

## **“Christ the Center and Focus of the Church”**

Revelation 1:9-20

APTAT → Trust:

PRAY.

Is anyone WORTHY? Worship = “WORTH-ship” Value Is anyone WHOLE?

A lot going on today with the Coronavirus... Stock market up and down. Perhaps our emotions too...

- Why I am “bullish” on the church.
- Why I believe in the ministry of the local church.

→ The CHURCH is God’s plan to make His Glory known and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

Matt 16: Jesus: Who do people say that I am? They answered: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of prophets

Jesus: But who do YOU say that I am. Peter... You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus: ...and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

**I feel good about where we are as a church.**

**Of course, there are plenty of things we need to work on, improve, etc. But overall, I feel good.**

**Financially, we’re in the black. PTL! Trying to do a better job of communicating.**

**The building is paid for! PTL!**

**The Art of Marriage – 40 people!**

**4 engaged couples!**

**So far this year... 4 births and only 1 funeral. 5 or 6 more babies on the way!**

**And a lot of new people have been attending.**

- They come because of the worship and the preaching of the Word.
- They come because they feel like they can take their mask off.
- They come because they are being disciplined, counseled.
- They come because they are getting back into the Word of God on a regular basis—or for the 1st time.
- They come because they hear truth in a culture that fast abandoning our moorings and traditions.
- They come because their children are being disciplined.

**I believe in the ministry of the local church.**

**I believe the local church is the means by which God wants to reach the world with the witness of Jesus Christ.**

- In all of its weaknesses—in all of our weaknesses.
- Local church ministry, for the most part, is not sexy. But it is holy.
- Preaching/Teaching of the Word
- Sacraments
- Discipling, nurturing our children in the Gospel, Bible, relationship with the God of the Bible

**I believe that Jesus is in the ministry of the local church. Revelation 1:12-20**

### **WHAT JOHN HEARD. Revelation 1:9-11**

**1. The apostle John persevering in the faith. v.9** (also wrote the Gospel of John & letters: 1, 2, 3 John)

- Writing to Christians being persecuted for their faith by the Romans.
- John was also experiencing persecution. Exiled on the island of Patmos. Near the end of his life.
- “bother and partner” in the tribulation

**2. John was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” v.10**

- He heard God’s voice.

**3. John was commanded to write what he saw. v.11**

- Write it in a book and send it to the churches of Asia minor. → ch. 2-3... the book of Revelation

### **WHAT JOHN SAW. Revelation 1:12-16**

### 1. John saw seven golden lampstands. v.12

### 2. John described one "like a son of man." v.13-16 Ref. Daniel 7:9-14

→ John saw Jesus. Imagine trying to put it into words...

- Long robe w/golden sash around his chest. v.13 = Indicative of royalty; a King or Priest (or both)
- Hair white like wool and snow. v.14 = Dignity. "the ancient of Days" (Daniel 7:9)
- Feet like burnished bronze. v.15a = Strength and stability
- Voice like the roar of water. v.15b = Words used by prophet Ezekiel to describe God
- In his right hand he held seven stars. v.16a = the 'angels' of the seven churches (Rev.1:20)
- A two-edged sword came out of his mouth. v.16b = God's Word of judgment (Hebrews 4:12)
- His face was shining like the sun in full strength. v.16c

→ What a magnificent crescendo to an awesome vision!

## **WHAT JESUS SAID. Revelation 1:17-20**

### 1. Don't be afraid. v.17

- John had fallen at His feet.
- The point was not to leave John overwhelmed, but to reassure him.

### 2. This is Who I AM. v.17b-18

- "I am the first and the last." Ref. 1:8: the Alpha and the Omega (the first and last letters of Greek alphabet)
- v.18a: "...the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore..."
- v.18b: "...I have the keys of Death and Hades."  
- Keys signify authority. → Jesus has authority over death!

→ This is the Gospel!

### 3. Write these things. v.19 (Hence, book of Revelation).

### 4. Here is the explanation of the "mystery." v.20

- The seven stars are the 'angels' of the seven churches. 'angel' = messenger
- The seven lampstands are the seven churches.

## **'TAKE AWAYS'...**

### 1. Jesus is in the midst of the churches.

- He is not an absentee landlord. We are not latchkey kids.
- John 14:18: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."
- How is Christ present with the church?  
-His Word. His Spirit. His Sacraments.

### 2. Jesus is the center of worship in the church.

- Daniel 7:9-14
- Revelation 5:11-13

Motto of the World Council of Churches: 'The World sets the agenda for the Church'

"The Christian needs the Church to be the Church. The World needs the Church to be the Church. The Church is the Church when it is obedient to Christ." -Richard John Neuhaus, 1987 International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, Washington, D.C.

Motto of the World Council of Churches:

Tozer's comment is as relevant now as it was when he made it 65 years ago: "The church goes along with everything and stands against nothing – until she is convinced that it is the safe and popular thing to do; then she passes her courageous resolutions and issues her world-shaking manifestos – all in accord with the world's newest venture – whatever it may be."