

## Why the Church Exists – Gene Getz

*Elders and Leaders, Gene Getz*

Wednesday, July 16, 7 PM

### **Introduction:**

Privilege to minister the Word of God.

Traveled with

“Gene I have two things I pray. I pray that first of all that I’ll never just become professional. And I always want to be able to thank God that someone came to listen to me.” I consider it a privilege that you’ve come to listen.”

Prayer

The unique cultural situation today is post-modernism.

“who needs the church” was the question they were asking then.

I had my own agenda based on certain assumptions...like they believed in the church.

These students didn’t even have an adequate definition of the church.

I laid aside my syllabus and my plan, and said ok, there is one thing that we agree on and that is the Bible is the Word of God. What I did was change direction in mid course. I went to my office that weekend and opened my Bible to Matthew 28:19

and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Two basic reasons that the church exists:

1. to make disciples
2. to train them

Took Epistles chronologically as they were written. Following the flow of what was written. By Sunday evening I’d finished Revelation.

*Sharpening the Focus of the Church*

We started a church and it mushroomed quickly.

I then became a first time pastor.

Through that experience I discovered principles that weren’t being used.

Two things I want to share: Both are very basic

1. How to measure disciples – their maturity.
-

Acts 14:21-28 “After proclaiming the Message in Derbe and establishing a strong core of disciples, they retraced their steps to Lystra, then Iconium, and then Antioch, putting muscle and sinew in the lives of the disciples, urging them to stick with what they had begun to believe and not quit, making it clear to them that it wouldn’t be easy: “Anyone signing up for the kingdom of God has to go through plenty of hard times.” Paul and Barnabas handpicked leaders in each church. After praying—their prayers intensified by fasting—they presented these new leaders to the Master to whom they had entrusted their lives. Working their way back through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia and preached in Perga. Finally, they made it to Attalia and caught a ship back to Antioch, where it had all started—launched by God’s grace and now safely home by God’s grace. A good piece of work. On arrival, they got the church together and reported on their trip, telling in detail how God had used them to throw the door of faith wide open so people of all nations could come streaming in. Then they settled down for a long, leisurely visit with the disciples.

Encouraging  
Strengthening  
Appointed elders in each church

**Question:** How do you measure disciples and their maturity?  
How do you measure a church? Same thing!

Acts 14:22 – strengthening the disciples  
The disciples were the church  
Strengthening the church.

**What is the church? A group of believing disciples!**

“Brothers” = “Brothers and sisters” 250X  
Disciples = a family in relationship  
“Hogias” = saints = disciples and brothers  
Brothers who are called holy disciples

Disciples  
Brothers and sisters in Christ  
Holy ones

**How do you measure that?**

Eph 4 - we are to measure up to the stature of Christ “metron”  
How do you break that down? Paul defines this in letters to the churches...

3 Words = “But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.” 1 Co 13:13

**Example:**

Letter to 1 Thess 1

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 “Every time we think of you, we thank God for you. Day and night you’re in our prayers as we call to mind your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope in following our Master, Jesus Christ, before God our Father.”

What it really means to reflect the stature of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 You need to know, friends, that thanking God over and over for you is not only a pleasure; it’s a must. We have to do it. Your faith is growing phenomenally; your love for each other is developing wonderfully. Why, it’s only right that we give thanks. We’re so proud of you; you’re so steady and determined in your faith despite all the hard times that have come down on you. We tell everyone we meet in the churches all about you.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-4 “Don’t let anyone shake you up or get you excited over some breathless report or rumored letter from me that the day of the Master’s arrival has come and gone. Don’t fall for any line like that. Before that day comes, a couple of things have to happen. First, the Apostasy. Second, the debut of the Anarchist, a real dog of Satan. He’ll defy and then take over every so-called god or altar. Having cleared away the opposition, he’ll then set himself up in God’s Temple as “God Almighty.”

Your faith is increasing.  
Your love is increasing.  
But your hope is being shattered!

“Because your faith is growing”

Ephesians 1:15-18 “That’s why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the Christians, I couldn’t stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I’d think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for Christians,

Only one hope. Not two – one for Jews and one for gentiles.

Hope =

“Hope of eternal life”

“the Blessed hope” of the coming of Christ.

Colossians 1:3-5 “Our prayers for you are always spilling over into thanksgivings. We can’t quit thanking God our Father and Jesus our Messiah for you! We keep getting reports on your steady faith in Christ, our Jesus, and the love you continuously extend to all Christians. The lines of purpose in your lives never grow slack, tightly tied as they are to your future in heaven, kept taut by hope. The Message is as true among you today as when you first heard it. It doesn’t diminish or weaken over time.”

Back to 1 Corinthians 13:13

How did Paul begin his letter to the Corinthians?

If Paul didn't thank God for faith, hope and love until 1 Cor 13 how did he open his letter?

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 "Every time I think of you—and I think of you often!—I thank God for your lives of free and open access to God, given by Jesus. There's no end to what has happened in you—it's beyond speech, beyond knowledge. The evidence of Christ has been clearly verified in your lives. Just think—you don't need a thing, you've got it all! All God's gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale. And not only that, but God himself is right alongside to keep you steady and on track until things are all wrapped up by Jesus. God, who got you started in this spiritual adventure, shares with us the life of his Son and our Master Jesus. He will never give up on you. Never forget that.

1 Cor 4 - if it weren't for the grace gifts I wouldn't even know you are Christians.

1 Cor 13:1-13 "If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end. Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled. When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good. We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us! But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

Gene goes back through the book to show It takes time to produce a group of mature Christians. Paul left them after 1 and ½ years and the church was still in a mess.

This church is in trouble and are still the most immature in the NT. Demonstrates there is no correlation between spiritual gifts and maturity!

Love protects...you aren't 1 Cor 8, 11

Doesn't cause another believer to stumble.

How do I know you have no love?

In the first 12 chapters – summarized in 1 Cor 13:1-4

Even knowledge is temporal.

When perfection comes – when we are like Christ.

When I became a man – Corinthians when are you going to grow up?

When I looked in the mirror I saw the truth.

A mirror doesn't lie.

When you look into the mirror of the Word of God it doesn't lie.

Someday we will see face to face.

If Jesus comes today, no mirror. You will be like Him, the perfect Bride of Christ.

Three remain. The greatest is love. Until we see this you are not maturing.

The work of faith = Eph 2:8-9

What is the work of faith? Eph 2:8-10

Saving grace

Not by works – not works salvation

“for we are God's workmanship” created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

Perepateo = to work worthy – Eph 4

Walk worthy!

Not like the gentiles!

Walk in the light

Walk in love

Walk carefully

The work of faith is to reflect JC in all we do, in all our relationships.

That's what James is referring to “faith without works is dead”

What is hope? Not being tossed about by every wind of doctrine. Stability

The labor of love – what is that?

Patience, kindness,

Why is it the greatest?

Because Jesus said “by this will all men know you are my disciples” It is the mark of a Ctn. It is the mark of a believer. You can't demonstrate love without being in relationship with others.

John 17 – prayed for unity. What produces unity? Love for each other.

Why does the church exist?  
So that the world will believe that You sent me!  
They will see the love of God in them!  
So the world will believe!

What is the greatest miracle that God wants to use to bring people to Christ?  
Authentic love and unity in the Body of Christ.!

Love is a reflect in the ultimate sense – love that is joy, peace and longsuffering.

That is one of the first questions that I wrestled with.  
We tend to measure the church in ways that aren't "faith, hope and love"

If Paul wrote a letter to our church what would he say?  
What are those people like in your big church?

What is your organization producing?  
It is really producing people who are demonstrating a work of faith, steadfastness of hope  
and labor of love?

That will give us something to work with until Jesus comes.

If that is the measure, then how do you produce it?