



ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A ministry of the Presbyterian Church USA
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SERMON STUDY & DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Church Series:

- #1 – Why are we a church?
- #2 – Are we becoming the church God calls us to be?
- #3 – From the past to the future**
- #4 – What will becoming God's church do to us?

10.03.2021 – Learning from the past. Moving to the future.

(Not blindly repeating the “un-good” things from the past while wisely moving to a better future)

Examples of “un-good” things from the past (man-made traditions/practices)

1. Clergy apparel/vestments
2. Church décor/ornaments
3. Style of worship: liturgical or blended
4. Style of music and choice of instruments
5. Bible translations, preaching/teaching language
6. Kneel, raise hands, speak in tongues, “Amen!”
7. Congregants’ apparel, unique ethnic/cultural attire

Examples of “good” and necessary elements of the church

1. Preaching and teaching of God's Word
 2. Promote and practice spiritual formation and discipleship for all ages
 3. Praying as a church, as well as individually and families
 4. Practice sanctified life as a church, as well as individually and families
 5. Regular worship attendance and giving to the church
 6. Participate in church fellowship and small group Bible studies
 7. Engage in church ministries especially community outreach*
- *Step up when you can for whatever church needs come up

When Paul visited Athens...

- Felt distressed to see so many idols
- In the synagogue, Paul reasoned with Jews and God-fearing Greeks
- Paul preached about the Good News of Jesus and His resurrection
- Paul observed: In every way, you are very religious
- But one object of worship/idol stood out: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD
- That God is now made known through Jesus Christ
- For in him we live and move and have our being
- God now commands all people to believe in the resurrected Jesus and repent out of their ignorance

The church in Thessalonica believed and became a model!

- They believed Christ's Gospel with power, deep conviction, and enabled by the Holy Spirit
- They turned to God from idols

- They learned and practiced what it means to have faith, love, and hope in Jesus Christ
- They became a model church in a large region
- The Gospel of Jesus Christ spread because of the example of the believers' life in the church
- And not just by the way they lived but also because of their hope in the resurrected Christ

People of St. James, what do we need to do to move to a better future?

- What “un-good” things and idols of the past must we not blindly repeat?
- What good things from the past and from today must we wisely do towards a better future?
 - God’s Word must prevail over our faith and life individually, as families, and as church (2 Timothy 3:14-17)
 - Rooted and built up in Christ, strengthened in the faith, overflowing with thankfulness (Colossians 2:6-7)
 - Will take all of us in church to grow together in faith, love, and hope (2 Peter 1:3-11)
- Like the Thessalonian church, they were moved by the Gospel of Christ with power, deep conviction, by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5). In other words, they were changed by God and did what they were chosen and called to do: to grow in faith, love, and hope in Christ and then build the church. As a result, the Gospel of Christ spread!

A testimony of God’s impact towards a changed life

Luke 9:23-25

St. James, becoming a model church?

Or, simply the kind of church that God calls us to become and to do?