

Who Makes Up the Worshipping Assembly?

Various Passages

Halifax: 28 May 2017

Introduction:

You will notice my title today: *Who Makes Up the Worshipping Assembly?*

- We have been looking at the subject of “going to church” for several weeks.
- We have seen that the very word *church* in our Bibles refers to an assembly of persons called together to meet with the living God.

That is a wonderful thing, in itself, but who are the people that make up this worshipping assembly—who are the persons that are a part of it?

- Or perhaps I should say, who is supposed to be included in it?
- Many churches (worshipping assemblies) are not set up as the Lord appointed.

This makes it difficult for a person who wants to worship the true God to know what a worshipping assembly is supposed to be like...

- Is a church just any random group of people that meet together to worship?
- Are there supposed to be officers in the assembly, and if so what kind of officers?
- Are there guidelines about what is supposed to be done?
- Who is supposed to lead the worship service?
- How are churches to be related to each other and who is supposed to be in charge?
- Or do any of things even matter?
 - A lot of people in our day think it doesn't matter.

Certainly the thing that matters most is that we find out what God wants.

- And not only that we find out what He wants, but as much as it is possible,
 - that we endeavour to *be* what He wants us to be as a worshipping assembly.

Now there are a number of different approaches we might take to try to figure out what God wants His worshipping assemblies to be.

- We could look at what the church has done traditionally.
 - That can be very helpful, but you quickly realise that there are many different traditions. How do you know which ones are pleasing to the Lord?
- Another approach would be to look for God to lead us (or to lead our leaders) by giving them special insight directly from His Spirit—just let Him show us.
 - But how do we know that we are actually hearing from Him?
 - There have been numerous cults whose leaders have claimed to hear directly from God, but they have brought in damnable heresies.
- The best method is to consult the scriptures—
 - The Bible itself testifies that it is God's own word, written by prophets who demonstrated that they were prophets by signs and wonders that God gave them.
 - It is called a word of prophecy that is more sure than visions from God, and it is said to be given by inspiration of God.
 - We can completely rely on it.
- So that is what we are going to do.
 - Yes, we will make use of tradition in the sense that we will be informed by how those who set out to follow scripture in worship worshipped...

- And we will benefit from the work of the Holy Spirit—not to lead us independently of scripture, so that we bypass it—but rather to open our understanding to the Bible that He Himself gave us.

So today, I have the goal of showing you what a worshipping assembly ought to be made up of—who ought to make it up—according to the Scriptures.

- We will be looking at a number of different passages today, but for our scripture reading I have chosen 1 Timothy 3:14-16 where Paul has just been instructing Timothy about how things are to be done in the church, as he says.
- Here is the Word of God—1 Timothy 3:14-16:

1 Timothy 3:14-16: These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; ¹⁵ but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. ¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His holy Word.

You see how the Apostle makes it clear that the things that he is writing to Timothy are instructions about how things are to be done in the church.

- Notice how Paul refers to the church as “the church of the living God.”
 - The church is the assembly that gathers before the true and living God to worship Him.
 - What a marvellous thing it is to think that this is what we do when we assemble together each Lord’s Day!
- And notice how Paul also calls the church *the pillar and ground of the truth*.
 - The church is to be the place where the truth is upheld!
 - It is to be the place where we really do engage with God—where His name is proclaimed and where the only way of salvation is declared.
- This is the thing that makes the church the most hated and the most loved institution in the entire world...
 - It is hated because it frankly acknowledges that man has sinned against a holy God beyond remedy—that there is nothing we can do to make ourselves acceptable.
 - But it is the most loved because it declares what God has done to save us.

Now it follows that if we recognise that we are engaged with the true God, we will surely want to follow His directives about our worshipping assemblies...

- Not only in what we do, but also in who is a part of them.
- And this morning, as I have said, we are going to be look at who is to make up the worshipping assembly according to scripture.
 - Who are the members and officers that God has appointed to make it up?

I. The first member of the worshipping assembly is Jesus Christ!

A. Paul speaks of Him right here in our text—in verse 16.

1. He begins with the words, “great is the mystery of godliness.”

- This is the great mystery that stood from the time that God first accepted sinners as His worshippers (ever since the fall) until Jesus came...
 - How can God accept men and women and children as His people (as godly) when they are all sinners?
 - Remember that when God was revealed, they saw that they were defiled.
 - There were sacrifices offered, but these were not able to truly atone for sin before God—and even with them—the worshippers were still ungodly.
 - God received His people as godly, even though they were not actually godly—and that is the mystery of godliness...
 - How could He receive ungodly people as if they are godly?
2. Now in Jesus Christ the mystery of godliness has been clearly revealed!
- Look how Paul describes Jesus here!
 - a. He refers to Him as **God manifested** [or revealed] **in the flesh!**
 - Though He was God, He became fully human.
 - He is the godly human being (God in human nature) who is able to come before the face of God truly be perfectly pleasing to Him.
 - As it says in 1 Timothy 3:16, He was not only manifested in the flesh...
 - He was also **vindicated by the Spirit**—
 - To be vindicated is to be shown that He was true.
 - The Holy Spirit anointed Him, not to make Him good, but with the Father’s declaration that He was already good.
 - Do you remember at His baptism—that is when He was anointed with the Spirit—the Father declaring with a voice from heaven that He was pleased with Him
 - And all this was witnessed before the holy angels...
 - They saw that the Son of God became flesh, and they saw that the Father was pleased with Him, and they saw that He was tempted and never sinned. They saw it all...
 - And He was preached among the Gentiles and believed on by them.
 - That’s right, the nations that did not know God came to know Him when they heard the gospel preached.
 - They who had been dead in sin became alive in Christ and started serving God in the great assembly.
 - And He was **received up in glory** where He sits at God’s right hand.
 - He was received because He truly was godly.
 - He is the true worshipper—the flawless worshipper—the worshipper that all ought to be—now seated in heaven.
 - b. The whole church, (the worldwide assembly of worshippers), is godly because of this one member.
 - As Romans 5:18 says, **through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.**
 - Adam brought all of his seed (all of us) into condemnation, but Jesus Christ made all of His seed—the true worshipping assembly—righteous.

- The church is godly because of Jesus and His redeeming work.
- He is godly and righteous, and the worshippers in both the Old and the New Testaments were and are counted as godly because of Him.

TRANS> That is the mystery of godliness that is now fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

- We are godly because He is godly as our priest and representative.

B. So Jesus is the first member of the true church...there is no true worship of God for anyone apart from Him!

1. He is called both the foundation and the head of the church...

- All the other worshippers must be established upon Him as their foundation or they are not a part of the true worshipping assembly.
- And He is also the head of the whole body of the church—the one who is Lord and Master of us all whom we must follow...
 - He is the Priest of us all, having offered the only sacrifice that can atone for our sins—Himself as the lamb of God on the cross...
 - He is the Prophet of us all, having declared God's will to the church by the Holy Spirit—through all the prophets and apostles He sent—and by opening our hearts to receive the truth when He calls us...
 - And He is the King of us all, the one who gives us the Spirit to turn us from rebellion to God's service, and the one who delivers us from Satan's dominion and even from bondage to death and sin.
- The Father's message to us was "this is my beloved Son, hear Him!"
 - He is the foundation and the head of the church—the original member by which all other members come.

2. And in the assembly itself, we have seen that He is the liturgist of the whole church, and so of each true worshipping assembly.

a. I showed you this a couple of weeks ago from Hebrews 8:1-2 where it says:

- **We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.**
- When it says that He is a *minister of the sanctuary*, the word minister is a more rare word *λειτουργος* *li-toorg-os* which refers to a *liturgist* or a worship leader...
 - And the word *sanctuary* refers to the holy place...

b. So Jesus is the one that truly is before the face of God, and through His mediation, we are all brought before the face of God spiritually when we worship.

- This ought to have a profound effect on the way we understand worship!
- The sanctuary is not the building where we worship—it is the dwelling place of God in glory where we come by Jesus Christ when we worship.

C. It should be perfectly clear from all of this that any church that does not acknowledge Jesus as the foundation and head of the church is no true worshipping assembly at all.

1. They may claim to be; but if they, as a body, do not confess Jesus as one who brings them to the Father, they are not truly before the Father at all.
 - As Jesus said, **no one comes to the Father but by through Me** (John 14:6).
 - He is the **only mediator between God and man** (1 Timothy 2:5).
 - There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).
 - **1Co 3:11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**
2. This is the first thing to find out about a worshipping assembly...
 - Do they acknowledge Jesus as the foundation and head?
 - And if they do that is wonderful, but it is also important to see how consistently they do...
 - To what extent is He their worship leader—
 - Do they follow His directives in their worship and in their government and in who they allow to be members?

TRANS> And that brings us to a consideration of who else makes up the worshipping assembly besides Jesus—who are the members in Him?

II. The worshipping assembly is made up of those who hold to the true religion.

- A. Such persons are described in the opening address of Paul's letter to the Corinthians...
 - Please turn there and look at how Paul addresses them.
 - He is writing to this one particular church (or really a group of worshipping assemblies in one city) and Paul addresses them (in 1 Cor 1:2) in this way: **To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours...**
 - You see how they are called **the church of God**—the assembly of God.
 - They are part of the church and look at how they are described:
 - They are said to be **sanctified in Christ Jesus**—that is, what we saw before about Jesus—they are sanctified or set apart as godly in Jesus Christ—
 - They are relying on Him for their acceptance before God.
 - They know that they cannot come to the Father but through Him.
 - They have come to Him as Saviour and He has sanctified them.
 - Paul says that they are **called saints**—which means *holy people*—
 - They are called saints because they are set apart from other people as those who are trusting Christ and following Him...they are distinct from the rest of the community because they are holy—
 - This is our uniqueness—that we come before the living God as a holy people to Him.
 - And Paul says that they are called saints in the same way as all others in every place that **call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord...**
 - All true worshippers are those who call on Christ to save them and who continue to look to Him to sanctify them and lead them.

- B. It should be understood that anyone who is not sanctified by Jesus Christ is not a true worshipper of God.
1. As we already saw, any church that does not profess Christ, whatever kind of assembly they may be, cannot be an assembly that worships the true God...
 - but so also, any individual who does not personally trust in Jesus Christ and follow Him cannot be a true worshipper of God, even if that individual is in a church that does truly profess Christ and serve Him.
 - That individual is among true worshippers, but that individual is not a worshipper who truly comes before the Father—not in an acceptable manner at least.
 2. Of course we ought to encourage those who are God fearers or who are simply curious to attend worship services...
 - a. They cannot be received as members until they profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him,
 - and they should not be admitted to the Lord's Table, but they should be encouraged to come that they might hear the gospel and learn of Christ to be saved.
 - We should urge them to come, and we should pray that they would come.
 - b. As I told you the other day, don't underestimate the power of the gospel.
 - Most of the people who have been saved in our congregation have been saved simply by attending church with us for a time.
 - Grace Presbyterian in Woodstock recently reported that they have had a number of young adults who have come to profess Christ,
 - and I asked Pastor Kingswood if it was through special outreach or regular attendance at church, and he said that it was through regular attendance.
 - It is not by our clever methods, but by God's power that people are saved.
 3. Furthermore, any church that professes the true religion should not receive individuals as members of their assembly who do not have a credible profession of faith.
 - Some churches are tempted to do that—to swell their numbers.
 - a. Of course a church cannot see into the heart of people—but we are called to examine their outward profession.
 - There will be those like Judas in every church who outwardly profess to follow Jesus (as Judas did for three years), but who do not actually follow Him from the heart.
 - The church is not called to try to see into the secrets of peoples' hearts, but only to examine the outward profession.
 - b. And if an individual does not outwardly call on Jesus Christ alone as his only Saviour—
 - If they do not see a need to be sanctified by Him—or if they are living in rebellion against Him instead of following Him in ways that can be seen,
 - then the church is wrong to receive those persons as members or to allow them to remain as members.

- The rule in both the Old and the New Testament is the same, 1 Cor 5:13: **put away from yourselves the evil person.**
 - Paul was appalled with this same Corinthian church because:
 - **1 Cor 5:1-2: It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife! 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.**
- c. So although the Corinthians were a true worshipping assembly, they were defective because they did not remove such a person.
 - In Revelation where Jesus writes to the churches, He speaks strongly against several of the churches that have not dealt with those who are not walking with Him in their churches.
 - When the problem is allowed to continue and spread, such a church can cease to be a church that professes the true religion.
 - If people are not held to their profession, the church has been unfaithful and may so deteriorate that it is no longer an assembly that truly worships God but has become a synagogue of Satan.
 - In any case, it has perverted that worship.

TRANS> So you see that properly, the assembly is made up first of Jesus Christ and then of those who are sanctified to God through Him and so profess the true religion.

III. Another category of persons that is to be included in the worshipping assembly is the children of those that profess the true religion.

- A. It is very kind of our Lord to include our children if we are among those that believe.
1. Jesus made it very clear that the kingdom of God belongs to them and that they should not be excluded from coming to Him.
 - In Matthew 19:13-15, it says: **Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.**
 - By including them as belonging to His kingdom, and as those who receive His blessing, Jesus shows that little children are to be included in the worshipping assembly.
 2. His inclusion of them is rooted in the fact that when God makes His covenant with His people and promises to be their God and accept them as His people,
 - He adds that He will be God to them and to their children.
 - Even though they are not old enough to profess their faith, they are included with their parents because they are part of their household.
 - To some people, this doesn’t make sense, but it is what God has done.
 - For this reason, when people came to God in the Old Testament, they and their sons received the sign of circumcision...

- And in the New Covenant, the practice without variation is that those who come to faith are baptised along with their household—because they are a believing household.
 - There are zero examples of children growing up in the home of believers and then coming to be baptised—
 - Instead, they were received as part of the congregation that worships God from infancy, just as they were in the Old Testament.
 - That is why all the baptisms with families are household baptisms.
 - In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul mentions that even if there is only one believing parent, the children are still considered to be holy because the household is holy on account of the believing parent.
- B. And when it comes to the worship of God, children are to join with their parents in the assembly—they are part of it!
1. This was the practice all the way back into the Old Testament.
 - a. Look with me, for example, at Exodus 10 where Pharaoh told Moses that he could go and worship the Lord with the men of Israel, but not the children.
 - Look at Moses’s reply in Exodus 10:9: **And Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.”**
 - b. The inclusion of children was made a standing requirement for worship.
 - **Deuteronomy 31:12-13: Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess.**
 - It is true that when Israel went up for the Passover and other feasts, it was only the men that were required to go, but that was because it involved a long journey for some...
 - But the children were welcome and did participate when they could,
 - and in the holy convocation that was supposed to be held in the local community each week, children were included.
 2. This practice clearly carries over into the New Testament as well...
 - Whenever letters are written to the churches which were to be read in the assembly, the children are addressed as part of the assembly...
 - For example, when Paul writes to the saints at Ephesus, as he moves along he says: “wives” and then he says something them; and he says: “husbands” and then says something to them; and then in chapter 6, he says “children” and addresses something to them.
 - They were not separated into some different place.
 - They were among the worshippers with their parents.
 3. We need to see this because sadly, it has become a common practice to exclude children from the worshipping assembly—

- sometimes even providing a separate worshipping assembly (of sorts) for them that is supposed to be more suitable to them.
- No one ever did this until recent times—and interestingly, since this practice was started, there have been greater and greater numbers of children that walk away from the faith when they grow up...
 - Such assemblies for children are not appointed by God and we cannot expect Him to bless them.
 - They teach children that worship is supposed to be determined by what appeals to them instead of by God.
 - This has had the bad fruit of causing many who grew up with such worship to continue to worship in a way that is more like child's play than the reverent worship that God has appointed.

IV. Next, we need to see that ruling elders are to be a part of the worshipping assembly—the worshipping assembly is to have ruling elders.

A. The New Testament refers to them as “those who rule” or as “bishops.”

1. For example, in Titus 1, Paul simply tells Titus to appoint elders in every city to serve as bishops or overseers.
 - He refers to this ordination of elders as something that will complete the work of establishing churches at Crete where Titus had been sent...
 - In other words, a congregation is not really established until it has ruling elders.
 - He says, Titus 1:5: **For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—**
2. And in Acts 14, we see an example of how Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the congregations that they had formed on their first missionary journey.
 - They deliberately passed through the area again so that they could ordain elders in all these congregations and encourage them.
3. Many guidelines are given about ruling elders...showing how important they are to the life of the church.
 - In both Timothy and Titus, rules are given for the selection of ruling elders.
 - In 1 Peter 5:3, the elders are commanded to shepherd the flock and to be examples to the congregation...
 - And in Hebrews 13:17, the congregations are instructed to **obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.**

TRANS> So ruling elders are very much a part of the worshipping assembly...

B. But what is their role—in what way are they to rule?

1. We find that both in the Old and New Testament, they gather with the other elders in a city, a region, or the entire world to make rulings pertaining to their congregations.
 - a. When God wanted to address the whole congregation, certain elders would meet with Moses or with a prophet to receive instruction...

- Then they would carry back the ruling to the elders within their own tribes and then those elders would convey the message to the people over which they had oversight...and insist that it was followed.
- b. In the New Testament, we find the elders doing the same sort of thing
- We find the elders from the congregations at Ephesus meeting together with Paul to receive instruction about keeping watch over the flock...
 - And at Jerusalem, the elders from those churches in Jerusalem meet with Paul to give counsel to him about his ministry while he is at Jerusalem...
 - And then there is that international meeting of the elders in Acts 15 to determine whether the Gentiles need to be circumcised...
 - The elders together have the authority to make rules of application based on their study of scripture.
 - We also see the elders at Antioch meeting together to send out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries.
- c. So they are given rule in this way as presbyteries or synods that affect the whole church.
- Sadly, because of heresy, the church is divided today into many different factions.
 - There is only one church under Christ, but our organisational unity is broken.
 - Reformation according to scripture is what is needed so that we will all be united in the truth as it is revealed in scripture and can work together.
 - But apart from that, we should seek to work with other churches that are united in biblical doctrine according to the pattern given to us.
- So that is the larger way that elders govern the church...
2. But in the local congregation, elders are responsible in the local community for joining with the priests and scribes (in the OT) and ministers (in the NT) to lead the congregation...
- a. We saw before how it is the task of the congregation to remove wicked persons who are no longer following the Lord...
- Well we find that the elders are the ones who were given this task in the synagogue and it is their task to do this in the New Testament assembly.
- b. They are also to examine the profession of those who want to join the church from the outside, and they are to maintain the communion roll among the members.
- This is a big task because they are not only to examine the profession of outsiders and those who grew up in the church to admit them to the table,
 - but they are also to oversee the congregation so as to help those who are already communicant members to maintain a credible profession of faith—admonishing them and calling them to repentance when necessary, and setting a godly example for them.
 - Paul says of them in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 & 13: **And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the**

Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

- Esteem them because they are helping you to maintain your walk with Christ and to apply His word that is preached to you.
 - They are appointed to help you continue in the faith, and any worshipping assembly that does not have them is not complete.
- c. Related to this, they are also to oversee the worship in the church—
- making sure that the commandments of Christ are followed by the ministers in the church who lead the service...and that the word is faithfully preached...as Paul urges the elders at Ephesus to do in Acts 20.

TRANS> And that leads us to the fifth category of persons that are to be found in the worshipping assembly...

V. The ministers of the word are to preside over the worship service itself, preaching the word and administering the sacraments in obedience to Christ, under the oversight of the ruling elders.

A. We have already seen that Christ is the liturgist—the minister of the sanctuary, who leads the worship service.

- But He is in heaven.
- Therefore, He has given ministers of the word to preach the Word and administer the sacraments in the assembly for Him.

1. The ministers of the Word are presented to us in Ephesians 4 as Christ's gifts to His church.

a. In Ephesians 4:8, we are told that **“When He ascended on high... He gave gifts to men.”**

- And then in verse 11 we are told what those gifts were in the New Testament—they were (and are) people—ministers of the word that He gave to the church.
- It says: ¹¹**And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,¹² to equip the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**

b. All of these officers are ministers of the word—

1) The apostles and the prophets were given to establish the foundation of the church and to leave us with the scriptures to be our rule...

- They are indispensable to the church, for by them we know the will of our Lord Jesus who is in heaven.
- No worshipping assembly can be said to belong to Him if it does not follow His word.

2) The evangelists are either assistants to the apostles and prophets, or more likely missionaries who carry the gospel to new places...

3) And the shepherds and teachers are the regular ministers of the word that are to preach the word for Christ in the church...

2. The preaching of the word is emphasised throughout the New Testament.
 - It is through this means that we hear the voice of Christ, for the ministers of the word are His ambassadors who speak in His name.
 - Their words are to be tested by whether or not they are in agreement with the scriptures—they are commanded to preach the Word, not of man’s wisdom, but of the holy Scriptures.
 - But if they do, their words are to be received with the authority of Christ.
 3. As we have seen in this sermon series on worship—the preaching of the word is the main feature in the New Testament...
 - Now that Christ has come, the good news (the gospel) is to be preached about how He was offered for our sins and was accepted by the Father for our forgiveness and our acceptance if only we believe.
 - People are saved when they believe the message that is preached,
 - and they grow as they continue to hear the gospel preached and deepen their understanding of it and obey the commandments of the Lord that are preached to them by the grace of God.
 - These ministers of the word have taken the place of priests and prophets in the Old Testament who presented Christ by ceremonies and prophecies...
 - Now He is presented by proclamation of what He has done.
- B. These ministers are to be carefully chosen and trained for their work.
1. Although I mentioned that Timothy and Titus give us guidelines for selecting ruling elders, these passages also give us guidelines for selecting ministers.
 - The ministers of the word are also ruling elders.
 - But the distinction from the Old Testament between those who speak and those who hear is carried over into the New Testament, so that you have some elders who rule, and others who rule and preach.
 - The ones who rule are to be examples among those who hear, those who preach are to faithfully preach God’s Word as His ambassadors.
 2. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Timothy is instructed to begin a pattern that is to continue in the church of training up faithful men who will be able to train up others also.
 - Those who were already ministers of the word have the task of training up more ministers of the word.
 - a. In 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul reminds Timothy that he had been set apart to his work by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.
 - This would suggest that the ministers of the word were not only to be chosen by the people, but also approved by the presbytery.
 - b. Timothy’s whole task at Ephesus was to make sure that these men preached the Word of God faithfully—
 - he was to lead the presbytery in rooting out those who were teaching error...and this is still to be done by the presbytery.
 3. So it is not just anyone that is to preach, but only those who meet the qualifications that are given by Christ and who faithfully preach the Word.

- a. Along with this, only they are to administer to sacraments because that goes together with preaching the Word.
 - Paul speaks of himself and other ministers of the word as stewards of the mysteries of God—they have the responsibility for giving to the congregation what Christ has appointed in the church.
- b. Churches that allow men who are not qualified to preach—either because they are not sound in their understanding of scripture, or are not godly in their lives,
 - are not being faithful as churches—and it will have a detrimental effect on them if they do not repent.
 - They are moving toward becoming no churches at all if sound doctrine is not preached and the sacraments are not rightly administered.

Conclusion: So to have a proper worshipping assembly, you must have Christ as the head, you must have those who profess Him along with their children, you must have ruling elders to provide oversight, and ministers of the word to lead.

- Of course there are many imperfections and deficiencies, but that does not mean that the church entirely ceases to exist.
 - But it is our duty in our community to promote the reformation of the church, and to as much as we are able be a part of faithful worshipping congregations.
 - The worship of God is much too important to be indifferent about such things.
 - One only need read the New Testament to see how often faithful ministers of the word were kicked out of churches, and how the faithful members of those churches followed them.
- The greatest example of all is that of Jesus Christ who was cut off from the Jewish church at its highest level...
 - And all those who were faithful followed Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.
 - I do not think ministers and members should leave over every little thing, but when a church starts to exclude those who are following Christ because they are following Him, it is time to leave.
 - Our goal must be to be a worshipping assembly and as individuals to be part of a worshipping assembly that follows Jesus Christ.
- Let us also seek, with other churches, to plant faithful churches that follow the directives of Christ our Saviour.