

# Leadership and MEMBERSHIP part 2

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 17 July 2016

Preacher: Jim Masters

[ 0 : 00 ] If you would take your Bibles and go to the book of Galatians, chapter 1, if you're visiting with us, if you pull that black Bible out in the chair in front of you, Galatians chapter 1, you will find Galatians chapter 1 on page 147.

Actually, look for page 146, because there is no 147 on the top page. I don't know why they do that.

How is that helpful? They have it on the other, and then you turn the page, they have 148, right? Yeah, but not 147. So look for page 146 on the back of that black Bible.

So, in Galatians chapter 1, I'm going to read the first nine verses to get us launching into this series, two-part series, Leadership and Membership.

Galatians chapter 1, I'll read the first nine verses. Galatians chapter 1, verses 1 through 9. Paul, an apostle, not through men, nor through the agency of men, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised them from the dead and all the brethren who are with me to the churches of Galatia.

[ 1 : 27 ] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us, excuse me, out of this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore.

Amen. Verse 6, I'm amazed you are so quickly deserting him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel, which is really not another, only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ, but even though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

As we've said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

Facebook surpassed over 1.5 billion users as of their last quarter.

I think this is as of 2015. So if the social network was a country, it would now be the most populous country in the world, even bigger than China.

[ 2 : 57 ] Interesting too, the United States, the users in the United States only accounts for less than 17% in the world. The rest of the world is over 82% of users of Facebook.

And I understand in reference to the population scenario, I get that, because there's more population obviously in the whole world than in the U.S., but in terms of users of Facebook, you'd think there'd be a whole lot more, but it's only 17% in the U.S.

Social media. Notice the first word I said, social media, which is actually kind of a interesting word to use, because when you talk about social, it's kind of redefined, because it's social on my terms, right?

People want to be relational, but not that much. Social, the way I want to be social. I mean, I'm going to post stuff about me on Facebook, and I'll watch stuff about you, but then, if I just don't like the stuff that you put there, I'll just unfollow you.

I'm still your friend on Facebook, but I'm social, right? It's kind of an interesting way to define it.

[ 4 : 26 ] Social, really? Oh yeah, the way I want to be social. So I define what social is, and you define what social is, how you want it, on our terms.

Your own terms, my own terms. Unfortunately, this thinking, this cultural idea, has now become a part of the church.

you might say, what do you mean? We have a weak view, of the local church, and its role in the Christian faith.

We want to be relational on our terms, our way, when it comes to the church. We want to be relational, the way we want to be relational.

How do I know that? Christians attend a particular church, without joining that church. Some Christians, even visit different churches, for different things.

[ 5 : 30 ] Well, I like this church, because they have great music, that great preaching, and they got this over here, they got this event, and this event, so I go to this church, for these events, I go to this church, listen to the message, I go to that church, to listen to music.

You might say, oh, people, they do, we're friends, people actually do this. Or, they don't go to church at all, to a church service, they'll read books, they'll just be a part of small groups, in a Bible study, whatever.

And if a church, the very topic, that I'm discussing, and I'm saying right now, membership, congregationalism, if any church, even mentions church membership, the person, will come across, and say, well, you're being legalistic, you're being dogmatic, you're not loving people, I mean, it's almost as bad, as saying you're a drug addict, you're selling drugs, that's how bad it's become, there was someone, who was coming here, they were visiting here, for a week's time, a couple months, whatever, and I didn't even mention, to them membership, it came up in the message, I don't even think, I even was preaching, on membership, just came up, randomly, within the message, that I'm doing, and they left the church, because of that very reason, they would not come back, he was so angry at me, that's how it's become, well, here at Conlin Bible Church, we are a Southern Baptist church, by the way, we believe in congregationalism, and we believe very much so, in membership, so, the title of my message, which is,

Leadership and Membership, Part 2, Congregationalism and Membership, and I was trying to figure out, there's so many verses, that we could read, about this, but I chose Galatians 1, verses 1 through 9, for a specific reason, which I'll mention, in just a moment, for first, we have to define our terms, what do we mean, when we say, Congregationalism, what do we mean, when we say, membership, what do we mean?

Congregationalism, the last and final, court of appeal, in matters of the life, of the local church, is and always should be, the congregation, that's Congregationalism, the final court of appeal, in matters of the life, of a local church, is and always should be, the congregation, it's not, a bishop in Rome, or Constantinople, or Washington DC, for that matter, we don't rely, on some international body, some national assembly, some conference, some convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Church, they don't tell us, what to do, not a president, of the denomination, not a chairman, of a trustee board, not a committee, not a regional synod, not a group of elders, even, or a group of deacons, no, not even the pastor, no, the final, court of appeal, is the congregation, that's Congregationalism, that's what it means, the final responsibility, of doctrine, which by implication, includes choosing leaders, and discipline, which by implication, includes choosing members, in a local church, does not lie with deacons, or elders, it lies with the body, as a whole, that's what it means, that's what we believe, that's what we believe, the scriptures teach, and here's some verses, for you, which I will read, and you can write them down, you can turn there with me, whichever works, how it will be, best helpful to you, but I will read these, we read together,

[ 9 : 36 ] Matthew, part of Matthew 18, we read verses 15, and 16 together, I will, read, out loud, 17, 18, and 19, well I'll even read verse 20, when it comes to, church discipline, this is the context, of the passage, in Matthew 18, if you refuse to listen to them, tell it to the church, it doesn't say tell the elders, so the elders are going to know, it says tell it to the congregation, the assembly, if he refuses to listen, even to the assembly, let him be to you, as a Gentile, and a tax gatherer, truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth, has already have been bound in heaven, whatever you loose on earth, has already, shall already have been loosed in heaven, in other words, you have authority, the church has authority, that congregation has authority, that assembly has authority, verse 19, again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth, about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them, by my father who is in heaven, for, where two or three have gathered together, in my name, there I am, in their midst, friends, this has nothing to do with prayer, please do not quote this, and say, oh two or three gather together, we're praying together, it has nothing to do with that, the two or three, are the people, that are coming to the person, who is in sin, that's what that verse, has to do with, and Jesus is saying, when you are, coming to a person, two or three, and you're saying to this person, there's sin, we see this, we're calling you to repent,

Jesus says, I'm there, and if they're not even, going to listen to you, you tell it to the assembly, and the final court of appeal, is in the congregation, in that assembly, because they're the ones, that say, they're no longer, part of this church, we'll talk more, about what that means, in just a moment, so that's Matthew 18, again the point is, it lies in the congregation, 1 Corinthians chapter 5, Paul says, I actually wrote, to you not to associate, with any so called brother, if he should be, an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a vile, or a drunkard, or a swindler, not even to eat, as such a one, what have I to do, with judging outsiders, do you not judge, those who are in, who are within, but those who are outside, God judges, remove the wicked man, from among yourselves, again, Paul was speaking, to the church of Galatia, not to the leaders, not to the pastor, he's talking about the church, you as a church, remove him, the responsibility lies, with you as a congregation, and then we read,

Galatians chapter 1, earlier, verse 6 through 9, because Paul says, if anyone, even an angel from heaven, preached to you, a gospel contrary, which we have preached, you let him be accursed, if anyone has preached to you, a gospel contrary, that which you received, let him be accursed, notice, he was speaking to the churches, of Galatia, it's their responsibility, to hold fast, to the doctrine of the faith, to the true gospel, people, it's your responsibility, as a congregation, that's congregationalism, that's what we mean, by this, so if a professing Christian, refuses Jesus lordship, by refusing to submit, to a local church, a true local church, where one exists geographically, their conversion, can be questioned, by the congregation, they have every right, to do that, because the congregation, are the ones, who admit people, and forbid people, they have that right, they have that authority, that's what Jesus says, in Matthew 18, so congregationalism, means, that final authority, rests, with the members, of a local church, they hold fast, the gospel, they determine, who's in, who's out, they choose men, to lead, to love, and shepherd, according to God's word, adhering to the truth,

I just, that's a synopsis, of what we're going to be looking, out over the next few moments, I'm jam packing, all of this in, in about 40 minutes, now, a question came up, with someone last week, which I thought, was a great question, and I wanted to address it, what is the question, how does choosing elders, fit in with congregationalism, last week we talked about, you choose elders, well how does that fit in, with congregationalism, how does that work, right, I mean, how do you do that, a couple things for you, three to be exact, number one, first, you can have a church, without elders, unhealthy yes, but true indeed, nonetheless, it's still true, I mean, you need to have a, going to go into the book of Acts, these churches, sprang up, and there was no leadership, they just, people came to Christ, so there's an assembly, of Christians, coming together, as a church, to come together, as a body, to preach the word, to administer the ordinances, to do these things, that makes a true church, so you have a church, and you might not have elders, but still a true church, nonetheless, number two, though, second,

God makes men elders, or leaders, or shepherds, it's a gift, do I have it up here, oh yeah, I do, Ephesians 4, 11, again, I'm going to read these verses, you can write them down, you can turn there with me, Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11, he gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers, if you go to verse 6, excuse me, verse 7, but to each one of us, grace was given, according to the measure, of Christ's gift, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are the gift to the church, God does this, God makes men elders, or pastors, remember, elders, pastors, overseers, it's the same thing, it's all one, they're not elders, pastors, overseers, they're not three different offices, it's one office, the church is called to discern, which men God has given them, to serve them in this way, so the congregation should be involved, in the process, of selecting those, that God has given to them, to lead them, does that make sense, others, but then third, leaders should appoint other leaders, so you have both, in other words, elders are called to select, or nominate other elders,

[ 16 : 28 ] Paul did this, Timothy was called to do this, Titus was called to do this, and yet you have in 1st Timothy, 1st Timothy is written to give direction, to the whole church, how you go about finding elders, what are they going to look like, for a church, so the church is involved, in this process, and other elders, which may be there, they're also involved, in the process, so this means, pastors are noticing men, with the qualifications, to be pastors, or elders, and the congregation, is noticing it too, so we have members, in this church, common Bible church, we have members, recommend men, for elders, to be elders, pastors, but also, men, who are elders, or pastors, they also, are part of nominating, that process, so men are called, to be elders, but, the congregation, affirms that, that's what we do here, so let me help you, with something, that, it's probably an article, that Mark Dever, wrote, some time ago, do you realize, that this form, of church government, is actually a microcosm, of our United States government, you realize that, the US government, is a republic, and it was built, upon this, you have the document, the constitution, the people, they elect, certain people, to be their leaders, we see this about them, about their lives, we see this about, who they are, we have put them, in a position, to lead us, and the final say, is with the, the congregation, the people, which base it, upon this document, the constitution, that's what we do, the constitution, the authority, is the scriptures, right, so here's the scriptures, you have the congregation, they select men, to be their leaders, these men shepherd, these men care for them, these men are ones, that direct them, and give them guidance, and everyone, is basing everything, upon the scriptures, our form of government, is based on this, and the article,

I was talking about, is Martin Devere, actually wrote an article, about how, Baptists, were the ones, that were involved, historically, in developing, this government, in the United States, because it's based, upon this model, okay, so what's so important, about congregationalism, kind of narrow it down, I'll give you five, five bullets, for you, what's so important, about congregationalism, number one, they guard the gospel, we saw that, in Galatians chapter one, two, they affirm, credible professions, they joyfully, affirm those, whose lives, and professions, of faith, show that they belong, to Christ, by uniting them, to the body, and his family, well how is affirmation, done formally, through baptism, and the distribution, of the Lord's Supper, that's the formal way, that's why, individuals, don't baptize themselves, nor do they, feed themselves, the Lord's Supper,

I mean you'll see people, baptizing themselves, in bathtubs, I'm not going to, baptize myself, that's not, you don't do that, you do that, as a congregation, to display this profession, that I am a follower, of Jesus Christ, I'm displaying this, to you publicly, third, they unite, or receive professors, to Christ, professors to Christ, to herself, a local church, receives a person, into part of them, if a person, gives a credible, profession of faith, they have no choice, but to receive them, fourth, based upon everything, that we've read, they exclude hypocrites, i.e., church discipline, it's the congregation, that bars, and excludes, imposters, who would harm, the members of the family, who would degrade, the name of Christ, they hinder, the church's testimony, to the world, it's the congregation, that does this, they're called, to exclude imposters, now leaders, are part of this process, too, receiving, and excluding people, and they're part of this process, in two ways, first,

I, along with another, person, we interview people, designed to become members, of this church, so if you want to become, a member of this church, you go through the ABCs, of CBC, but then the second part, of this is, you get interviewed, by me, and another person, because we, me and the other person, I've had, uh, Travis sit in, I've had Michael sit in, we, are going to go, to the congregation, and say, we have heard, their testimony of faith, we bear witness, to you, as two people, that they know, the Lord Jesus Christ, as best as we can see, we can't read, their hearts, and we're going to do that, but we're bringing them, to you, as a congregation, so what do you want to do, what say you, see that's what we're doing, but the congregation, has the final say on that, that's the first way, another way, leadership is involved, in this, is in the disciplining process, we might be the one, or two, of Matthew 18, but then number five, in reference to, uh, congregationalism, they disciple each other, they should strive, to keep one another, in the love of God, to give grace, to those who doubt, to snatch others, from the fire, to show mercy,

Jude verses 21 and 22, they're called to admonish, to counsel, to encourage, to love, to love, so this means, friends, that congregationalism, notice it, leads right into membership, I mean, it just goes hand in hand, they go together, here, so what is church membership though, here's a definition, for church membership, church membership means, a covenant of union, between a particular, local church, and a Christian, which consists, of the following, the affirmation, of a Christian's, gospel profession, by the church, the church, is promised, to give oversight, to that Christian, and then that Christian, promises to gather, with the church, and submit to its oversight, and the oversight, that's given, to the church, is given to the elders, or the pastors, or the overseers, that's what we mean, by membership, and people say, oh we don't believe, in membership, that's not true, yes you do, there's some type of way, that you affirm, somebody, and we're going to look, at this later, who's in, who's part of this, we just simply, put a formal process on it, in this church, so you have, here's the local church, here's the Christian, the local church, affirms this Christian's testimony, right, and then, the church promises, to give oversight, to this Christian, and then this Christian, promises to, submit to this oversight, and the oversight, is given to the elders, that's what membership means, so, this also means, that, membership is, an implication, of the gospel, of gospel love, you might say, what do you mean, this word covenant, is important, especially for us, we're Southern Baptists, a person, becomes a member, of the church, they're saying, yes,

[ 24 : 15 ] I want to covenant, with this group, I want to be a part, of these people, I believe what they're saying, in reference to the scriptures, I want to connect myself, to this church, that's the implication, of the gospel, you're saying, Lord Jesus, I submit myself to you, and you're saying, this to the church, I submit myself, to the church, and they're saying, we are making, the profession, that you know, the Lord Jesus Christ, they're not creating faith, they're just affirming, their faith, here we are together, as a church, church, okay, let's define church though, where is the church, are we talking about, the local, or the universal church, some people say, I'm a Christian, so I'm part of the church, man, the universal church, church, okay, which is true, right, but this is not like, the motor vehicle department, they hand that license, to people, who have no real attachment,

I mean, you don't have people, out there, once you get your license, they're like, yeah, yay, you don't have people, they're going to say, congratulations, right, give you your license, get out of here, next person in line, 523, please, right, that's what they do, I mean, it's nothing, it's not like, the motor vehicle department, so you're part of, the universal church, yes, fine, good, sure, sure, the local church, is where the church, on earth is, where is the church, the local, or the universal, how does a universal church, show itself, in the local setting, how do you see, the universal church, do you see it, kind of, it's pretty abstract, you want something, more concrete, you go to a local church, that's only the logical connection, you know, of the 114 occurrences, of the word church, in the new testament, at least, 90 times, it refers, to a local group, of believers, a local church, is the active, working, visible, complement, of the universal church, as Jonathan Lehman says, quote, the local, is a manifestation, of the universal, you want to see, the universal in action, go to a local church, listen, here's strong words, for you, graciously,

I say this, a person, cannot, meaningfully, or authentically, submit, his or her life, to Jesus, and his delegation, in something, other than, the local church, how are you, going to do that, well, I, I grew up, on the mountains, man, that's my church, right, you have anybody, say that to you, I grew up to, mountains, there in Sedona, and I do this, and that, well, that's convenient, for you, isn't it, nobody can see, what you're like, nobody can see, how you live your life, nobody can see, how you respond, to your wife, nobody can see, how you respond, to any of your relatives, nobody can see, how you respond, to your neighbors, nobody can see, your dad, why, because you're up, on the mountains, by yourself, well, that's convenient, for you, that concept, Facebook, that's exactly, the way it is,

I'm going to be social, with you, on my terms, friends, that, is a concept, that is foreign, to the New Testament, if, Paul, were to come, into our century, and see, how Christians, react, in reference, to the local church, he'd go like, huh, wait, what, I'm confused, it doesn't make, any sense, Christians, submit, to a local church, via covenant, it consists, of responsibilities, obligations, entitlements, prerogatives, freedoms, on both sides, the congregation, and the individual, people, ah, but why membership, golly, why do you, got to be talking, about this, why membership, does the Bible, actually say, thou, shall, become, a member, of the church, yes, in flesh of the audience, chapter 9,

I'm just kidding, no, there is no command, that you, thou, shall, become, a member, of a church, it doesn't say that, I'll admit that to you, of course, but it is, strongly implied, friends, now, I gave you, five points, about, congregationalism, but specifically, for membership, let me just, pinpoint, just three for you, which is kind of, rehashing the five, but I kind of put in, just three bullet points, here, why membership, because membership, determines, who's in, who's shepherded, and who's out, now, you can go to any, like a Calvary chapel, they say, we don't believe in membership, yes, they do, they just don't have a formal way, by which they do membership, but they know who's in, and they know who's out, they know who to shepherd, let me unpack this for you, number one, she, the church, is God's ordained means, of growth for his people, membership is needed to know, who to love, who do you, who do you express love to, within, who do you serve, who do you care for, who,

[ 30 : 32 ] I don't know who you are, you have to have a way, by which you do, you want something practical, here's a practical verse, 1st Timothy chapter 5, verse 9 and 10, very practical, again, I'll read these, or you can, and you can go there with me, you can read them with me, whichever, 1st Timothy 5, 9, let a widow be put on the list, only if she is not less than 60 years old, the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works, if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work, why am I reading this?

Because notice, Paul is being very specific and practical here, if there's someone that you know, that she's supposed to be on the list of widows, there's some list that he had, put her on the list, if she's, like that, you gotta know who she is, you gotta know people, I mean, this is just a practical verse, that Paul is writing to Timothy, about how to know who's a widow, how you put them on the list, because they're a part of the church, how do you know they're part of the church, see what I mean?

yes, we submit to God's word, yes, it converts and grows as by the spirit of God, praise the Lord, but it is the church, that speaks and teaches God's word, being the place, where Christians have occasion, to submit to it, and to minister to each other, it's in the local church, the church belongs to Jesus, and so we as a church, we promise to love you, by affirming you, encouraging you, rebuking you, serving you, and overseeing you, in obedience to Jesus, you gotta know who's in, it's just practical, it's just practical, the local church affirms, a person's faith, you don't create it, faith, in Roman Catholicism, faith is created, from the church, we don't create faith, we simply affirm faith, it's the local church that gives, persevering, enduring love, designed to keep its members, gathered under its wings, and that responsibility is given to the elders, others, so, practically speaking now, the longer a member stays away, from his or her home church, the less capable, that home church has, at giving oversight, to that particular member, thus, we have more responsibility, for members of this church, than for members of another church, or other Christians, as members,

I'll speak to all you members here, you should foster your relationships, with each other, first and foremost, that should be a priority for you, so it's meant to be, because you've covenanted together, a covenant which you will read, in about, an hour and a half, what does this also mean, I say this graciously, this also means, that if someone from another church, were to continue to come here, we will encourage that person, to return to the church, he or she has covenanted with, or transfer your membership here, coming under the oversight, of this church, that's how strongly, we believe, the Bible talking about, congregationalism, and membership, because, it is this structured church, that Jesus wants to use, as the medium, to convey, the gospel message, friends, the message, is God's love for people, right,

God's kingdom, is extended, through his church alone, God's authority, is exercised, through his church alone, the idea is, if you want to know, what the future, is going to be like, if you want to know, how are people, going to love each other, how is there going to be peace, how is there going to be comfort, how is there going to be, such utopia, what's it going to be like, in the future, you know where you're supposed to look, amongst the church, I don't mean, a church service, I mean okay, that's part of it, what, you guys are sitting there, for 45 minutes, listening to that clown, that's going to be like, in the future, no no no no no, you're not going to be, listening to this clown, you're going to be listening, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he ain't no clown, and you're going to be, worshiping and serving him, and you're going to be, loving and serving each other, in such ways that we've never imagined and even dreamed of.

[ 35 : 54 ] And that little window, we're looking, what's the future going to be like? Oh, it's in the local church. We represent God's living grace upon this earth.

That God saves sinners, bringing them together in peace with Jesus as our head. With Jesus as our senior pastor. Or a small window as to what the kingdom will be like.

We are a living display of the gospel. Proclaim it and live it. We are the gospel.

We should display this gospel. The gospel that God should condemn sinners because we have broken His law and yet He shows grace and compassion. And sending Jesus who lived, who died, who rose, repents and trusts in Him alone.

That's the gospel. If you're here, you're not a follower of Jesus Christ. This gospel message is for you to respond, to repent and trust in Jesus. We are a living display of this gospel.

[ 37 : 12 ] So, what do we believe about membership? When we're talking about membership, you're connecting yourself to this church and it's a way by which we love and minister and serve one another. We're caring for each other and when people look in and look at this local church, they see what the kingdom is going to be like.

That's reason number one. Who's in? Reason number two. The very nature of elders who shepherd God's people begs the need for church membership.

How can one obey the specific command in the New Testament? Hebrews 13, 17. Obey your leaders and submit to them.

For they give oversight over your soul as those who have to give an account. How am I supposed to give an account for you if I don't even know who you are?

You see how this doesn't make any sense? There has to be some type whether you're talking informal or formal, whatever, but you have to know who's in and you have to know who to shepherd.

[ 38 : 26 ] How can an elder or a pastor know who to or not to shepherd? How do you do that? If you don't know who's a member, who's not a member, well, we just kind of come and go.

Oh! Hey, how are you? I'm Jim. Hey, I'm Joe. I've been here for 20 years. Oh, sorry.

I didn't. See? That'd be confusing. The very nature of elders who shepherd God's people begs the need for church membership. And the last reason, reason number three.

Membership is needed to know who to discipline. Do I have the verses in there? Oh, yeah, right there. I read Matthew 18, which follows suit with Matthew 16.

13 through 19. This is the very same phrase that Jesus says to Peter, You are Peter upon this rock. I will build my church in the gates of heaven. Whatever you loose on earth, the you is plural. So is he saying, Peter, whatever you loose on earth, will you loose in heaven?

[ 39 : 31 ] Peter, whatever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven? Is it Peter? Is it about Peter, him? No. It's about those that have the authority with them. It's about the local assembly, which you find out in Matthew 18.

It's in reference to the church as a whole. This is who Jesus was speaking about. The last resort for discipline and lies with the church, the congregation. You go through this whole process, go to one person, they don't repent.

One or two, two or three gather together to call the person, don't repent. Maybe at that point leadership gets involved, but then you bring it before the congregation and the congregation has to decide what to do.

And at that point the congregation says, You know what? This person has not repented. We're calling this person. All of us as a church, we go to that person, we call them to repent. They still don't repent and they say as a church, we have to release you from membership.

You are no longer a member here at this church. We embrace you, we love you, we want you to come to this service, yes, and to hear the gospel, but you are no longer a member of this church because you are not reflecting the profession of faith that you say.



[ 40 : 46 ] It's the church that decides that, not me. The church is like an ambassador who makes declarations on behalf of the king.

They're given the authority to speak on Jesus' behalf. That's what Jesus is saying in Matthew 18. So friend, if you're not a part of a local church, a particular local church and you call yourself a Christian, then you're missing a huge vital biblical element of Christianity.

The concept of Christians not connecting themselves to a local church is a foreign concept in the New Testament. It does not make sense. And I say this graciously.

If we are united through our submission to Christ's rule, and if Jesus gave those keys of rulership to his church, which he did, then all those who profess his name must connect and then submit to a local church.

Facebook is fun to use. I use it. It's fun.

[ 42 : 11 ] Let's not allow this cultural idea to infiltrate and usurp the principles of God's gospel word of grace, what he's given to us in his word.

And Father, help us as a church, as a congregation, as members, to foster our relationships with each other, yes, but also give us wisdom to build relationships with those that are not members here, that are just visiting, and to connect with them and yet to graciously encourage them about connecting themselves here, identifying themselves with us here, not that we're the end all be all because we're not.

Thank you for Canyon Bible Church. Thank you for Christ's Reformed Church. Thank you for those two men.

Thank you that they're being diligent to preach the gospel here in town. Thank you for Clarkdale Baptist Church, that they're being faithful to proclaim the gospel. We thank you for that.

But Father, use us as a church here, that we will display the kingdom in this community. And people understand that.

[ 43 : 49 ] We're serious. About membership and what it means. Thank you for being so gracious to us. Thank you for being so kind to us.

If you would, take a few moments and ponder what we've seen about this, these concepts and the word of congregationalism and membership. worship and after a few moments, we will take time to do our worship and giving.

We'll sing our last two songs in our closing prayer. So take a few moments and ponder and think what we've seen in the scriptures today.

joy and then.

so Thank you.