

Community Group Discussion Questions

“The Center of the Church”

1 Kings 3:16-28

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.

Setting: 1 Kings records Israel’s history after King David. It is a continuation of 1-2 Samuel which records the period after judges when Israel was led by the prophet Samuel and installed their first two kings: the wicked King Saul and the righteous King David. Our passage comes right after the third king, King Solomon, humbly asks God for wisdom instead of riches or fame.

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.

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

Sermon Points:

1. The Setting
2. The Situation
3. The Solution
4. The Salvation

Opening Question

1. Is it important to be part of a church? Why or why not?

(Answers may vary.)

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We're starting a new series this week on the church of God. We see in God's word that He works in and through the church. He calls us to be part of the church, and He calls His church to be part of His work. Before we go into the various aspects of the church, we see that God is calling us to our center: the person and work of Christ.

Read 1 Kings 3:16-28

2. Before this sermon, what did you think was the center of the church?

(Answers may vary.)

I'm sure everyone will say Jesus and the gospel. But practically, they may have different opinions. Some may say theology is the center. Others may say attendance or service may be the center. Other responses may be obedience, mercy, community groups, etc.)

3. In your opinion, what has been the center of our church?

(Answers may vary.)

4. What does our passage teach us about the true center of the church?

(It teaches us that the center of the church is the person and work of Jesus Christ. First, Jesus is the greater Solomon. He is the true King who is Lord over His church. He is the Ruler, and we must submit to Him and His wisdom. This means that what He has laid out in His word for us is the way we should go. It's not for the destruction of the church but the construction of the church. It's not to break the church down but to build her up. But so many times, we think we know better. We know how the church should be. The church doesn't meet our standards, because our standards are higher than God's standards. But the truth is that Jesus' ways are higher than our ways, and Jesus' wisdom is far wiser than our wisdom. We must submit to Him as the head of the church.

Second, our center is the work of Jesus Christ. Just like the true mother had compassion and yearned for her son, God has compassion and yearns for us. He loves us so much that He is willing to count the cost, bear the grief, and take the loss so that His children may live. The mother was willing to give up everything. God DID give up everything to save us. Jesus is the One who was "cut in half" and died on the cross, so that we may

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live. This is the center of the church. We submit to Jesus as our king, and our hope, strength, purpose, and life are wrapped up in the work that has been finished by Him.)

5. How can we bring ourselves to the true center, the person and work of Christ?

(First, we must walk according to this truth every single day. We must center our lives on Christ. The church may encourage us in our faith, but we must not be so dependent on the church that we lose our center without the church. We must have a personal relationship with our Savior King. We must walk with Him in His word and prayer. Is Christ our king? Is His work the source of our life, joy, strength, and hope?)

Second, as members of the church, we are called to encourage each other toward our center. We remind one another of the person and work of Christ. We keep our leaders accountable to stick to our center, and the leaders are called to shepherd and guide our members toward this center. Partaking of the means of grace (diving into God's word, observing the sacraments, praying together) helps us grow in Christ. Living in community and serving the city together brings us back to our center.)

Final Thoughts: *This is the start of our series on the church, and it's the most important. The person of Christ as King of the church and the work of Christ on the cross must be the center. We must submit to His word and rule. We must have the cross be the source of our life, joy, and hope. And from there, we can move forward, living for the glory and kingdom of God*