

Do you love your church?

Lesson for Sunday, August 14, 2022

TEXT: Ephesians 5

INTRODUCTION:

- Share a brief testimony of why you love FBT (be specific).
- Have you ever stopped to consider the value of a church? We're not looking for what the church is worth if we were to put it up for sale. We are discussing the worth of the church to the community.
 - For example, can you put a price tag on a divorce that is avoided due to the influence of a church on a marriage? What is the price of teaching a teenager the difference between right and wrong? What is a church's economic worth to the community which it serves?
- A couple of years ago a secular research company set out to discover the answer:
With a list they devised of 54 value categories, they attempted to calculate the economic "halo effect" of a dozen religious congregations in Philadelphia. They added up the money generated by weddings and funerals, festivals, counseling programs, preschools, elder care. They tallied the salaries of staff and the wages of roofers, plumbers, even snow shovelers. They put dollar signs on intangibles, too, such as helping people find work and teaching children to be socially responsible. They even measured the diameter of trees on church campuses. The grand total for the 12 congregations: \$50,577,098 in annual economic benefits.
- Have you ever considered the "halo effect" the church has on your personal family? A proper understanding might lead to less complaining and more supporting the local church. Today we want to look at our responsibility to lead our families to love the church, and to discuss tangible ways we show our love for it.

BIBLE STUDY:

POINT: Love what Jesus loves. Jesus loves the church.

1. As Christians, we model our lives after the life of Christ. As we become more and more like Christ, we begin to take on His characteristics and we will love the things Jesus loves.
2. Read Ephesians 5:22-26, 32-33.
 - a. This is a passage that we often reference when discussing marriage and the family. As we read it, pay attention to the comparison Paul makes to the relationship between Christ and the church. (Read it slowly and ask the class to identify the references.)
 - b. Vs. 23 – We see Christ presented as the head of the church. This reminds us of our lesson last Sunday when we discussed a functioning church and Paul's reference to the church as a body.
 - c. Vs. 25 is the key. Husbands are to love their wives *as Christ loved the church*. There is our point! Jesus Christ loves the church.
 - d. In vs. 25, Paul reminds us that Christ didn't just say He loved the church; He gave His life for the church – the ultimate example of sacrificial love. This point should not be rushed over. Remember Jesus' own words in John 15:13? *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*. In Christ's death He showed the height and depth of His love for the church.
3. These verses remind us that we are to love the church as Jesus loved the church – sacrificially.
4. Give your class a few minutes to stop and consider the worth of this church in their lives and families.
 - a. Teaching Tip: If you put some thought into your lesson you may have a person in your class that has a testimony of the difference FBT has made in their life. It may be appropriate for them to share it briefly at this point of the lesson.
 - b. Be sure to work with them on their testimony during the week. Do not put anyone on the spot, and do not turn someone loose if you are not confident in what they might say.

APPLICATION:

Here is the question: What are specific, tangible ways we show our love for our church? Discuss each of the following:

1. If we love our church, we will faithfully **pray** for our church.
 - a. How often does your family pray for FBT?
 - b. What are some areas we should pray about regularly?
 - i. Spiritual protection
 - ii. Protection from moral failure
 - iii. For our church leadership
2. If we love our church, we will **worship** together **faithfully**.
 - a. Sadly, church (and Sundays in general) has become a weekend option for many families and not a priority. Families will be in church as long as nothing else happens to interfere.
 - b. As our text clearly stated, Jesus died for the church. Do you think He died so we wouldn't have to take it so seriously? Or does His death teach us anything about the importance the church should have in our priorities?
 - c. Does your church attendance say "I love my church?" (This is not a discussion question – just for them to reflect.)
3. If we love our church, we will faithfully **serve**.
 - a. There should never be "holes" in a church's organizational chart! In fact, the opposite should be true: there should be people standing in line to serve!
 - b. You don't have to beg a person who loves the church to serve.
 - c. All of us would say we love our church. But if we are not willing to raise a finger to serve its members, are we being completely truthful?
4. If we love our church, we will faithfully **give**.
 - a. Remember the old saying, "Show me a man's checkbook ledger and I will show you his priorities?" This is true even in church.
 - b. We give more than our money. We give our time.

These are just a few examples of how we show our love for our church. Notice that the key word in each of the previous points is "faithfully." Are you faithful?

- Don't forget to use August 28 as a day for people to attend faithfully!
- Have a class sign-up and don't hesitate to ask people to commit to be faithful to God's House on that special day.