



“This is Church – Church 101”

4/27/2025

Speaker: Pastor Drew Hunsley
Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

19:12

All right. It's a good morning to be in church. We're going to see if my microphone works or doesn't work. It had. It felt a little loose when I messed with it a second ago. So we'll see. And if not, then I'm just gonna grab a microphone and we'll get through it either way. So I'm excited about being able to share with you guys starting our new series that we're simply calling “This Is Church”. So wanted to kind of give you a little bit of a backstory of how we got here and what we're gonna be talking about before we dive in this morning. So many of you were with us, were a part of the church last summer.

19:45

And so you may remember, last summer I went on a sabbatical that the church blessed me with the privilege of being able to kind of step back for a couple of months and really be able to focus on a couple of different things. I had a couple of goals as I started the summer. The first one was to be able to spend some personal time with the Lord. To really be able to sit with my Bible when I wasn't preparing to teach something or preach or do different things that are my responsibilities around here. And that was a blessing for me to be able to do. The second thing that we kind of set out last summer I set out with the goal of, was to prayerfully answer this question, what does God want for The Rock over the next five or 10 years?

20:29

So I'm thankful that I had the opportunity to step back and to be able to try to answer some of those questions. And so that goal of being able to. To say, what does God have for The Rock over the next five or 10 years? That's what we're going to be talking about for the next five weeks. That's what, as I was able to step back and to spend some time this summer just sitting with the Lord this past year, this series is kind of birthed from that and is really going to unroll over the next several weeks and over the next several months. But I don't want to rush through that process. And so this morning, what we want to do is we want to start this process of answering the question, what does a healthy church look like?

21:11

What does a healthy church look like? And then by extension of that, we have to ask the question, what does a healthy church member look like? And then we have to be able to answer the question, how do we help you in becoming that? This isn't me wagging my finger or deciding, well, you're not a good enough Christian because you don't check A, B, C and D, but simply for us to talk about together, how do we do this? And how do we do this? Well, what does it look like for us to be obedient to what God has instructed of us and commanded of us as we consider who we are as a church and what it looks like for us to be healthy in all of the different ways that God wants us to be healthy?

21:49

So we're gonna spend the next five weeks today and then four more answering this question, what does a healthy church look like? And so this morning, we're gonna simply define what is a church. We're gonna talk about some different pictures that God uses to describe the church. But over the next several weeks, we're going to talk about how a healthy church knows what it believes, how a healthy church, we have to decide for ourselves and evaluate ourselves whether we are spiritually fit, whether we're in good spiritual shape or not. And if we're not, we want to talk about how do we get there. So we're going to develop a spiritual health plan of how do we take those steps to become healthy? And then finally, we're going to talk about a path to commitment, a path to moving forward in this.

22:33

And so over all five of these weeks, I want to focus on the big overarching picture of what does God expect from us? What has he commanded us to be? What has he commanded us to do? How are we supposed to live this out? How are we created and designed to function as His church? And so my goal in this series is for us to be able to answer all those questions, but simply to kind of summarize that, to answer the question, what does a healthy church look like? And what is my role in a healthy church? Now, I know this is going to be weird for some of us because in a series like this, it's going to feel a little bit out of the ordinary, right? For us about 95 to 98% of the time, something like that.

23:19

I didn't do the math, but we preach expositionally, right? That means we work our way straight through passages of the Bible. And so we do chapter one this week and then we end chapter one and we do chapter two next week. We plug our way systematically through. But this series isn't going to do that. And I want to encourage you. We still believe wholeheartedly in expositionally teaching through the Bible. We are going to begin teaching our way through a book of the Bible in the beginning of June. We're going to go through the Book of Acts, which by the way, fun little connection. It talks about the start of the church and how God has created and fashioned the church to fit together and to function.

24:00

But over this series we're going to systematically look at a theme and that can be appropriate for us as well. That can be beneficial at times. And so as long as you base everything that you say, that I base everything that I say on scripture and interpret scripture accurately within its context, then we can do this in small bite size pieces. My hope for this series is that we would build all of this on Scripture. This isn't some fun idea that I had, something that the elders think we should do or shouldn't do. This is simply about what God has commanded. This is about what God desires for us. And so as we get started, I feel like I owe you an apology.

24:46

I feel like the elders owe you an apology because I think we do a pretty good job of preaching and saying what the Bible says. But there are some spaces where we haven't done a good job with this. There are some spaces where we will kind of make the declaration, we'll preach something and we'll say, hey, this is what God says. But we don't take the next step of saying, and this is how it needs to play out in your life. This isn't just something that you get to decide to do or not do. And your spiritual health is completely unrelated to that. This is what God has commanded of us. And if we are going to be the people that God wants us to be, if we're going to be healthy Christians, then we do the things that God tells us to do.

25:27

The Bible tells us that if you know what to do and don't do it's sin. And so for us as elders, I feel like I owe you an apology because when we put things in front of you and say, hey, maybe, if you feel like it, maybe you could do this. That's not me doing my job as God has commanded me to do it. And so I'm sorry for that. But I hope that you will join me, that you'll join us as we go on this journey that I believe is going to revolutionize how we function as a church, how we communicate with one another as a church, how we have expectations of one another as a church. And I promise I started this series trying not to oversell this, but I feel like I'm probably doing a poor job of it so far.

26:09

Right. This is going to change the way that we function as a church. And so I want to encourage you, if you've got questions, come talk to me. If you buy me a burger, I will sit with you as long as you want to hang out and talk, right? Tacos, whatever it is, that sounds good to you. But let's walk through this together and let's talk through things as we dig into this together. What does God want us to be as a church? And what does God want me to be as a leader of a church? And what does God want you to be as a member of a church? So I want to pray for us as we get started and then we'll dive into this series together. Let's pray church.

26:43

God, we thank you for the privilege of being able to gather here together this morning. God, for the privilege of being a part of a wonderful, healthy, loving church like ours, that we would be able to encourage one another and admonish one another and exhort one another. God, all these different responsibilities and roles that you give to us, you give us gifts and you tell us to use them, you give us opportunities and you tell us to play these different roles. And so, God, this morning as we begin this journey of considering what is a healthy church and what does it look like for me to be a healthy part of it.

27:18

God, I pray that you would use this time, that you would speak, God, that we would clearly communicate that we would clearly understand what it is that you and your word have spoken have clearly declared for us. God, we pray that we would understand more completely what your church is and isn't. God, that we would more accurately and faithfully walk in. What does it look like for us to live this out in a practical way? God, help us to be the church that you created us to be. We give this time to you. We pray that you would speak, that I would get out of the way. God, hide me behind your cross and use this time to accomplish as you see fit. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen. All right.

28:00

Well, as we dive into this week, the week that I've simply titled Church 101, right. We have to start. And so for week one of this series, I want to lay some foundation for the remainder of what the series is going to look like. I want to talk about how the rock can become a healthier church. And so today we're going to simply get started by reminding ourselves of some key details. Now, I think a lot of this is probably going to be familiar to you, but I wanted to kind of wrap it all up and put it together as we touch on some key kind of highlights. And we're going to go back over the rest of the series and get into some of these topics in a little bit more detail.

28:40

Today is kind of a flyover, but I want to begin by considering the question, what is the church? We're going to try to answer three specific questions of what that means and what that looks like today. So we want to answer the question, where did the church come from? We want to start by answering the question, how does a healthy church determine success? And then finally, we want to answer the question, how is a healthy church structured? Where did the church come from? How do we determine success? And how is a healthy church

structured? So we're going to start with answering the question, where did the church come from? That's a big question that's going to receive plenty of attention over the coming year. If you're unfamiliar with the different books of the Bible and how they all work, right. There's four gospels.

29:26

We're familiar. Many of us are familiar with those, right? Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They wrote four different perspectives from four different men as they watched the ministry of Jesus play out while he was on earth. They spent. Jesus spent about three and a half years doing earthly ministry and teaching and performing miracles and doing these different things. And so we've got these four pictures, one of them being Luke the doctor, as he made a reasonable, logical account of all the things that Jesus did, his teaching, his miracles, the different places that Jesus went, and the things that he said and did. But Luke also continued that story, right? The Gospel of Luke is Luke's account of Jesus, earthly ministry, Jesus, life, death and resurrection. But then we also have. We have this part two that Luke gives us.

30:14

We didn't put his name on it, sometimes we forget or miss this. But the book of Acts picks up immediately after where the book of Luke ends, right at the end of Jesus life. The book of Luke kind of comes to a close. And then the book of Acts picks up the story and tells us the story of how the church started to take the message of Jesus out into the world. How we took the story of Jesus and a few key followers there in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, in Galilee and these places, and how that message made its way over the course of years and years thousands of miles away, where people are sitting in casual California land that didn't even particularly exist on a map back then in Jesus's day.

30:55

Right, we know the land existed, but weren't on the map 2,000 years ago. But now we're sitting here this morning talking about a message that wasn't given directly to any of us. So how did the church start? How did the message go forth? And so we're going to study that over the course of the next year. But the whole Bible really tells us the same story. It tells us a story about how God has been forming a people for himself since the beginning of time, ever since in the beginning, God created the sky and the land and the water and the trees and the birds. God created man and he intended for man and woman to have a relationship with Him. Since that day, God has been forming a people for himself since the beginning of time.

31:43

And the story of the Bible, the story of God's redemption finds clear roots in the Old Testament where God is creating and forming a people for himself. We know stories about men like Abraham and Moses and David. God would reach in and was playing a special role with the nation of Israel, that He was going to be their God and they were going to be his people. But in the New Testament when Jesus shows up, we see in the New Testament that same people of God is referred to with a different title.

32:15

We are a spiritual Israel, but we are referred to as the Church in the New Testament, a term that is used to refer to the people of God as we see it in the New Testament, as God brings outsiders now, not just Jewish people, not just children of Abraham by blood, by heritage, but God brings outsiders, people like me, people like many of us non Jewish people, into the family, into the people of God. The book of Acts starts to tell us the story about how that message went out into the world. And we're going to focus on answering that question. Where did the church come from? More extensively in June and continuing as we start our

new sermon series in Acts. But until then, I want to leave this question with a fairly simple answer.

33:02

That is that God established the church in the wake of his departure. As Jesus left the earth, Jesus gave the disciples instructions in order to go and to fulfill the Great Commission. Right. Are we familiar? I think many of us are familiar with the Great Commission. Matthew, chapter 28. Right before Jesus left earth and went back to heaven, ascended back to heaven, he said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And then he said, go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, Baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you. Then he promises them, I will be with you to the end of the age.

33:41

He makes some commands in there, and he kind of talks about why the church has been established. He says for the disciples to go make more disciples. Go make disciples of all the nations. He tells the Church, the apostles, to go and to teach all these other disciples. Teach them everything that I've commanded you. In the book of Acts, right at the beginning, it tells us a little bit of the final words of Jesus before Jesus ascended back to heaven. And in Acts 1:8, he said, you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. God created the church. And he commanded us to go and to do his work, to take the message of Jesus.

34:26

To take the message of the kingdom out into the world and to make disciples of all the nations. That's why the Church exists, and God created it himself, with that being the goal. Why does a healthy church exist? It's to take the message of the gospel out into the world and to teach them to obey all that Jesus has commanded. The second question for us to answer today is, how does a healthy church determine success? Now, if you've ever heard someone talk about the Great Commission before, the verses that I just shared with you, it's possible that they blew past an important piece of information in that puzzle. Right. I actually just did it a minute ago when I was kind of summarizing what those verses say. I did it intentionally just to see if anybody would notice. Right. Did anybody notice?

35:14

I kind of didn't really focus one part of those verses. We often talk about go make disciples. We often talk about Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Right? We like to talk about that in the go. We have to go. People will focus on that word go. Right? We gotta go somewhere. We just blow past. It's like it's a footnote. Where does that authority come from? Who's in charge of this mission? Jesus is the foundation for the commission that he would give to his disciples. He says in Matthew 28, verse 18, he says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And then he issues the command, go make disciples. The command, go, make disciples, it comes from Jesus.

36:03

But the authority and the power with which we are to go and to do that also comes from Jesus. Right? That means that it's his mission. That means that he has the prerogative to define what constitutes success in this mission. If Jesus has established the mission and Jesus has given us the mission, that means that he is in charge of the mission. And that means that his goals are the goals for the mission. We have to ask this question. If we're going to talk about being a healthy church, we need to be able to answer the question, who do we seek to please? What is it that we're truly trying to accomplish? I want to point to Galatians, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10. Write this down. You can go back and look at it in context later. We can simply.

36:53

I've got it on the screens for you here. We're going to bounce around a bunch, so I'd encourage you just write down all the references and then we can, you can go back and consider them this week. If, if we move too fast, we got a lot to cover. Galatians, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10, it says we have said before. Now I'll say it again. If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one that you've received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man or of God? Or am I trying to please man? For if I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

37:27

Paul is kind of working this outwardly, talking to the Galatian church and he's telling us that our job is to proclaim the truth of God that God has given to us. Our job is to please him, not to please man. We don't exist to please people. The success of a church isn't dictated by how happy people are or aren't when they come to it. It's not dictated by how many people come to it or come to it. It's not up to us to come up with some man-made definition of what is a successful church. Biblical churches aren't measured by how many warm fuzzies you get over the course of a week or a year or whatever it may be. Successful biblical Churches aren't even measured by any real numbers, right? They're certainly.

38:19

They're measured by how obedient are they to what God has told them to be, what God has told them to do. God is the one who dictates the terms of this relationship and dictates what is or is not successful. Another important reminder I'd like to bring up is from Matthew, chapter 16, Matthew 16:18. You may remember this in context. Peter has just made this great declaration saying, Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And then Jesus looks at Peter and he says this. He says, peter, I tell you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. In those verses, Jesus says, I will build my church. The church is not a democracy. It's a theocracy. Right?

39:12

We don't get to vote for our leaders that we want to lead us. We don't get to decide for ourselves what is or isn't sitting success. It's a theocracy. God is the king. God is the king of the world. God is certainly the king of his church. And so our job is to establish his church and to lead his church as faithfully as we can. The measure of success or failure is not whether a church is big or small. It's not whether a church has a whole lot of money in the bank or very little money in the bank. It's not. A church is not successful if it's powerful or weak. We look at things like that. We like to look from the outside.

39:51

We look from a human perspective when we look at these things and we say, oh, well, that church is doing something right, because. And then we fill in the blank. Measure of success is whether a church is being faithful to do what God has commanded it to do. And beyond that, we look to Jesus to accomplish the work of the church. Now, are there healthy churches that are big? Absolutely. Are there healthy churches that are wealthy? Absolutely. But are there also healthy churches that are small and poor, just have a few people gathered together in a basement somewhere? Absolutely. The measure of success for a church is whether the church is being faithful to be and to do what God has commanded it to be and to do. We have to be faithful.

40:38

Jesus is the one who, like he told Peter, I will build my church. We simply act the way that he tells us to act, do the things that he tells us to do, and then Jesus is the one that brings fruit. Jesus is the one that will fill this room with people. Jesus is the one who will take people sitting in a room like this. We can drum up a crowd of people, right? I've heard people say.

I've heard other pastors say the easiest thing to do in the world is to get a room full of people, right? There was a church in the town that I grew up in. Every Easter, they would give away a car. They would raffle one. It was, you know, hey, come, you know, reach underneath of your seat, whatever. I didn't go, right?

41:18

I was busy at my church on Easter. But they would give away a car every Easter. You know what they had? Every single Easter, they had a full room, right? The easiest thing to do is to drum up a crowd. But if we drum up a crowd like that and then everybody leaves in the same spiritual condition that they came in, that's not a successful church. That's just a busy parking lot, right? Jesus is the one who will build his church. Jesus is the one who will accomplish his mission in the church. And so the ultimate goal for a church is simply to be biblical. We can do all the shiny, look at us things that we could want to do, right? We could do the thing. I'm not going to name the church, but the car church. Right?

42:00

We could do that, and we could drum up a crowd and we could be successful in a lot of people's eyes. But the ultimate goal for the church is to be biblical. We're in Orange County. There's a lot. There's plenty of churches that have that look at us kind of attitude around us, right? There's a lot of people in Orange county that have a look at me attitude in Orange County. But our job is not for us to be about us. Our job is for us to be about him. Our job is for us to be about his mission and his purpose and the things that he defines as success. God is the one who established the church, and God is the one who gets to determine the rules. Our goal is simply to follow the instructions well.

42:42

Let me read for you a quote that I found this week talking about this idea. John MacArthur, you guys may have heard of him. He's a preacher at a small church up in L.A. He said it is absolutely essential that a church perceive itself as an institution established for the glory of God. I fear that the church in America has descended from that lofty purpose and has focused instead on humanity. When we get our eyes off of God and we simply start to look at the people, how do we get the people? How do we get A bigger crowd? How do we get more money? How do we look like we're sort of successful in the world's eyes? That's a great way to build a McDonald's franchise. It's not a great way to build a church. Right?

43:25

We're not about dollars and cents. We're not about just putting enough butts in seats for us to feel like we're doing something. It all has to be based on what does God want for us? How does God define success? And so we have to remember God is the one who gets to define what a successful church is. Finally, we have to ask the question, how is a healthy church structured? What we agreed upon just a minute ago is that when we're determining what a healthy church looks like, we need to consider what God has to say on the matter. So a key question for us this morning is what does the Bible say about the church and how it's structured?

44:00

The first thing that we have to note if we're talking about the church and how the Bible talks about it is that the Bible uses several different analogies. It uses several word pictures to show us what the church is supposed to be like, right? It uses analogies of the family. It uses the analogy of a building, and it uses the analogy of a body, a family, a building and a body in different places. In the New Testament, it talks about the church using each of these pictures. And I think each of these analogies speak to the elements of how the church relates to one another and how it's dependent one another. So let's briefly peek at each analogy to see what God has to say about these different things. The first one is that the church is a family.

44:46

There's a couple of different verses that I found. There's several that talk about this. This is a familiar concept to us. But let me just quickly touch on these different places. Matthew, chapter 12. It says that as Jesus was stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said, here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven and is my brother and sister and mother. Someone in the crowd, Jesus was there teaching. Someone said, hey, Jesus, your mom and your brothers are here. He said, no, no, no. These people are my mother and my brothers. This is my family. The people who know and do the will of God, who are obedient to what God has told them to be and do, that's my family. Jesus was not shy about where his allegiances lied.

45:34

Those who are a part of the family of God are his Family far more than his flesh and blood. Let's jump over now to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians 2:19 says, so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. The household of God is a commonly used term in several places. We see this all over the place, right? The Bible talks about when you place your faith in Jesus, it tells us that you are adopted and become a part of the family of God. Ephesians 1 talks about that. Romans chapter 8 talks about uses that adoption analogy, that we are brought in, that we are a part, we're adopted into the family of God.

46:16

And so as God is gathering a people for himself, they're often referred to with this family type language that we are being built into a family together. The second picture that Bible uses is that the church is a building. Now, I'm not saying that this physical building is the church, right? We call it the church. We talk about getting up on Sunday morning and going to the church. And we're talking about 101 South Chaparral Court, right? But this physical building is not what I'm talking about. Listen to what the Bible says when it's talking about the church being built up as a building. Same passage that we just looked at. I'm just going to continue reading from a moment ago. Ephesians chapter 2, verses 19 through 22. Now verse 19.

46:59

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. This same passage that we looked at just a minute ago regarding the church as being a family. These same verses continue to speak of the church as a building that individual members are being constructed together, that we're these metaphorical stones that are being used to build God's temple. God's temple in the Old Testament, the physical structure of the temple, the holy of holies, right?

47:50

That was the dwelling place of God in the Old Testament. The temple was where God resided among his people, the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, the temple takes on a different form. The temple is a spiritual reality where the New Testament church is referred to as the temple of God that God lives and dwells inside of each of us who have placed our faith in Jesus, that the Holy Spirit comes and dwells inside of us, that we are the temple of God, the church is the temple. And so these verses are telling us that we are stones being built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Jesus as our cornerstone. We're being built together into a holy temple in the Lord. We're a building. 1 Timothy, chapter 3 also talks about this same reality.

48:38

Paul addressing Timothy, he says, I hope to come to you soon, but I'm writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God. Right? Family language, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and a buttress of the truth. This passage also talks about these two pictures, household and building, with these pictures in mind as the household of God. It's spoken of as a pillar and a buttress. A pillar was a structural feature that was used to uphold the weight of a building, right? It was a. Was part of a building. A buttress was a support column. If you had big heavy walls, they would put these kind of cross sections in. It was a buttress that would be used to stabilize a building or a wall.

49:26

These two structural features of buildings are used to describe the church. Referring to the church as a building that God is constructing the church and is formed as a sort of a structure of support for the message of Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Most of the people out there in the world that don't know the message of the gospel, most of them are going to hear. If they hear the message, they're going to hear it through the ministry of a church. They're going to connect God and the faith that they need to have in Jesus and the Gospel. They're going to connect those things together in, most of the time, in a ministry of a church, the church's responsibility is that we would support the church.

50:09

Excuse me, that we would support the truth and serve as the foundation upon which the Gospel is reflected to the world. That we're built together as a building. God has put us together as a family. And finally, the last picture that God uses of the church is a body. Romans chapter 12 talks about this. Romans 12, verses 4 and 5. It says, for as in one body, we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function. So we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. There's one body with many individual members. Romans chapter 12 talks about it. 1 Corinthians 12 also talks about this same topic, the body of Christ. But we have a ton that we're covering. I don't want to read this whole big section.

50:55

There's 15, 16 verses that are here, but talking about it in 1 Corinthians 12. But let me just read a short portion now and I promise you we're going to come back to this. This is kind of a key text that we're going to come back to later in the series. We'll give it a more thorough address then. But for right now, let me read just a couple of verses. 1 Corinthians 12:12. Paul says, for just as the body is one and has many members, hands and feet and eyes and ears, all these different things, all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. You skip down to verses 18 through 20. He says, as it is, God has arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose.

51:36

For if all were a single member, then where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. Both of these passages use very similar messaging, very familiar messaging to many of us. The family of God, right? The family of God is a body with different parts and each different body part has a different role. You're familiar with 1 Corinthians 12. You know, he offers this absurd analogy about how if everybody in the body was an eye or an ear or a hand or a foot, we would be a really funny looking body, right? Has anybody ever pictured a body with 400 feet and no eyes or ears or heads or. Right. That's horror movie stuff, right? The family of God is a body with different parts and we have different roles.

52:27

I love the way that I saw one person describe it. They said there is unity in our diversity. Reality is that the analogy of the body, it means that we are given to one another and that we need one another. That we are codependent at the center of all of this. There's this

mysterious connection that we find in the midst of a church, right? There's many places in life where people are united by their similarities. If you go somewhere and you meet people that love the same things as you, maybe they think the same way as you, right? They all watch the same news channel that you watch. Maybe they act the same as you, they use the same terminology or do the same things or go to the same places.

53:10

We can find community with these people when we have similarities with them. But that's not the case at the church. The church is the most diverse collection of people that are unified anywhere that I've ever found in the known universe. See, at the church, we aren't united because we all like the same music. In fact, I can tell you as the pastor, there are a lot of people that come to me and tell me we should do this kind of music. You know, I think we should change this. We need to get rid of this instrument. We need to add this instrument. We need to do this song more or this song less or right? We like different music. We like different things. We might even like different teams, right? If you need proof, I'll give you exhibit A.

53:55

A guy from the south standing up here, pastoring a church full of Dodger fans. If that wasn't crazy to me growing up in the south, rooting for the Braves, I don't know what is right. But I love you, even though you're Dodger fans, right? The Angels fans, you guys are cool. They've never been a threat to anybody, so we're good. But the fact that I can love a church full of Dodger fans is proof of the fact that God has united, brought people from all over the place, right? We know this to be true. In a healthy church, we have one thing that unites us. It's the fact that we are a part of the family of God, that we are part of, brought together, that we belong to him, that we love Him. That brings rich people and poor people.

54:36

It brings successful people and unsuccessful people. It brings people from different nations, different tribes, different ethnicities, different language groups, all of these different things. God puts his church together as a body full of unique and valuable parts. We're going to dig into this more in the coming weeks, but for now, I want to focus on some of the structural differences that God has built into the church. Now, it's not our right to determine how God's church, right. God's church should be structured and organized. God established it. God put it together. God ordained the structure and created specific roles within the church. And so there are three specific roles that are mentioned in scripture that we see within any given church. Right? I want to briefly note each of these along with their primary responsibilities that we see.

55:29

The first group is the pastors and the elders, right? Synonymous terms that we see used of the same people in the New Testament. But in Acts, chapter 6, we see kind of a story talking about how there was a specific role, a specific responsibility that the church leaders had and they needed to hold tightly to. In Acts, chapter 6, just a little context for you. There was this conflict in the early church where there were some people, there were some widows that were in the church that were feeling neglected in the way that the church was distributing food, they were taking care of their members. But some people felt like they were getting the short end of the stick. And there was this fight that was brewing in the church, right? Good news for us. Even churches thousands of years ago fought amongst themselves.

56:14

And so as the apostles start to hear this message that there's unrest in the church, they determined that this was an important issue that needed to be responded to. But they also knew that they had an important role to fulfill. And they needed to remain focused on the role that God had given them. Let me read just a couple of verses for you. From Acts chapter 6.

It says that the 12 summoned the full number of the disciples. And they said, it is not right that we, the church's leaders should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty, but we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

56:58

These leaders had an important role to play in the church and they needed to remain focused on their job. The appropriate thing for them to do was to remain focused on the ministry of the Word and prayer. There was a specific role that was given to these leaders, but that doesn't mean that they ignored the problem. It means that they appointed others who had become known as deacons to meet this need. We'll touch on that group in a minute. I also want to read for you from 1st Peter chapter 5 in these verses that we get clear instructions from Peter to the pastors and the elders in the church. Let me read for you 1 Peter 5, verses 1 through 3.

57:38

Peter says, so I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Pastors elders shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you. Not for shameful gain, but eagerly. Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. Elders were told to lead, to provide oversight. They have a responsibility now. They were to make sure that they weren't greedy when they did, that they weren't going to do it with compulsion, that they obligated people to do what they said, not heavy handedly, but they were to do it with compassion and with eagerness.

58:22

They were to serve and to lead the church that God had given them a responsibility for. That's My job as an elder of this church, that's the job of our elders of this church, is to care for you and to love you and to lead you to the best of our ability, to grab you by the shoulders and say, come with me. We're going to Jesus. Right? That's the responsibility of an elder. Now, we also see deacons mentioned in scripture, Acts chapter 6, that same passage that I was just talking about, we just looked at this, talking about the role of elders and pastors. But the origin of this role of deacon comes from Acts chapter 6 as well.

58:58

They were the ones that were asked to go and to serve the tables, to go and to meet these needs that existed in the church. Deacons exist to serve metaphorical tables to meet felt needs in the church as an extension of the elders. And so that means the deacons are going to be waiting tables when you go to breakfast. No, I'm kidding. You got to get your own orange juice and coffee, right? But they exist to meet the felt needs of the church. 1 Timothy, chapter 3, we have a section of verses. We're not going to read those verses this morning, but first Timothy 3:8-13. It specifically outlines the expectation, the responsibilities, the characteristics of a deacon in the church.

59:40

It kind of gives weight to this is a specific role that God has created and ordained for it to exist inside of the church. If you're curious more about that passage we actually preached through 1 Timothy a couple of years ago, go on our YouTube page. We've got a whole sermon talking about those verses. But for now, I wanted to simply use it to point to the fact that God has established deacons as an explicitly created role that God has for his church. The last role, the third role that we see mentioned in scripture for the different pieces, the different roles in the church, is members of the body, right? 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. We

just talked about it. Romans, chapter 12 as well. They talk about these different sections that we are members of the body of Christ.

01:00:32

We looked at these earlier, but I want to simply note the fact that these key verses here point out the role that applies to many of you in this room. You may not possess the role of elder or deacon, but each member of the body of Christ has an important role to play. Now, you're not simply a junk drawer full of spare parts, right? Everybody's got the junk drawer that's under the microwave or whatever that you just shove all the random stuff. That's not a church, right? We talked about how we're Diverse how? We're different, but we're not a junk drawer full of random pieces. Each member is united to the body and has an important role to play. I don't know what the appendix's job is, but somebody is the appendix, and it's supposed to. Man.

01:01:16

We all have a role to play, right? 1 Corinthians, chapter 12 even says, it cautions us. It says, don't look at someone else and say, I don't need you. We need one another. The hand cannot say to the foot, I don't need you. The hand also can't say to the foot, you don't need me. Right. It goes both ways. We can't look at someone else and say, you're not important. You don't play an important role in the church, in the body of Christ. No, no, the church does need them. And also, you don't get to play the not little old me. Right? The church doesn't need what I have to give. No, no, no. The church needs you, too. You were created to be a hand or a foot or an eye or whatever it may be.

01:01:57

And the church needs you because without you playing your role in the church misses out. The rest of the body doesn't have a sense of sight in the same way or a sense of smell in the same way, or we don't accomplish the same things if members of our body, if hands and feet and eyes and ears don't do their jobs. The problem. If a person's eyes don't work right, that person is limited in what they're able to do or not do. The same way a church is handicapped. If we don't all play our role, we are codependent body parts, members of the body. Words that God uses in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans chapter 12, talking about the body. A member is a body term. Right?

01:02:45

We hear that word and we often think of, well, no, I'm a member at Gold's Gym or I'm a member of Costco or wherever it may be. Right? But a member is a body term. If we agree that the Bible talks about us as a body, we have to agree that the body has members. And if you are sitting there going, I don't know what this guy's getting at, you know, I got my membership card for Costco. I got my membership card for. Let me say it this way. If I told you that a body was dismembered, does that mean anything to you? Oh, wait a second. No, no. There's A connection there, right? Members of a body. No, no, we're talking about fingers and hands and feet and limbs. And if you start dismembering a body, we know what that means.

01:03:25

Members of a body are pieces of a body. Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 and 12. God gave the leaders the responsibility to equip the saints. Ephesians 4:12. Equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. This means that every member of the body is called to do the work of the ministry. The leader's job is to lead. Well, the pastor's job is to teach you how to do that, to equip you to do the work of the ministry. But it's not. The pastor's job is not to do all of the work of the ministry. That flies in the face of what Ephesians chapter four is telling us. It says that every person, every member of the body is called to do the work of the ministry.

01:04:08

Every member of the body has gifts and has a role to play. And so for us to be a healthy church, that means that we need one another, that we support one another, that we play this role, that we are so intimately connected with one another that it looks so different than anything else that exists in the world. We all have an important role to play. There are no tonsils in the body of Christ, right? There are no appendixes in the body of Christ. We all have a role to play. And so as we wrap this first week up, this series is going to focus on helping us to fulfill those roles that God has planned for us and that God has commanded us to live out and to do.

01:04:54

There's pastors and deacons and members of the body in every one of those roles has an important role to play. Now, we don't want to try to make this up on our own. We're not coming to you with just. I've been talking with the elders about this since last summer, right? I told you guys that this was just something that God put in my belly burning last summer and said, no, we need to deal with this. And so the elders have been patiently humoring me as weekly, most of the time, weekly, have been talking about how do we. What does a healthy church look like and what does it look like for us to be a healthy body and what does it look like for the parts of our body to be healthy and how do we lead our church to do this well?

01:05:36

We wanted to be so careful. We talked about this countless times. Guys, this can't just be something that we want. This can't just be something that we come up with. And we put this really cool plan on paper and we say, hey, everybody, do this. Well, where did it come from? Can you footnote it? Well, no, no. We. We had a meeting, right? If I come to you and say we had a meeting, don't follow me in that thing, right? This is about what does God say? This is about how has God structured his church? And then how do we best. Most faithfully as we can? How do we live that out and how do we walk that out practically in life? We need to consider God's plan and do things his way. That's why we've been trying to answer this question.

01:06:21

What is a healthy church? What is a healthy member of our church? For close to a year at this point, I'm excited to share, to see what God has in store for us over the summer as we continue to kind of unpack this and share the rest of this with you all. But for today, there's two takeaways for you today. A little strange with the introductory thing, but two things that I want you to remember as we leave here this morning. The first one is that the church matters. The church matters. The church was supernaturally created by God. This isn't something that we just got together and we kind of like the same things. And so we formed a club. God created the church supernaturally. God has organized and directed the church.

01:07:07

And our job is to walk in obedience as best as we are able. God created the church, and the church matters. The second takeaway for us is be here for the next four weeks. Right? Because today was just the flyover. It was just the introduction to kind of lay some groundwork. So as we are seeking to be a more healthy and a more biblical church, we've got to dive in on some of these places in a little bit more detail over the remainder of the month. I'm really excited. I don't know if my body language is selling me out today, but I'm like, I told myself, get up there and plant, because I'm going to be running all over the place and waving my arms and doing. This is important to me. This is important to us.

01:07:51

And it's important that we understand what God created us to be and how we're supposed to work together. And biblical church changes, it changes your life. If you're a part of a biblical church and you live in a community of faith that looks like what the Bible describes the church as in the New Testament, it radically changes. And everything in your life, it looks entirely different than someone who goes out there and tries to figure it out for themselves all week and then goes to church for their little Jesus fill up on Sunday mornings. Entirely different. Entirely different. So please, please, I love that you're at this church. I'm not foolish enough to think that all of you stay at this church for the rest of your life, right? Somebody's going to move.

01:08:37

Somebody's going to end up at a different church or a different state. Right. We're going to be in different places at some point in life. But whether you're at the Rock Community Church or whether you're at some other church down the road years from now, blessed by some other church's ministry, being a part of a healthy church matters. Being a healthy part of a healthy church matters because we are not an organization that we just put together a service for you and then you consume it. We are not seller and buyer, right? We're collaborative. We are the sum of our parts. We are what we make us to be, what God ultimately is making us to be. But we make up as a church. We are what we are, the health of our members. If you've got a gangrenous toe, right?

01:09:30

If you've got some body part that's infected, anybody had a tooth go bad before, your whole body feels that, right? Your whole body feels it when you have a tooth or a foot or a pinched nerve or whatever it may be, right? The whole body suffers when an individual member or part of the body is hurting. Our church is healthy when our members are healthy, when our body parts are healthy. That's how we become a healthy church. That's my desire for us over the course of the coming month, over the course of the coming years. That, that we would be biblical church, that we would be a rich and bountiful church. That we would overflow with the things that God has for us, that we would be the things that God has for us to be.

01:10:18

Our prayer team is going to be down here after the service. They'd love to pray with you, pray for you about whatever it is that's going on in life. Drop your prayer requests off at the prayer wall. If you don't have time to pray with us this morning, would you pray with me now? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the church. God, what a privilege it is for us to spend this time talking about what a healthy church looks like and what it looks like for us to be a part, a healthy part of a healthy church. God, we pray that as we consider all of these things, God, we pray that you would teach us to stand up and to be the people that you have for us to be.

01:10:55

That the church would arise, that we would be the body. Like we sang at the beginning of the service this morning. Oh, how good it is when the family of God dwells together in faith and in unity. God, help us to be the church that you have for us to be. God, we need you to build us together. That you would stack the blocks together. That you would build the body parts together and bring us together, unify us as one body. But God, we pray, most importantly. God, we need you. God, we need you. Our acceptance of the gospel is an open admission that we are insufficient on our own and we need help. God, you step in and you saved us in the power of your mercy and your grace. That you would save sinners like us.

01:11:43

But God, you didn't just save us and send us back out to be dust in the wind, to blow around

and figure it out where we want to. God, you knew that life would be hard and you gave us to one another. You gave us responsibility for one another. You gave us the privilege of having people that would have our backs. God, you gave us the church. Help us to realize just what a blessing that is and to grab onto it, to seize the privilege that it is of being a part, a healthy part of a healthy body. God, we pray that you would do your work in us and that you would do your work in this church. We need you and we love you. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen.