

# What is a “Good” Church?

Class 1: November 5, 2023

## Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Orthodoxy (Doctrine)</u>	<u>Orthopraxy (Practice)</u>
• 11/5/23	Worship & *Preaching	Nurture Christlikeness
• 11/12/23	Mission [“Wrap-Around Ministry”]	Nurture Service
• 11/19/23	*Sacraments	Nurture Grace
• 11/26/23	Community & Fellowship	Nurture Empathy
• 12/3/23	*Discipline	Nurture Truth
• 12/10/23	Government & Leadership	Nurture People
• 12/17/23	Prayer & Repentance	Nurture Justice
• 12/24/23	<i>NO MEETING</i>	
• 12/31/23	<i>Food &amp; Fellowship Day</i>	
• 1/7/24	<i>New Series begins</i>	

## Opening Group Discussion

### What makes a good church?

How do we determine what church to attend?

How do we point others to find a church?

“The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error” (*WCF* 25.5)

## Structure of the class

- Orthodoxy (Doctrine)
  - asterisks are the three historical “marks” of the church

“...true preaching of the Word; proper observance of the sacraments; and faithful exercise of church discipline” (Edmund Clowney, *Church*, 101).

The marks of the ideal church are “love, suffering, holiness, sound doctrine, genuineness, evangelism, and humility” (John Stott, *Men with a Message* (1954), 163-64.

- Orthopraxy (Practice)
  - Scot McKnight and Laura Barringer, *A Church Called Tov* (Tyndale Elevate, 2020).

## Worship

### What makes a good worship experience?

#### Psalm 29:1-2

<sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

<sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

Psalm 51:17: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

“We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased” (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 26).

“Where education attempts to explain and interpret mystery, worship allows us to experience and dwell in the presence of God as a way of knowing” (Sonja Stewart & Jerome Berryman, *Young Children and Worship*, 13-14).

“The human heart is a perpetual idol factory” (John Calvin, *Institutes* I.11.8).

“There are two ways to commit idolatry: worship something other than the true God or worship the true God the wrong way” (Ligon Duncan, “Does God Care Who We Worship?” 2003).

“The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination [of standing before God], shall find approval, shall please God. To please God... to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness... to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son – it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is” (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 38-39).

“As God revives his people in true worship, we become a prophetic presence in a dying world, a living invitation to all to join us in the delights of God that will last forever” (Ray Ortlund, *Isaiah*, 448).

## \*Preaching

### What makes a good sermon?

Christian faith is the proclamation of the Gospel message. And therefore, it makes sense that the worship (which is the *telos* (end) of Christian experience), has the proclamation of this message as central.

“The world’s a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow” (Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, chapter 8).

#### 1. Grounded in the Fear of God

“Give me 100 preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God; such alone will shake the gates of hell.” – John Wesley

“I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.” – Richard Baxter

#### 2. Empowered by the Holy Spirit

#### 3. Built upon the Word of God

“There’s a way to preach the Bible unbiblically... You can use the Bible as the springboard for all kinds of ideas, can’t you? Look around in here and find something that fits your fancy and then launch a rocket off it. People say, ‘That was amazing, wasn’t it? Remarkable what he got out of that.’ Well of course it is because he put it in before he got it out.” Alistair Begg

#### 4. Centered in Jesus

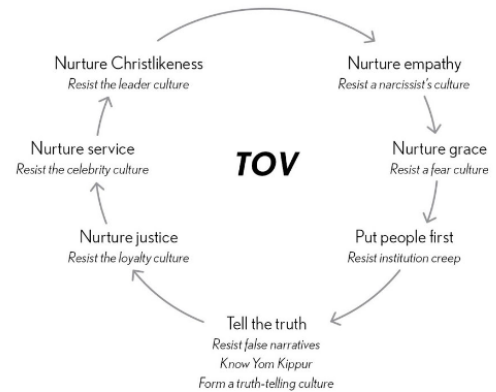
“Scripture presents one, consistent, organic message... True Christian preaching must center on the cross of Jesus Christ” (Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*).

1. Sola Scriptura (“Scripture alone”): The Bible alone is our highest authority.
2. Sola Fide (“faith alone”): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
3. Sola Gratia (“grace alone”): We are saved by the grace of God alone.
4. Solus Christus (“Christ alone”): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
5. Soli Deo Gloria (“to the glory of God alone”): We live for the glory of God alone.

## Tov is Hebrew for “Good”

“*Tov* is the Bible’s summary term, the ‘executive virtue,’ for how God wants us to live” (87).

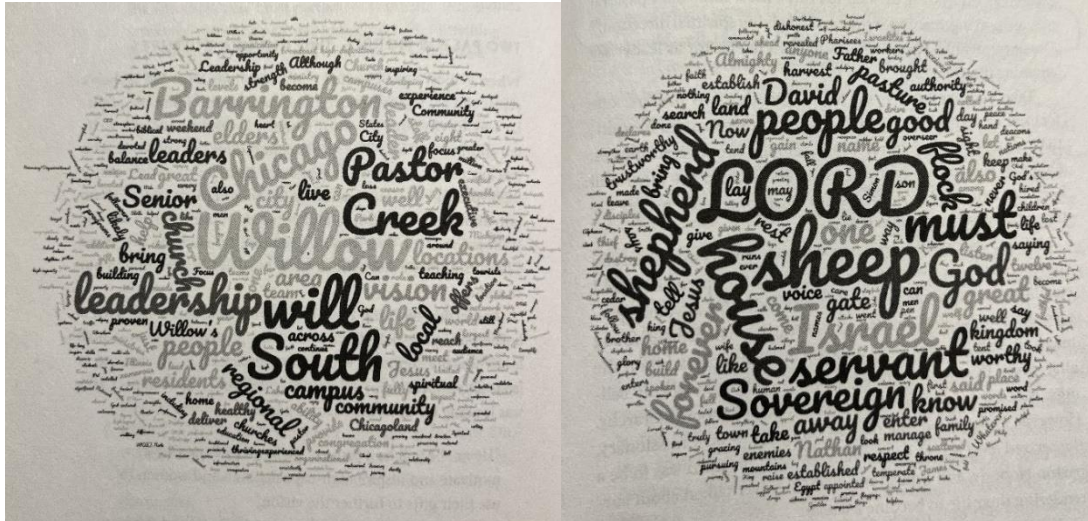
1. God is *Tov*  
Psalm 119:68: You are *tov* and do *tov*
2. God’s Design is *Tov*  
Genesis 1:31
3. *Tov* is active (Do Good)  
Ephesians 2:10, 5:9
4. *Tov* resists evil  
Galatians 5:19-25



## Nurture Christlikeness

If you were looking for a new pastor, what would you include on the job description?

What words would you use?



*A Church Called Tov*, 206-07

According to Eugene Peterson, the three most important pastoral acts are “praying, reading Scripture, and giving spiritual direction” (Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles*, 3).

How are you becoming more like Christ? What would your friends/spouse say?