

Sermon Series Title: "The Church of God"

Sermon Series Summary: The Church of God is the people of God throughout the ages, redeemed by Jesus Christ. We're going to take a look at who we are and who we are called to be as the church of God. More specifically, we see that who we are is directly connected to whose we are in Christ.

"We are in our "The Church of God" sermon series, and we see that we are defined not by who we are but whose we are as the Church."

Call: Isaiah 26:7-8

Text: 1 Kings 3:16-28

Title: "The Center of the Church"

Next Week's Call: Isaiah 26:9

Next Week's Text: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Next Week's Title: "The Beauty of the Church"

Future Calls: Isaiah 26:10-11, 12, 13; Luke 1:46-48a, 48b-49, 50, 51-52, 53, 54-55, 68-69, 70-73, 74-75, 78-79; Luke 2:13-14, 29-32; Revelation 5:6-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14; Revelation 15:3, 4; Revelation 21:1-4, 5-7, 22-23

Future Titles: "The Treasure of the Church" (2 Corinthians 4:7-11), "The Victory of the Church" (Matthew 16:13-20), "The Pathway of the Church" (Matthew 16:21-28), "The Unity of the Church" (Ephesians 4:1-7), "The Diversity of the Church" (Romans 12:1-8), "The Sufficiency of the Church" (Ephesians 4:11-16), "The Identity of the Church" (Matthew 5:13-16), "The Humility of the Church" (1 John 1:5-10), "The Draw of the Church" (2 Corinthians 2:14-17), "The Distinction of the Church" (1 Peter 2:11-12), "The Instrumentality of the Church" (1 Peter 2:9-10), "Church as Building" (1 Peter 2:6-8), "Church as City" (Ephesians 2:19-22), "Church as Body" (1 Corinthians 12:12-31), "Church as Family" (John 1:12-13), "Church as Bride" (Ephesians 5:22-33), "The Eternality of the Church" (Revelation 21:1-7)

Fallen Condition Focus: We lose the center of the church, which is Christ (the head) and His Work (the cross).

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ is the Lord of the church, and He has redeemed us by His sacrifice on the cross.

Central Truth: Christ is the Lord of His church and His work is the redemption of His people.

Summary: We are starting a new series on the church for the next 5 months. We need to come back to who we are as the church, which is based on whose we are. To start, we will look at the center of the Church, the person and work of Christ. Through King Solomon's wise rule, we are called to submit to His Lordship over the church. Through this story, we are called to come back to the compassion of God shown through the cross.

Reflective Questions:

1. Before this sermon, what did you think was the center of the church?
2. In your opinion, what has been the center of our church?
3. How can we bring ourselves to the true center, the person and work of Christ?

#### I. Introduction

- A. Hook- Personal reflection on the church, including our time in America and Aurora
- B. Transition- Center of the Church
- C. Proposition
- D. Points

#### II. The Setting

- A. God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, and this land was known as the Promised Land for the nation of Israel.
- B. After slavery in Egypt, the Exodus, and 40 years in the wilderness, they finally entered into the Promised Land- book of Joshua.
- C. God appointed judges to rule and redeem Israel over and over again, but that eventually fell apart because the book said that there was no king.
- D. Finally, God established Israel as a kingdom, with the first king being Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, handsome and tall. But his heart was sinful and he disobeyed the Lord.
- E. The second king was David... David and Goliath David... and he was a man after God's own heart.
- F. The third king was Solomon, David's son. God approached him and told him that he would grant him anything, and instead of asking for riches or fame, Solomon humbly asked for wisdom, which greatly pleases the Lord.
- G. That was the passage right before our passage, and today's passage is a display of Solomon's wisdom.

### III. The Situation (vv. 16-22)

- A. A dispute between two prostitutes is brought before the king.
  - 1. Prostitutes are the lowest of that society: socially, economically, morally, relationally.
  - 2. They have children, most likely out of wedlock, with no father to help care for them.
- B. One accuses the other of kidnapping, while the other denies it.
  - 1. Heartbreaking situation- mother who lost her child through a horrible accident (with all its loss, grief, shame, and envy), mother who lost her child through kidnapping, and the child himself.
- C. This case between two lowly women is brought to the king, because no one else could make a wise judgment.
  - 1. They probably live in their place of work, but they didn't have work that dreadful evening.
  - 2. There were no other witnesses. It was one woman's word against the other.

### IV. The Solution (vv. 23-28)

- A. King Solomon does not deny the hearing for these women, despite their status and profession. He hears them out and cares for them.
- B. King Solomon commands a sword be brought to him. His ruling does not appear to be wise at first. It seems to be the opposite: heartless and uncaring. He commands the baby to be cut in two.
- C. Then, out of yearning and compassion, the true mother of the child gives up her rights in order to have the child live. She is willing to live in sorrow and deal with loss in order to save her child.
- D. The other lady did not care for the child. She was so consumed by her own grief for the loss of her son and also by her envy at the mother who had the living child that she did not care if this child lived or died.
- E. We see then that this is all part of King Solomon's wise ruling to discover the truth.

### V. The Savior

- A. Jesus is the more faithful and wise king. He says that He is the greater Solomon (Matthew 12).
- B. Jesus is the king of this church. He is the head and Lord. His words of who we are and what we are called to do as the church are true and wise. His ways are higher than our ways. He is what makes the church the church. He needs to be our center.
- C. Just like Solomon, no matter how lowly and sinful we are, He is the One who listens to us... cares for us... and (even greater than Solomon) he loves us.

- D. We see great love in our story... not in Solomon but the true mother. The passage says that she yearned for her child. This word in Hebrew is a word that means great compassion... an intense mother-like love for a child... and this word for compassion is what is used to describe God.
- E. We were the ones who deserved to be cut in half. We should have died for our sins. And yet, it was God who had this compassion on us. He yearned for us with an intense love so much so that He would bear the grief, the loss, the hurt to have us live... to save us.
- F. This mother was willing to give it all up to save her child... and our heavenly Father was the One who did give it all up to save us.
- G. It was Jesus that said... let me be cut in two... let me perish... let me die so that they can live.
- H. See, this is the center of our church. This must be our foundation. We start here. It's about who Jesus is and what He has done to save us... to give us life.