

Subj: Character, Christian

032617PM

Text: Eph. 4:17-24

Meth: Topical

Titl: The Art of Attitude

G.Pp: Instruct/edify

S.Pp: To show how each individual's contribution shapes the congregation as a whole.

Thesis Sentence: A congregation is made up of individual Christians, and therefore, reflects the collective character of the individuals of which she is constituted.

Introduction:

- A. A congregation is made up of individual Christians.
 - 1. Reflects their collective character and cannot obscure that character.
 - 2. Has no character of its own, aside from that of which it is made.
 - B. The more faithfully members reflect Christ in their lives, the more faithfully a congregation will represent Christ.
 - 1. It is easier to do what is right when we “think” what is right.
 - 2. Attitudes are always important – Cf. Prov. 4:23.
 - 3. Proper attitudes aid in proper relationships – Cf. Rom. 12:3.
- I. Attitude toward God influences all else said and done throughout life.
- A. *Love* - Mat. 22:34-38. Cf. Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3.
 - B. *Faith; trust* - Heb. 11:6. Cf. Jas. 2:18 “But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”
 - C. *Thankfulness* - Col. 3:17 – Thankful Christians “do all” by Christ's authority.
 - 1. Gratitude, or ingratitude, affects all we are, say and do as Christians – Eph. 5:20 “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”
 - 2. Faithful Christians are thankful Christians.
- II. Attitude toward self affects attitudes toward God and other people.
- A. *Humility* - Rom. 12:3, 16.
 - 1. Includes desire to serve, even “menial” tasks - Jn. 13:12-16.
 - 2. Lk. 16:10 “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”
 - B. *Teachability* - Prov. 15:31-33.
 - 1. Teachability requires:
 - a. Eagerness to learn and grow – Cf. 1 Pet. 2:1-3.
 - b. Ability to learn from correction, profit from advice and criticism. Pro. 12:15 “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.”
 - 2. The old and the young need a teachable attitude.
 - C. *Honesty; willingness to admit mistakes and correct them* - Jas. 5:16 “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

III. Attitude toward brethren shows level of spiritual maturity.

- A. *Love* - 1 Pet. 1:22 “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart”
1 Pet. 2:17 “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”
- B. *Cooperation; willingness to work together* - 1 Cor. 12:20 “But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.”
 - 1. We need to be able not only to *work*, but to *work together* – Heb. 10:25.
 - 2. Fellowship in worship **and** service makes a congregation effective.
 - 3. Otherwise defeats the need for congregating.

“It marks a big step in a man’s development when he comes to realize that other men can be called on to help him do a better job than he can do alone” – Andrew Carnegie.

- C. *Appreciation for others and their work* - Phil. 1:3-8. Cf. 1 Thes. 5:12-13.
 - 1. Will reduce destructive criticism, gossip, factionalism, etc.
 - 2. Read Phil. 2:1-4.
- D. *Submissiveness to faithful leadership* - Heb. 13:17.
- E. *Peaceableness* - Rom. 14:19 “Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.”
- F. *Hospitality; courtesy* - 3 Jn. 5-8; Acts 2:44-47.
- G. *Gentleness; meekness* - 2 Tim. 2:24-26.
- H. *Forgiveness; forbearance; patience; longsuffering* - Eph. 4:29-32.

IV. Attitude toward God's work affects both *quality* and *completion*.

- A. *Gratitude for the privilege of our work* - 1 Tim. 1:12. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:9-10.
- B. *Enthusiasm; eagerness* - 2 Cor. 9:7. Reluctance makes even easy tasks more difficult!
- C. *Industriousness; diligence* - Neh. 4:6. Cf. Heb. 6:11-12. “Some people are like blisters: they show up when the work is almost done.”
- D. *Initiative* - Mat. 25:14-30, parable of the talents.
 - 1. The willingness to do what is right without having to be forced.
 - 2. We should not have to be reminded constantly of our responsibilities.
Cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6.
- E. *Positiveness* - Eph. 4:29 “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”
 - 1. Grumblers and the negative thinkers are obstructive – Jas. 5:9 “Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!”
 - 2. Are “People are often down on what they’re not up to”?
- F. *Persistence* - Jn. 4:34. Cf. 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 6:12.
 - 1. Initiative must be followed through to completion.
 - 2. We can be our own worst enemies in getting the job done: faulty priorities, discouragements, distractions, prejudices, negative criticism, resistance.

Conclusion:

- A. Right attitudes make for better fellowship, worship, and service.
- B. The mind of Christ will help - Phil. 2:1-5.