

Intro: I love to fish: Someone I know goes: What did you catch! Stripes....: Rockfish...Yellow Perch...Northern Pike? Just because it has lines...doesn't mean a thing! What KIND of Lines? What color? Direction? Broken? Connected?

This morning we start a new message series I have titled: **THIS IS CHURCH:**
When someone talks to me about Church today, this is what I know. Just because it has stripes...MIGHT NOT BE!

There are a LOT of things that LOOK like church...Some that even CALL themselves Church...but they aren't! Church, the way it was created, initiated and lived out in the mind and heart of God, Expressed in NT, has 7 distinctive Marks Based in the book of Acts...we are going to be looking in detail at what makes something a Church! 7 Marks Of A NT Church
Acts 2:42-47 Page 772

1: Evangelistic Proclamation:

To announce the good news of Jesus death, burial and resurrection, calling people to repentance and faith!

Acts 2:38: *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins!"*

- One specific content: Acts 2:38ff 1 Cor 5:1-4 This is THE essence of our message
- Two distinct approaches:
 - ~Corporately: Acts 8:4-8 Phillip in Samaria
 - ~Individually: Acts 8:26-35 Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Applic: Church does all different kinds of things...but the core...the essence...the irreducible minimum: Call to Faith
You can have an organization that does every single other thing we are going to talk about...don't do this...not church

Personally: Have YOU made that decision to follow Jesus? Have you come to a place that you know you are lost without Him
Have you come to realize that YOUR sin has separated you from a Holy God, and that you NEED Him?
Today...if you have never made that decision...like Peter...I plead with your...be reconciled with God!

2. Christian Baptism:

To follow Jesus command to testify of your faith and identify with Him through immersion.

Acts: 2:41 *"Then those who accepted his message were baptized."*

- Obedience: Mt 28:19-20 This is what Jesus TOLD us to do!
- Significance: Rom 6:4 *"buried with Him in baptism...risen to walk in newness of life!"*
Every time someone is baptized...they are testifying...being obedient

Applic: This is the clear pattern of the NT! Dr Black (Get Saved...Get Wet!)
Act of obedience that sets the stage for a lifetime of walking with Him (Always going to be things don't like..understand!
Baptism helps us: And Baptism encourages others!

Applic: This year: 35 For each one...we are going to light a candle...constant reminder of what we are to be about
Every single candle...represents a different life that has been and IS being transformed!

3. Apostolic Teaching:

A commitment to teaching the truth of the Scripture, OT and NT

Acts 2:42 *"They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching."*

- Corporate: Acts 6:4 (Give ourselves to prayer and study of the word)
Acts 13:44 Paul in synagogue at Antioch Almost whole city!
- Small Group Acts 16:13-15 Lydia down by the river!
- Personal/Individual Acts 16:1-3 Paul personally instructing Timothy

Applic: I am firmly convinced we need all three! Corporate...God speaks to us all Small group, Interact, Personal Mentor
I cannot tell you the value of the personal mentor I have in my life
Small Group: Couple of Pastors I meet with Personally
Individual: Spiritual Director...What I am doing for younger

Applic: Sunday isn't enough! Amazing that a Pastor would say that, right...but it is so true!
Find a group...seek out a mentor...impact on your spiritual life immeasurable

4. Genuine Relationships:

"They devoted themselves to ... the fellowship"

- Shared life: Acts 2:46 Authentic community Where life is lived together: Not perfectly...But connected...care
- Shared ministry: Acts 6:1-7 Taking care of the widows...no one else would!
- Shared responsibility: Acts 13:1-2 Paul and Barnabas commissioned and sent out with blessing!

Applic: This is the area that is most attractive in many instances to the world we live in
There has been a transition in what people think of Church. It has become: The SHOW!
For many, church is about what happens on Sunday in that hour...

INCLUDES that..but if that is all MISSED THE BEST

Applic: Friday night...went to movies: Everything ok: 2 hours: A Pastor, 2 deacons, 2 ministry leaders

CONCL:

Why? Because they were so connected...

Life is tied into people throughout the church

Pray for, take care of, lead, teach, nurture

Gives meaning to their life...Blesses others...

Their time of need came...others flocked to them...

To love...care for...pray for...walk with

THAT IS CHURCH!

Question: Do you have it? Or do you just have the show!

If not....Do this

- **Do I know Jesus? Responded to proclamation?**
- **Have I been baptized? Obedient**
- **Am I in word? Not just Sunday....Small Group...Personally reading**
- **Am I connected with others in authentic spiritual relationship?**

If not...You know what to do....

Starts right down here!