



May 29, 2011

**Love God.
Love each other.
Serve the world.**

“The Holy-Lifestyle Church”

I Peter 2:9-12

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

I Timothy 3:14-15

¹⁴Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Discussion and Reflection Questions

1. Who founded the church, and who decides how the church is to function?
2. What does this phrase mean to you: *I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)*
3. Read *1 Corinthians 5*. What did the *immoral brother* do that was so ungodly? How was he to be treated? Why was the Corinthian church being rebuked? What is your understanding of “church discipline”? Why does God require the church to deal with scandalous sin in its midst?
4. Why is the church not simply a “Jesus Fan Club”? Who creates a typical “fan club” and who determines the membership policies of the “fan club”?
5. When a spiritually skeptic world looks at the church of Jesus Christ, what should the world see?
6. According to *1 Peter 2:9-12*, what should the world see when it looks at Southport Presbyterian Church?
7. Of the two unbiblical extremes that churches may take in establishing some kind of guidance and accountability for its leaders and members, where would you place SPC on the continuum below?

License

Legalism

8. What rotten fruit is produced by a church that practices “license?”
9. What rotten fruit is produced by a church that practices “legalism?”
10. What is God’s will for the CHARACTER of Christians in general and His church in particular?

**A Puritan Prayer from *The Valley of Vision*
Christian Calling**

O LORD GOD,

The first act of calling is by thy command in thy Word,
‘Come unto me, return unto me’;

The second is to let in light,
so that I see that I am called particularly,
and perceive the sweetness of the command as well as its
truth,
in regard to thy great love of the sinner,
by inviting him to come, though vile,
in regard to the end of the command,
which is fellowship with thee,
in regard to thy promise in the gospel,
which is all of grace.

Therefore, Lord,

I need not search to see if I am elect, or loved,
for if I turn thou wilt come to me;

Christ has promised me fellowship if I take him,
and the Spirit will pour himself out on me,
abolishing sin and punishment,
assuring me of strength to persevere.

It is thy pleasure to help all that pray for grace,
and come to thee for it.

When my heart is unsavoury with sin, sorrow, darkness, hell,
only thy free grace can help me act
with deep abasement under a sense of unworthiness.

Let me lament for forgetting daily to come to thee,
and cleanse me from the deceit of bringing my heart to a
duty
because the act pleased me or appealed to reason.

Grant that I may be salted with suffering,
with every exactment tempered to my soul,
every rod excellently fitted to my back,
to chastise, humble, break me.

Let me not overlook the hand that holds the rod,
as thou didst not let me forget the rod that fell on Christ,
and drew me to him.

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