

## I. INTRODUCTION.

-  A. Scripture text: **Philippians 3:12-14** (from Tom Moore)  
Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. [13] Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
-  B. This is the last of a series of sermons on moving the church forward:
1. The fact is that we will move into the future regardless of how we prepare for it.
  2. The question is actually one of what we will be able to do with the future when it arrives.
  3. So far we have looked at:
    - a. Challenges we must accept.
    - b. Enemies we must defeat.
    - c. Dangers we must avoid.
    - d. Opportunities to take.
  4. There is one more essential ingredient in Moving the Church Forward - **attitude**.
- C. Someone once wrote this verse asking, "Who am I describing?"  
*It is the "advance man" of our true selves.*  
*Its roots are inward but its fruit is outward.*  
*It is our best friend or our worst enemy.*  
*It is more honest and more consistent than our words.*  
*It is an outward look based on past experiences.*  
*It is a thing which draws people to us or repels them.*  
*It is never content until it is expressed.*  
*It is the librarian of our past;*  
*It is the speaker of our present;*  
*It is the prophet of our future.*  
*What is it?*  
*It's our attitude!*
- D. In this lesson I want to share some biblical truths with you about the importance of attitude and how it can help us accomplish God's will in "Moving the Church Forward."

## II. WHAT IS AN ATTITUDE, AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

-  A. Attitude Defined:
1. A person's prevailing tendency to respond favorable or unfavorably to an object, a person, a group, or an event.
  2. Normally, we speak either of positive or negative attitudes.
  3. Practically, it is how we think or feel about things.
  4. Attitudes are formed by what we believe to be true about things.
- B. Attitudes are expressed in several ways:
1. In our facial expressions.
  2. In our tone of voice / inflection.
  3. In our behavior or lack of it.
  4. In the way we perform a task.
  5. In the energy we put into whatever we are doing.
  6. In the interest we have in a person, a thing or an activity.
- C. Ask yourself, "How am I expressing Christianity?"

- D. The late General Douglas McArthur wrote something very profound about aging on his 75th birthday: "In the central place of every heart there is a recording chamber; as long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, and courage, you are young. When the wires are all down and your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then, and then only are you grown old."
- E. "Wouldn't you hate to wear glasses all the time?" asked a small boy of his playmate. "No-o-o," the other boy answered slowly, "not if I had the kind grandma wears. She sees how to fix a lot of things, see lots of nice things to do on rainy days, and sees when folks are tired and sad, and what will make them feel better, and she always sees what you meant to do even if you haven't got things just right. I asked her one day how she could see that way all the time, and she said it was the way she learned to look at things as she grew older. So it must be her glasses."
- F. The power of attitude is seen in the fact that since it reflects what we believe, it reflects what we are, what we will do, what we will sacrifice, how hard we will work, and how much of ourselves we will give to anything:
  1. There can be no doubt that attitude is a great determining factor of success.
  2. It is as true of the work of the church as it is with anything else.

### III. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ATTITUDES?



- A. Our English word "attitude" is translated in the Bible as: mind, countenance, and heart.
- B. Attitude is a very descriptive word that gives insight into how a person thinks or feels about something or someone.
- C. Note the following biblical examples:
  1. The disciple does three things (Ezra 7:10).  
For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.
  2. The attitude of work (Neh. 4:6).  
So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work.
  3. The attitude of loving God's word (Psa. 119:97-104).  
O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. [98] Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. [99] I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation. [100] I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Thy precepts. [101] I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Thy word. [102] I have not turned aside from Thine ordinances, For Thou Thyself hast taught me. [103] How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth! [104] From Thy precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.
  4. The attitude of sacrifice (Phil. 2:5-8).  
Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
  5. The attitude of joyous suffering (Ac. 5:41).  
So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name.
  6. The attitude of spiritual renewal (Eph. 4:22-23).  
*that*, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, [23] and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
  7. The attitude of being ready to suffer (1Pet. 4:1).  
Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
- D. It is obvious that God's word recognizes the importance of attitude, and either commends or condemns people for the product of attitude in their lives.

#### IV. ATTITUDES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE LORD'S CHURCH.

##### A positive attitude...

A. ...**toward God** (Mk. 12:30).

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

1. It will make a difference in how interested you are in God, and doing what He commands.
2. It will shape your willingness to seek for spiritual growth.
3. It will determine the moral climate you decide to live in.

 B. ...**toward the church** (2Cor. 11:28).

Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure upon me *of* concern for all the churches.

1. We need to promote, talk up, and let people know about the church.
2. This involves several different things:
  - a. Loving the people in the church (1Jn. 3:16-18).  
We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. [17] But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? [18] Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.
  - b. Actively supporting the work of the church.
  - c. Your level of involvement with the church (Mt. 6:33).

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

 C. ...**toward the assemblies of the church** (Heb. 10:25):

not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

1. Are assemblies important? Your attendance will answer the question.
2. Bringing visitors to the assemblies.
3. Participating in the worship.

 D. ...**about being different from the world** (2Cor. 6:14-18):

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? [15] Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? [16] Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. [17] "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. [18] "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

1. This is the difference between leading others to X or being led away from X.
2. Lift your head and know you are a son or daughter of the King.

 E. ...**about life** (Rom. 8:28).

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

1. This is the difference between overcoming the problems in life and being overcome by them.
2. Do you see life as your opportunity to learn how to be a servant of God.

#### V. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

 A. You can't keep an attitude a secret:

1. You will show it in your face, your voice, and your actions.
2. However much you are for or against something - your attitude will show through to others.

B. If the church is going to move into the future and do all that God wants us to do, then we must have a good attitude - the proper attitude.

C. **Are you moving forward with the proper attitude?**

D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.