

# Viewing the Church Correctly

by Mack Tomlinson

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*Viewing the church correctly is essential for experiencing spiritual growth, commitment, and maturity.*

**Duration:** 55:27

**Scripture:** Ephesians 2:19

**Topics:** "Church Life", "Ecclesiology"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of viewing the church correctly and making the most of church life. It highlights the need for believers to be fully engaged, initiate fellowship, and prioritize their commitment to the church. The speaker addresses the balance between family and church involvement, the continuity between Old Testament Israel and the church, and the significance of the church as the fulfillment of God's promises.

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## Transcript

Father, we're blessed to be among your people. It's very true that we could not have been included, and we would this morning be in this world, of this world, without hope, without God, because we would be without Christ. But because you've included us, Lord, you've also, in adoption, you've placed us in the family.

And as we think this morning and next week, God willing, about the church and our place in the church and our making the most of our church life, we pray you'd help us and you'd equip us to view this rightly and to adjust our lives accordingly. We ask your Holy Spirit to give us the gift of teaching your Word. We ask you to give us all ears to hear this morning, not only now, but as we hear your Word from Charles in the hour ahead.

Lord, you alone can speak so as to make it truly profitable. So help us now. We thank you in the name of our Savior.

Amen. Today and next week I want to address in two classes, which will be far too brief, obviously, something focused specifically about the church, and that is, in light of viewing the church correctly, how to make the most of your church life. You know, Christians can be all over the board on this.

Some Christians, for whatever reason, their past experience hurts, wounds, can be on the fringe of the church, cannot be consistent, cannot get close to people, cannot get engaged. And so they come, but

they're on the fringe. Others see more clearly the nature of what a church is to be and they get engaged.

Engaged fully. I don't mean engaged as in preparation for marriage. They're engaged.

I mean fully functioning. He's really engaged. And God wants all of us to be fully engaged with our own church.

And so I don't know how far I'll get in this today, but I want to talk about a couple of things. Viewing the church correctly. Because we can never hear this too often.

Because, you know, just like we get eye exams, I got a recent one a few months ago, and the optometrist said, Mr. Tomlinson, it's been way too long. You haven't been here in five years. Is that what I'm to understand? Yes, sir.

He said, you're illegal to drive. He said, let's get you some new glasses. So, see, we have to always get our vision adjusted afresh to see things correctly.

Spiritually, this is true. It doesn't matter how long we've been in the body of Christ or how important it's been to us in the past. We have to retweak this and to keep our understanding fresh and clear.

So let's jump into this. How important is it to believe correctly about your church? Well, obviously, that's an elementary question, but it is most important because the church of Jesus Christ is the most important entity, organism in the earth. Nothing can compare to it.

The United Nations, the entity of any nation around the world. There is nothing in the earth that is as important to the Lord Jesus Christ and His church. His church in the earth is what He's about.

And He's gathering the elect from every tongue, every tribe, every nation, from all the earth to make up His bride. And when that's completed, when that's finished, it seems like the Bible indicates that the end shall come and Christ will present to God a spotless bride. And so the church is the issue for us.

The Bible, as you know, makes the church a highest priority. In many verses, just a random reading of the New Testament affirms this to us. Jesus said, I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

Now think about it. We know that's not local church there, but what? Universal. We're going to talk a little bit about that and how to view the two.

There's many statements where it can only mean the universal church. Acts 20 verse 28, Paul said to the Ephesian elders, Pay close attention to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God. So the Ephesian elders are charged by Paul to care for the church of God.

And he wasn't placing on them the universal church. He's placing on them a local church. Local congregation.

Ephesians 1 verse 20, And He, that is God, has put all things under His feet, that is Christ, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body. So, you know, as you read the Gospels, the Lord Jesus Christ, in different places, Matthew 18 for instance, church system, tell it to the church. And then there's this unfolding reality with the New Testament church in Jerusalem being birthed at Pentecost.

Then it becomes local church reality. Acts is the birthing of a church and the planting of many churches. The epistles are written to and for churches.

And so, we must view the church correctly. Make sure you do this in your mind. Because she is Christ's treasure in the earth.

And the order of importance is, in our lives, God and family. Family was created first, right in Genesis 1. And then, in the context of our salvation, the church. And God teaches us how to keep these balancing realities as a priority.

So, viewing the church correctly. The way we view the church, the way any Christian views the church, is the way they will relate to the church. Think of that.

Out of our mind flows our conduct. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. The way you and I view the church, universally and locally, is the way we will relate to the church.

The way you see your church will govern how you practice church life. The level of importance that you place on your church and your relationship with it, the level of importance will determine the level and the degree of your experience in the church, your commitment to the church, your benefiting from the church and your growth spiritually. We cannot disconnect our spiritual growth from our vital relationship with our church.

It just won't happen. Think about it. Just picture this.

Picture if you were a Christian and you're just walking it alone. You have a good Bible. You have the Internet even.

But you either live where there's no church or for whatever reason, perhaps like an elderly person, an invalid, can't be with the church at all, or you've totally isolated yourself. There are Christians today who have erroneously isolated themselves from any relationship with the church. Picture your life if you had no church and it was you and the Lord and your Bible.

Would that be going well for you? In the bigger scheme of things in the New Testament, our own relationship with Christ and the Bible is not enough because the very Bible that's sufficient tells us that that's not enough. We need the corporate life. We need pastors.

We need brethren. Ladies need sisters in the faith to strengthen. Brothers need brothers to relate rightly to them.

Couples need to be strengthened. Children need to be helped. Parents need help with bringing difficult children along and seeing those children converted.

None of us are sufficient within ourselves to handle some of this stuff we face. And it's nothing but pride or a sense of self-sufficiency. You know, I really don't need others involved in this.

We can handle it. I can handle it. And often, problems continue and don't change because we haven't availed ourselves of what's available in the body of Christ.

Whether from true fellowship with those we can trust or from pastors. The way you value, the way we value or do not value, the church will determine everything down here in our Christian journey. So let's see

this morning a biblical snapshot.

You know, I referred to Mark's Gospel a number of times as a snapshot, which in many ways it really is. Let's see a biblical snapshot of the church this morning. And then we'll try to allow ample time for questions.

Number one, the church is universal. It's universal. And you know, there are Christians, there are camps, there are groups, and there are people that deny this.

They say, no, the church is not universal. It's only local. There is no universal body of Christ.

But when you see a number of Scriptures, let's go to Ephesians and see a few of these. Matthew 18, Christ's reference about bringing it before the church in the context of church discipline would have been local. But here in Ephesians, Paul could not mean, he could not be referring to the local body of believers that is the local expression of the church.

He's got to be referring to the universal church. Ephesians 3, verses 14 and 15, he begins his prayer and he says, For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. And so, how does the King James read there? Anybody have an author that David does? This seems to be, and I may be missing something, but this seems to be speaking of the whole family of God, heaven and on earth, and he's speaking about the universality of the family of God there.

But you look on in the next chapter in Ephesians 4, verse 4, it becomes even more clear, Ephesians 4, verse 4, there is one body and one Spirit. So, the only way to interpret that obviously is the universal body of Jesus Christ. What's the universal body of Christ? In the whole earth, every believer in Jesus Christ is a part of Christ's church, part of His body.

And we're joined to them. We're one with them. This is why anywhere Christians ever go when they meet other Christians, they feel a connection.

They're joined to them. You can meet Christians, those who have traveled overseas and you meet other Christians in mission fields. You've never met them, but there is an instantaneous bond because you have the same Father and the same Savior and the same Bible and the same Holy Spirit.

You are one with them. And Paul here speaks about there being one body. Now, he also speaks in Ephesians 4, verse 12 that the ministry gifts of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood.

The body of Christ is universal. Chapter 5. It is good to notice and just to remember, Paul speaks about the universal body of Christ several times in Ephesians especially. Chapter 5, verses 23-27.

Don't think here about husband and wife relationships. Think about Christ and His church relationships. Verse 23, For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior.

Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her. Verse 27 So that He might present the church to Himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any

such thing that she might be holy and without blemish.

The only way to be honest with that passage is to see that he's talking about the entire church of Jesus Christ. Universally. Now, I'll read these.

You don't need to turn there, but the book of Revelation toward the end speaks about this universal church as the bride. Revelation 21, verse 9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And then chapter 22, the last invitation in the Bible.

Revelation 22, 17 The Spirit and the bride say, Come. So, these references can only mean the universal church. Well, it's important to us to view the universal church properly, because when you meet Christians in other places, you have a spiritual unity with them.

You're to love them. You're to treat them with respect. You're to have a broader heart and a broader vision than just us here, because we are joined to believers anywhere and everywhere because of the mystical union of Christ with the whole family of God.

We're one with them, and we will spend eternity with them. But not only is the church universal, it's also obviously and primarily local. Most of the references on the church, well, the word church means ecclesia, called out ones, called out assembly, and the majority of the uses in the New Testament are in the context of local churches.

Somebody said the New Testament knows nothing of freelance Christianity. It doesn't give examples of nor encouragement toward believers walking without being vitally a part of a local church. So when you read the epistles, they always start out, to the church at, or to the saints at.

And you think about what I said earlier. Think of the heart of the New Testament writers. Paul, Peter, John.

They wrote those epistles to churches. They had in mind that they had established or that they knew of, that they had love for, that they wanted to meet. So the New Testament was written for and to local churches.

Romans 1, to the church of God at Rome. Paul had never met them. He longed to.

1 Corinthians 1, to the saints of God at Corinth. You could go on. Galatians 1, to the churches, plural, the churches of Galatia, where various churches had been established.

And this letter was a general letter to all those churches Paul was writing. Ephesians 1, to the saints of God at Ephesus. On and on.

Philippians 1 says that. Colossians 1 says that. The local expression of the universal body of Christ is a local church.

A body. And this is where it gets finally more important that we know how we view our church. Am I truly joined to my church? Another general truth I want to emphasize is that under the New Covenant, the New Testament speaks of there being no longer Jew or Gentile identities, but that in the place of Jewish and Gentile identity, there is one new man.

One body. Ephesians 2. Turn to that. Ephesians 2. God has established one... He calls it in Ephesians 2, one new man.

Verses 15 and 16. By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross.

So we know that in the redemptive purpose of God, in the Old Testament, Israel physically, ethnically, were the people of God. There was no other nation that God had chosen that He was identified with. But with the coming of the New Covenant and the Gospel, that's over.

And the church is the people of God. Is that good English? Maybe not. But it's true.

The church is. You can't say the church are. The church is the people of God.

The only people of God in the earth that know God, that are joined to Him, that are related to Him, is the church. And this is why Galatians 6 just reference these. You don't have to turn to them.

Galatians 6 calls the church the Israel of God. Galatians 6.16 says, And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God. That's especially pertinent to the Galatians when Paul is having to deal with the Judaizers about wanting to bring Jewish things in to add to the Gospel.

I've already read Ephesians 2. 1 Peter 4 is quite wonderful. And let's look at that. Our view of this must be that the church of Jesus Christ in the earth and the local churches of Jesus Christ is exclusively what God is about in the earth.

It's His purpose. I don't have a clue what God wants to do with America or Europe or the nations ultimately. But we do know from the Bible that God is saving a people and that He establishes churches and the Gospel is being spread and the wisest work in evangelism and the spread of the Gospel and the mission work is the planting of churches.

Because long after any other agency or lone rangers are in and out of places, you get churches established and the Gospel is going to have a witness there. So 1 Peter 2, beginning in verse 4, look at Peter's mentality about the church. 1 Peter 2, verse 4. As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Now, let's just register in our minds that as Peter, temple Judaism, Christ had ended it. And the Gospel has now replaced it. But Peter is using this Jewish language picture about priesthood and temple.

And that's us. He's writing to these Christians and says that that's us. Verse 6. He quotes from Isaiah 28-16.

And he quotes this to affirm their identity as the true people of God. Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame. And he quotes in verse 7, Psalm 118-22.

And in verse 8, he quotes Isaiah 8. Look at verse 9. You are a chosen race. In the Old Covenant, it was national Israel, physical Israel. You, church, you are now the chosen race.

You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation of people for His own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once, you were not a people, but now you are God's people. So, there are so many Christians everywhere that think Israel is now still primarily God's people to the extent that some men have preached God's going to save all the Jews even without Jesus Christ.

And they don't need the Gospel because they're the chosen people. Well, the church is the chosen people now. We are Zion.

We are the body and bride of Christ. We are the city of God. And we are the people of God.

And so, all that I've said thus far is just wanting to help us view the church right. Universally. Locally.

And who is the people of God? It's you. Alright. So, the way we view the church will determine how we are toward the church.

Because every one of us needs to make the most of our own church life. How do we do that? Well, we do it first by viewing the church rightly, but secondly, we do it by making sure we are initially fully joined to the church we're a part of. There's people that attend the church, but they're not really joined to the church organically.

They bring their bodies, but their hearts aren't fully there. And so they can have divided loyalties. They can be distracted by anything and everything.

But we must be, if we're to make the most of our own church life, it's on you to do this. The elders can't make you, can't produce it in you. They can encourage you, teach you, exhort you, strengthen you.

But only you from your heart will determine how I'm going to live my life with the church and how much I'm going to maximize my own church life, making the most. And if there's anything that ought to be in the heart of a Christian about their church, it's this. I am going to make the most of my own church life.

And when a person sees that and determines that, then priorities change, their practice gets fine-tuned, how they live, how they relate to the brethren, and then their heart is joined to the whole body. It's easy, isn't it, to gravitate to hanging around mainly each Sunday or each Wednesday talking to those you like or those you're most comfortable with, but we've got to be sensitive to being joined to in heart and life all the brethren in our church and to make sure that we are truly joined to the church. I'm talking about initially when God brings people into a church, if they know they're to be there, they are to jump in with heart, soul, life, commitment and time and love to truly be joined to the brethren.

And it's been special to see in these recent years here as God has brought different families and different individuals, you have been doing that, just being engaged to fully be joined to the brethren. You can't love one another from a distance. You can't build one another up if you're not involved in one another's lives.

And so it's always neat for me to observe, and I know for the other elders, to observe relationships flaring and people engaged in fellowship with one another and getting together. Guys meet for meals before prayer meeting because they're going to be coming and they plan to get together. Ladies get together before the women's study on Thursday.

Just this vital, organic relationship needs to always be happening. It won't happen unless we're truly joined to one another on the front end. That's how you make the most of your church life.

Secondly, once that's there, and these were just thoughts that I ordered this way to try to express the reality of it. To make the most of your church life, you must be engaged with the church fully. And I was kind of talking about that.

But I'm talking long term now. Engaged with the church. Apart from God's providence of sickness or business travel or legitimate family responsibility, after our jobs as men and as families and taking care of our families, what should engage our time, our energy, and our commitment is our church.

Because your spiritual gifts are necessary for the building up of the body. This is why I encourage people and I remind them sometimes or I might ask them, you know, why do you never come to prayer meetings? And that may seem like to be a little pushy, but pastorally you can say that to someone who's committed to the church and you can say there's legitimate reasons or it doesn't allow you time to get there. But if a Christian is able to be engaged with the church and its life and they can, then not doing it becomes questionable.

It is possibly evidence of a deeper issue and I don't really want to be that involved. I don't need to be that committed. Maybe even doing spiritually bad and I just don't want to be there.

And so, being engaged with the church fully is a barometer, it's a thermometer of how I am doing spiritually. If a person just stops coming consistently and they isolate themselves, you know something's wrong. You know something's wrong.

And they need to be pursued. They'll be joined to the church truly and to be engaged fully in all the life of the church. The Christians that grow consistently and flourish are those that view the church this way.

God has made my church a means of grace and growth. The worship services, the classes, the prayer meetings, the fellowship meetings, pastoral care. I need all this and God will use it to preserve me and protect me and grow me and stir me and edify me.

A friend of mine this week who's not been in a good church and has no fellowship was with a group of brothers that were just talking about the Lord. And he said, you know, I've been lonely spiritually and I've been struggling and it's because I don't have this. You neglect the church life in any consistent way, spiritually you will not be doing well.

You can't rationalize it. You can't justify it in any way. I would struggle deeply if I was disconnected and didn't have the church and the brethren in my life.

It's just none of us are strong enough to go without engaging in church life. So how are you doing? And how are you making the most of your own church life? Well, here's another point. Practical.

If you're going to make the most of your church life, if I am, individually, we must initiate church life and fellowship. You must do it. Do people pursue you? Probably not as much as you would like.

Maybe more than you'd like. I don't know. But here's the question.

Do you pursue people? Do you want fellowship? When do you make a phone call and an email to get with somebody? You're lonely and struggling one week. When do you call a sister and say, hey, could we meet

for coffee or breakfast? Could I be with you? Brother, I need to be with somebody this week. Could we get together? Do you initiate? Do you initiate welcoming new brethren in and make sure they feel a part and you invite them to sit down with you at Sunday lunch? Or are you in a comfort zone and you don't want to get out of that comfort zone and you don't initiate much? It's not up to the pastors here to make the brethren all feel welcomed and loved.

It's up to you. And it's up to us too. You must learn to initiate church life.

And you as a member implement church life by pursuing others. That's a vital ministry that every one of us have to have. And you say, I don't know what my spiritual gifts are and I don't have a leadership role.

Well, here's a ministry for you. You initiate engaging those in the body to get to know them and love them and be welcoming. Have them over to your house.

Meet them for coffee. Be with the brethren. They need you.

You need them. But you must initiate. The ministry of initiation.

Don't wait on others. Don't wait on others. You initiate.

And this will cause you to have a ministry to people that you don't have. This will cause you to be an encouragement to people. This will cause you to be fully making the most of your church life.

I'm telling you, it's wonderful. I have pastors sometimes here and there that I always have on my heart and I'll just call them. I'll just call them and say, well, just wondering if you're still in the land of living.

How are you doing? How can I pray for you? What's going on? And those guys don't call me back ever. And that's fine. One guy out in the east, he's kind of a loner, but when I get him on the phone, I can't get off.

He wants to give me a year's history, you know? And then he said, why don't you come back and do a conference here? Well, that's not why I called him. You see, we engaged in relational fellowship again because I took the initiative. Brethren, learn to take initiative.

God will use you. Forget your timidness. Forget your personality.

Don't make excuses that, well, I'm just not that way. This is a biblical calling and responsibility and the ability to love the brethren. And you can do it.

And you'll make more and more of your church life as you initiate fellowship and welcoming of others. Well, the last thing I want to say is this. How do you make the most of your church life? By you regularly praying and setting it as a goal for you to benefit in a maximum way from your church.

Because the more you benefit from your church, the more you'll flourish. And the way you'll benefit from your church is initiating things and being fully engaged and fully having your heart and life there as a priority. You will benefit extensively.

And this is what you want. The Psalms. In the Psalms, David talked about the saints flourishing in the house of God.

Are you flourishing? Are you withering? Flourishing in the house of God. Christ wants you as a member of the body to in a maximum way benefit from your church life. One-on-one.

Group meetings. Women's study. Men's study.

Prayer meeting. Would to God that every saint were in the prayer meeting. Their spiritual life would benefit twice as much if they made it a priority if they can go.

But we have to be engaged in such a way to say, Lord, I want to be rightly related to my church and fully engaged and taking initiative that I might fully benefit spiritually. That I might become the woman, the man that You want me to be. So making the most of your church life.

We've always got to come back to this and say not only how is my present walk with the Lord? Is it fresh? Is it real? Is it right? But how is my church life? Is it fresh? Is it real? Is it right? And what can I do? It's not others that can make your church life better. It's only you. You can.

So, we'll continue some thoughts on this next week. I've not said anything probably that none of you have not heard some way before, but it's good to be always reminded. So, questions? A little one now.

It's down on that perhaps. I know there can be situations too which vary. Children might be built and pulled out.

There are all kinds of scenarios, and sometimes it's difficult to weave that. And there's this tension isn't there? Because people can go to seed on worshiping the family and they neglect the church. But their marriage might be a great relationship.

But family becomes everything and they neglect the church. So that's error. That's imbalance.

But if a man is totally caught up in the Gospel and faith to his church and he's neglecting his wife and children, then that's wrong. So we have to learn to balance this. Paul Washer, I remember he said once, the will of God in one area will never conflict or negate the will of God in another area.

So a Christian can be a true churchman or churchwoman. High view of the church. Real commitment.

And your marriage and your family are your absolute priority in the earth. So, as elders, we function this way. Sometimes one of us will say, I can't come to the elders' meeting or I can't be at prayer meeting because my wife needs me.

We don't say, well, I doubt your real commitment then. We say that's right. We view that as right.

Because we see one another keeping things in proper order and in proper balance. So we have to learn as families, as couples, how to navigate this. How to keep one another and our family the priority and learn to have the church have its proper place.

Let's just say Jeff and Tommy, you brought the question up, so I'll use you as an example. Let's say Jeff and Tommy one Wednesday say, you know, we're both kind of tired. Usually one of us goes and the other one keeps the children.

We're both kind of tired. Why don't we just stay home and have some popcorn and watch a movie? Well, they could choose to do that. It might not be sin.

But is it the higher choice? Because what if one of them goes to the prayer meeting and gets edified and really blessed and strengthened and they skip it? And so we have to work these things out ourselves. And, you know, that's only a family can juggle that, Jeff, and figure out how to do that. But when you see families doing it and you see them exemplifying family is a priority and church life is a priority.

I mean, David Hulshlander's a marvelous example of this. Ron Elsie is too. Where their church is a priority and the commitment's there and the consistency, and yet the family does come first.

So, is that an all answer? Yeah, it's just one of the scenarios. Right. The beginning of missionary movement in the 19th century and mission agencies signing with mission and others began to really be popular.

There was, in my opinion, a wrong view of this. Families would put their children in boarding schools and the couple would leave and go to Africa. C.T. Studd saw his wife one time in the last 15 years of their lives.

She was in Britain. He was in Africa. So, that's questionable, isn't it? And that changed in missions in the 20th century where that wasn't done in practice.

Now, as it can be, Christ cherished. Your family wouldn't do that. Right.

It seems to me that a husband and a wife, that exemplifies Christ's love for the church. So, show Christ's love for the church by showing it does both for the importance of the church. Good.

Any other questions or comments? Well, I'll bring up something brief in that. I don't need to spend a lot of time thinking about it. The phrase, I'm sure, is replacement theology.

That's the view that a special friend of mine still thinks about replacements. So, we would be, it's a derogatory sort of term, right? Pre-worship salvation, we came up with. So, I'm just asking for confirmation.

What's your espousal, which I fully agree with, is what would be called dispensationalist and messianic. I plead the fifth on the grounds that it would incriminate me. At the New England conference, one of the questions was do you believe that church has replaced Israel? And I kind of just said, yeah, I do.

And then Charles answered better and he said, well, I don't think the word replacement is right. And it might not be. Although in Ephesians 2, it does say one new man in place of the two.

So, I think it's simply right to view that, I mean, my quick answer would be with the coming of Christ and the Gospel and His death and resurrection in the church, the church is now God's purpose in the earth. And there may be... You want to come up here? You can come and answer a little bit. A lot of times, the impression is given, well, God cast off Israel.

He's replaced Israel with the church. And I think the biblical idea is that there is a continuity. There's not only a discontinuity, but there's a continuity, there's fulfillment in the true Israel of God of all of those promises.

So, the promise there of the new covenant, God says days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. So, there's not this total chop off, but there's a renewed Israel and the true Israel becomes apparent in the church. So, I think we've got to guard against... We've got to guard against the flat land idea of covenant theology where it's just all one thing

and basically Old Testament Israel is the same as the church.

And we've also got to guard against dispensationalism where you have this chopped off thing that has no continuity. And Paul talks about that one olive tree in Romans 11 and there's a continuity. So, it's not one or the other.

And so, that's why I think we ought to shy away from the idea of well, the church has replaced Israel. It's the fulfillment. It's the fulfillment of all that God promised.

Yeah, I would never use that term. But it's kind of like lordship, salvation. Yeah.

Well, a lot of times we can give that impression in the things that we say. I think you've always got to maintain both the discontinuity and the continuity between the old and the new covenant. Right, right.

Yeah. See how much better his answer was than mine? Really true. I think also an implication on that as far as the church's identity is Christ and not ethnic.

Jew or Gentile. And then you see churches start up different places that maintain a certain identity. Messianic congregations.

Cowboy churches. You just keep naming. And they narrow it down to a specific people only.

And by implication, they're shutting out some who they won't reach. So, that kind of thing is always suspect. Any final questions? Obviously it wouldn't be an excuse, but do you think... That's always a challenge.

We grow up in a nation like America that just trains us in individualism a whole life, then it can become hard in many ways. And we have to shed that. Whether that's getting rid of comity, self-centeredness, or whatever hinders us.

Well, let's pray, and then we'll take a break and come back together at 11. Father, would You apply the truth that we've reflected on to our hearts and our lives? Help us to view the church correctly. Help us to engage properly and to be Your children in relation to our church in a way that will please You in every way.

Thank You. In the name of our Savior, we pray. Amen.

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Video: [https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/6YI7TA\\_KAyY.mp4](https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/6YI7TA_KAyY.mp4)

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