

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Philippians 1:27-30.**

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; [28] in no way alarmed by *your* opponents-- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that *too*, from God. [29] For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, [30] experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

B. How does one go about measuring the spiritual health of a congregation?

1. Some say it cannot be done, it is intangible and cannot be measured.
2. Some say it is done with nickels and noses.
3. Some say it cannot be measured but it can only be observed.

C. The following list is not exhaustive, but indicative of a congregation that is doing well spiritually.

II. THE HEALTHY CHURCH HAS A DESIRE TO GO TO HEAVEN.

A. Text: Colossians 3:2.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

B. Too many times our preaching, singing, and thinking is earth centered.

1. Preaching: I have preached a lot concerning earthly relationships (men, women, children). But I must also focus on the real goal--heaven!
2. Singing: I am thankful for our singing because many of the songs we sing are about heaven. This is the way it should be.
3. Thinking: God has not called us to be successful! He wants us to be faithful. Too many times we cloud our thinking by applying the wrong standard to our lives.

C. Listen to the emphasis Jesus had in the Sermon on the Mount:

1. Where is our treasure, goals, desires? (Mt. 6:19-21).
"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; [21] for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
2. Why do these things?... to be what we need to be, God's child (see Mt. 5:38-45).
3. Worry or the lack thereof shows what is first in our life (see Mt. 6:25-34).

D. The healthy church desires to go to heaven.

III. THE HEALTHY CHURCH IS GROWING IN GRACE.

A. Text: 2Peter 3:18.

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

B. To me, to grow in grace is to:

1. Grow in God's power.
Get rid of the pride, ego, and attitude of self-sufficiency (2Cor. 12:8; Zech. 4:6).
(2Cor 12:8) Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me.
(Zech 4:6) Then he answered and said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.
2. Grow in spirituality (Ti. 2:11-14).
For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, [12] instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, [13] looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; [14] who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
3. Grow in ministry (Rom. 12:6a).

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;*

- C. The healthy church grows in grace.

IV. THE HEALTHY CHURCH IS GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE.

- A. Text: 2Peter 3:18.

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

- B. A good way to spiritually starve is to only get your Bible learning from the time you spend in worship. It makes no difference how good the preacher is one must study for themselves (2Tim. 2:15).

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

(Story of Salvation Army preacher who didn't know Rom. 8:28).

- C. Healthy teaching means sound doctrine applied to your life (2Tim. 1:13; Heb. 4:12).

(2Tim 1:13) Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

(Heb 4:12) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- D. The healthy church knows they need:

1. To learn the Word (Mt. 28:20).

teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

2. To learn the Word to grow in faith (1Cor. 2:4,5).

And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, [5] that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

3. To learn the Word to be able to teach others (Heb. 5:12-14).

*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. [13] For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. [14] But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*

V. THE HEALTHY CHURCH PRACTICES FORGIVENESS.

- A. Text: Colossians 3:12-15.

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. [14] And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

- B. It's time for a heart check-up. Your heart is in good shape if it has the following in it: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

- C. Look at the powerful comments in the text:

- D. The best way to practice forgiveness in your life is to realize how much you have been forgiven yourself. The healthy church appreciates its salvation.

- E. A sad commentary on the churches of Christ is that those who have been converted are generally more appreciative of their salvation than those who have "grown up in it."

VI. IN THE HEALTHY CHURCH, MATURE PEOPLE ARE HELPING THE WEAK.

- A. Text: Romans 15:1-7.

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. [2] Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. [3] For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED THEE FELL UPON ME." [4] For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. [5] Now may the God who gives perseverance

and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; [6] that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. [7] Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

- B. There is no room for selfishness in the body of X. We are not a Xian so that we can please ourselves.
- C. Maturity is not a license to do as you please. Even X did not please Himself (see Rom. 15:3).
- D. God was patient through the OT giving us a message of hope (see Rom. 15:4).
- E. May we then be patient and selfless in helping those who are weak in X.

VII. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Noses (numbers) are God's business (1Cor. 3:6,7).
I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. [7] So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.
- B. Nickels (contributions) are God's business (Phil. 4:19).
And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
- C. Being a healthy church is our business. These five things are important:
 - 1. A desire to go to heaven.
 - 2. Growing in grace.
 - 3. Growing in knowledge.
 - 4. Showing forgiveness.
 - 5. Helping to mature the weak.
- D. Spiritual health begins with Jesus and His saving blood.
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.