

Remnant Life Church

September 17, 2023

Protect This House

Part 2

Acts 2:42-47

- What must we do as a church family to protect this house?
 - Sowing division into churches is one of satan's greatest delights
 - The history of the church is one filled with division
 - We are witness to this through the recorded history of the past 2000 years
 - By the great and ever-expanding number of denominations and parachurch groups
- We read the account of Nehemiah and what he had to deal with when the people were not in unity with one another
- We then asked the questions...
 - How do we protect what God is doing here?
 - What are our responsibilities?
 - What must we be aware of?

Three distinct areas that need to be protected:

1. Our mission
 - a. *Glorifying God – Blessing His People*
 - b. Glorify Him in all that we do and bless His people whenever we are together
 2. A reputation
 - a. Not our reputation but the reputation of God in this place
 - b. Who are we when we are not here on Sunday morning?
 3. Our people
 - a. Putting into practice the 'one-anothers'
 - b. Refusing to be divisive or take offense
- Unity is a core element needed in order to achieve anything of value or worth within a church
 - Why is unity important in the church?
 - Jesus prayed for it in **John 17:20-26**
 - The church was built on fellowship (**Acts 2:42**)
 - Paul writes in **Eph 4:3** that we are told to make unity a top priority
 - Understand something: any attitude or action that promotes disunity is SIN
 - Paul writes in **Rom 16:17** - *I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.*
 - Unity within a church is a powerful witness to the world (**John 13:34-35**)

READ – **Acts 2:42-47**

- God blesses the unified church (**Acts 2:46-47**)
 - The church that is operating in unity is a place where He can send those who are searching and need to be pointed to Him (**2:47**)
 - It is a place for new Christians to be loved and know that they are safe
 - And it is a place for the hurting to be cared for and, again, be pointed to the healer of our souls
 - The caution must be that the church where people are coming is not because of the church or the people but because of the presence of Jesus Christ
 - This is why so many churches come apart when they become “successful”
 - What is up to us is the responsibility of maintaining unity
- The good news is we don't have to be alike to maintain unity.
 - What draws us together and helps us to stay together is, first, that we are all sinners saved by God's grace
 - **Eph 2:8-9** - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*
 - The second thing that brings us together is our common love, worship, and devotion for Jesus Christ
 - That love does not focus on our differences
 - It looks at what is the common – our need for Him, His forgiveness for us, our walk to be more like Him

Now, for the million dollar question...how do we maintain unity?

1. Maintain an attitude of acceptance (**Rom. 14**)
 - a. Don't major on the minor things of life
 - b. Acceptance does not mean agreement in all things
 - c. It means loving one another IN SPITE of the differences
2. Focus on the common purpose that we all share
 - a. **I Cor 1:10** *I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*
 - b. What is our common purpose here at RLC?
 - i. First and foremost, to honor God in every aspect of our lives
 - ii. Be a witness for Jesus Christ everywhere that we go and in everything we do
 - iii. Love and help one another
 - iv. Pray for, support, encourage, and yes love one another to become men and women who tell others about Jesus and what He has done for us

3. Support the leadership of the church
 - a. If someone does not support the leadership then why are they attending that church?
 - b. Talk to the pastor
 - i. Never too busy
 - ii. We are all busy – no excuse
 - iii. I cannot pray, I cannot be there for you if I do not know what is happening
 - c. **Heb. 13:17** - *Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.*
 - i. I will be held accountable for the time that you were on my spiritual watch!
 - ii. I desperately need your prayers – so does Katerina, Dave, the BOD, the Elders
4. Control your tongue
 - a. One of the most damaging actions within every church today is gossip
 - i. In Paul's letter to the church in Rome he begins in the first chapter by talking about God's wrath against the ungodly
 1. He talks about several aspects of that sin and God's response – he then writes this
 2. **Rom 1:28-31** - *Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.*
 3. Notice that gossip is in the same list as murder, God-haters, and those who invent ways to do evil
 4. IOW – gossip is not a minor thing that is okay in moderation or if your intention is a good one
 - ii. Once started, gossip is like a wildfire that will consume everything in a very short amount of time
 - iii. Don't try and hide it in "Christianeze" language
 - b. If anyone comes to you with a concern about someone else here is the process:
 - i. "Why are you telling me?" (Ask this as soon as you realize what is happening)
 - ii. "Did you talk with that person about this?"
 - iii. Yes, but there is still a problem – then you say
 - iv. "Have you talked with Pastor Dave?"

- v. **Eph 4:29** - *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

5. Practice the Biblical method of conflict resolution (as given by Jesus)

- a. **Matt. 18:15-17** - *If your brother or sister sins go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*
- b. If you do this in the order that God dictates, the problem, one way or another, will be resolved

A church that is guarding the peace from within will be a church making an impact for the Kingdom of God!

This is how we protect this house

- The attacks that destroy a church almost never come from the outside
- They start within and cause a church, not to explode, but implode
- I refuse to allow that to ever happen at RLC and I am asking each and every one of you to join me to guard and protect the work that God has called us to do
- And the beautiful thing is, I am fully and wholly confident that you will!