

# **The Church at Work**

## **Perfecting the Saints**

### **What is the church?**

- ▶ The people of God in the New Covenant era
  - Indwelt by the Holy Spirit
  - United with the resurrected Jesus Christ
- ▶ The local assembly of believers
  - the functional unit

### **What is the purpose of the church?**

- ▶ Edifying, perfecting, equipping the saints
- ▶ Conformity to Christ: Ephesians 4:13-16

### **How does the church do this work?**

- ▶ Preaching and teaching the Word
- ▶ Baptism
- ▶ Lord's Supper
- ▶ Organization – elders and deacons
- ▶ Discipline

## The Church's Product

### Doing the Work of the Ministry

**Christ-likeness** – holiness in character and work

#### **6 lessons on the characteristics of a “churched people”**

- ▶ Worship – adoration of God
- ▶ Singing – musical praise to the LORD
- ▶ Giving – support the work and believers in need
- ▶ Discipleship – living the life of Christ
- ▶ Love – The sign of discipleship
- ▶ Am I my Brother's Keeper?

# **Am I my Brother's Keeper?**

## **An application of the love of God in us**

- ▶ Love – unconditional affection leading to acts of kindness which promote salvation.

## **How do we react to the scruples of one another?**

- ▶ Scruples: An uneasy feeling arising from conscience or principle that tends to hinder action; a feeling of doubt as to whether an action is morally right.
- ▶ How do we deal with differences of conduct among Christians in matters of conscience that produce differences where there are no specific instructions from Scripture?

## **Instructions from Scripture:**

- ▶ Romans 14:14-23
  - the weaker brother
  - days and dietary issues.
- ▶ 1 Corinthians 8
  - the exercise of Christian liberty
  - food offered to idols

# **Am I my Brother's Keeper? Pursue peace and edification Romans 14:13-23**

## **Context:**

- ▶ Romans 13:8 – owe no man anything except love!
- ▶ A particular case: one who is weak in faith – Romans 14:1
  - A true believer
  - Disputes over opinions
    - No explicit Scriptural teaching
    - Specific issues: foods and days
      - Do not quarrel or condemn
- ▶ Accountable to the Lord

## **My brother's keeper (Romans 14:13-23)**

- ▶ The rule: do not condemn and do not hinder my brother.
- ▶ Clarification – these are things that are morally neutral.
  - The result of application of Christian principles
  - These are matters of conscience.
- ▶ Application of the rule
  - Do not grieve your brother.
  - Do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.
  - Do not let your good be spoken of as evil.
  - Serve God's Kingdom – righteousness, peace and joy
  - Accept the brother's scruples as your own.
  - Keep your faith between yourself and God.
  - Do all things with a clear conscience

**Am I my Brother's Keeper?  
Never make my brother stumble  
1 Corinthians 8**

**Context: A series of questions. (7:1)**

**The issue – food offered to idols (8:1-6)**

- ▶ We possess knowledge
  - One God the Father, Creator
  - One Lord, Jesus Christ
  - Idols are non-entities.
- ▶ Knowledge and love

**The application (8:7-13)**

- ▶ The weaker believer.
  - The weaker believer does not possess knowledge.
  - The weaker believer is wrong.
  - This issue is morally neutral.
- ▶ The application is not morally neutral.
  - Do not cause the brother to stumble.
  - This is sinning against a brother and against Christ.
- ▶ The resolution:
  - My brother's conscience is more important than food.
  - I will NEVER make my brother stumble.

# **Equipping the Saints for the Work of the Ministry**

An eccentric life

- ▶ Definition:
  - Departing from a recognized, conventional or established norm or pattern.
  - Not situated at or in the geometric center.
  - Having the axis located elsewhere than at the geometric center
- ▶ The believer is “off center”!
  - Worship and praise God
  - Give our material goods
  - Living the life of Christ
  - Love and serve one another

The duty of the church.

- ▶ Contrary to the natural order
- ▶ An impossible task
- ▶ A holy task