

“A Church Worth Talking About”

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What is a Christian? What's the difference between a Christian and a Non-Christian? What's the difference from a church that shows Jesus and one that doesn't? Why are people, young and old leaving the Church, or at least not worshiping anymore?

There are many people saying that we all worship the same God, so what difference does it make. There are many others saying, “There's more than one way to Heaven, so just let me figure out how to get there. As Bible believing, blood bought children of God, we don't like that one bit, but what can we do? What can we do to make sure our church is a church where we teach, believe and follow Jesus? What are some qualities we must have to make this Church a place worth talking about and coming to?

The Church Talks Plainly not in Church Language. The special church language (justification, sanctification, redemption) might give you some comfort in a world that changing, but it's not helping those who are new to the church and come in seeking Jesus Christ. They want to understand what's being talked about and what it's saying to them. We need to talk to them plainly about love and joy, forgiveness and death, peace and God and they'll listen! That's why Jesus, as He preached spoke in parables using objects and situations the people understood.

The Church Shows Love not just Talks About It. In the next two months, we're going to have the opportunity to show love to those in need by raising money and packing packages of food for Feed the Poor. It's going to be an incredible experience as we team up with the other two Lutheran Churches and show that love is a process of action, not just pretty words!

Love can also be shown here as you greet one another with genuine joy and care, or as you offer and give help to someone in need, and do it with a big smile!

Open to 1 Corinthians 13. This well-known chapter of Paul describes and advocates love's divine qualities. Verses 4-7, *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”* Jesus IS love and we need to look like Him!

The Church Looks Past Its Building. Instead of simply stepping out into the area around us and partnering with all the amazing things already happening, and the beautiful things God's already doing, we sometimes seem content to keep our usual Jesus things inside and wait for the sinful world to beat down our door! To go out is hard and it takes a commitment to do it! It's our mission!

Our greatest mission field is just a few feet, off our property and we don't sometimes realize it! We're closer to the world around us than we might think or imagine!

The Church has Compassion for all. Open to Mark 5. Jesus was a perfect example of compassion to the man who had the problem of being possessed. He never turned away from him, He never ignored him, He never judged him, He just compassion toward him. Verses 7-8, *“And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”* So Jesus healed him and told him in verse 19, *“Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”*

The Church, meaning us, has to show compassion toward everyone, even those who are different than us. If you cultivate a compassionate heart, you'll be able to reach many people for Jesus. As the saying says: *"People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."*

Remember, to feel pity for someone doesn't change anything. Having empathy and compassion is to put you in the shoes of others, to feel what they feel. They need to see that you're not perfect and you struggle like they do. That's true compassion!

The Church Listens to Others. I've made the comment in Bible Classes and also in sermons how important it is to listen to others. Listening doesn't mean asking someone how they are and accepting their OK in return. When you ask, you need to be willing to put everything else aside and have a genuine desire to care for them and truly want to know!

It's not a matter of prying into others business, it's a desire to have them not feel alone. Our Stephen Ministers have spent a great deal of time learning to not give answers but to listen to the person they're talking to!

The Church Has a Passion for Jesus. Open to Ephesians 2. Our opening and closing words in anything we do must be, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" When you're thinking of what you're going to do next, you need to ask yourself, how can I show Jesus? As a Church, we need to do the same thing. We need to ask if what we're doing is showing our Passion for Jesus!

Verses 8-10, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*

Passion means being in His Word daily. Being in prayer seeking His guidance. Being in Church and Bible Class each and week, because we don't know how we could ever get through the week if we missed it! That's what passion looks like and that's what passion does!

The Church Isn't a Stumbling Block! Open to Romans 12. As a Church, each and every one of us, has to look outside ourselves and put our trust and confidence in our Savior and friend, Jesus Christ. He gave Himself for us, and He asks us to give ourselves for Him.

Verses 9-16, *"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight."*

These are the marks of a true Christian and a Church Worth talking About!