”
-) You see, my friends, with Jesus there is no room for neutrality. You are either for Him or you are against Him. You either follow Him or you don’t. You either love Him or you don’t. He is either your Lord, or He’s not. You either believe everything He says, or you don’t. You either gather with Him or you scatter. There are no fence sitters or shades of gray.
-) The Bible is very clear on the black and white view. In JOHN 8 Jesus says that a person is either a child of God or a child of the devil. JAMES 4:4 tells us that if you are a friend with the world you are an enemy of God. In MATT 25:46 Jesus says the wicked go away to eternal punishment but the righteous to eternal life. 2COR 6:14-16 says what fellowship does the wicked have with the righteous? Light and darkness. Christ and Belial. A believer and an unbeliever. The temple of God and idols.
-) When it comes to things spiritual, there is no common ground between one side and the other. There is no compromise. There are no negotiations. There are no shades of gray.

-) Listen. You either gather with Jesus or you scatter without Him. I am convinced that the truth will set you free, but shades of gray never will.
-) Have you ever heard of the word “*Pragmatism?*” Pragmatism simple means what works for you. Forget authority. Forget rules. Let’s just do whatever works. Truth is abandoned in favor of feelings. Absolutes are tossed out the window. Let’s not do it God’s way, let’s do what works for us.
-) **SLIDE 8**. Pragmatism is what has happened in the UMC. They have gone too long without taking a stand for truth. Tell dream.
-) **SLIDE 9**. Then once you become pragmatic, that leads to compromise with the world. They become lukewarm. The church befriends the world and its ways because they have begun doing whatever works (vs what is right). Outward pressure from the world outweighs any inward principles they believe they may have.
-) **SLIDE 10**. Once you compromise with the world, that leads to impotence in the church. The church becomes useless. It becomes a social club. It no longer makes an impact on the world for Christ. O, they are good at social justice issues— clothing drives, providing breakfasts, food pantries, repairing peoples’ houses, etc.
-) And those are all good things but unfortunately that is their priority. They do not have the mind of Christ when it comes to spiritual issues and Biblical truths because their focus is never on the preaching and learning sound doctrine. Their focus is always on works.
-) I encourage and challenge you to someday attend a church service at another church and see what happens in that service. Is the focus on sound doctrine or social events? Are you asked to bring your Bible and open it? Remember, you don’t go to Chemistry Class without your Chemistry Book.

-) Does the pastor teach you what the Bible says? 2TIM 4:2 — Preach sound doctrine in and out of season.
-) Theology. The study of the Word of God. Is this really taught in churches anymore? If it is not, or if it is no longer a priority, then that church has gone in a pragmatic direction. And pragmatism leads to compromise, and compromise leads to impotence.
-) Having the mind of Christ begins with hearing and learning sound doctrine, and sound doctrine is a command for every pastor to shepherd the flock.
-) **SLIDE 11.** 1CORINTHIANS 2:13. “*We speak not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing Spiritual truths in Spiritual words.*”
-) We have been given the absolute truth of God and it is right here in this book. To have the mind of Christ, we must learn what He has already said.
-) PROVERBS 14:12. “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death.*” I pray many and many more of our friends in the UMC make the right decision to take the true Biblical path that leads to the mind of Christ. And we are no exception. BGCC, we must have the mind of Christ too.

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