

A Pure Church

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[0:00] God desires His church to be a pure church.

Ephesians 5.25 tells us about the church of God.! God desires for these people to be a holy people, a pure church.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank You for Your Word. Enlighten it to our eyes. Help us. Lord, help me that I might speak what You want me to speak. Lord, help me that I might speak the words that are going to be beneficial and edifying to the people that are here today.

Lord, I ask that You would be glorified in every heart, that this church will be the kind of church that will glorify You, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

For Your praise we ask it. In Jesus' name. Amen. God's church. God's church. It's pure as a bride. God's church.

[1:57] God esteems that which is pure. Purity. No man esteems that which is pure. You know, we want to see purity in our children and in our spouse.

God hates sin. God hates sin. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride and arrogancy and the evil way. Proverbs 8.13.

God hates sin. God hates sin. He hates evil. He hates pride and arrogancy and the evil way. In 1 Thessalonians 5.21 it says, hold fast that which is good.

Prove all things. Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good. Now, this sermon is a bit confronting. It will be confronting.

But I believe it needs to be said. The Bible says, he that is spiritual judges all things. You know, some say they misuse that scripture that says judge not.

[2:55] But the Bible says, he that is spiritual judges all things. There is a call for discernment. A call for judging. Righteous judgment. That's not to mean that we are all about being picky or poking fun of others or pointing the finger at others.

But there is a truth that judgment is needful. Churches need to be judged. Manifestations need to be judged. Doctrine, preaching needs to be judged.

It must be. It must be. It tells us that we must judge righteous judgment. A man called Gordon Sears said this, when the standard of music is lowered, then the standard of dress is also lowered.

When the standard of dress is lowered, then the standard of conduct is also lowered. When the standard of conduct is lowered, then the sense of value in God's truth is lowered.

One follows the other. The music, the dress, the conduct, the doctrine, the stand of the church. It's just, one follows the other.

[4:02] So all of these things are important. In Proverbs 4.14 it says, Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

Enter not, go not, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it. Proverbs 4.14 Enter not into the path of the wicked. We need to be careful.

What path are we on? What track are we on? And as a church it's critical too. We want to be on the right track. What are some indicators that we are on the right track?

I'll put it to you, some markers of purity. God wants a pure church. Number one, he wants a church that has a steadfastness with the word.

The word. The word of God. In Psalm 119.9 it says, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word?

[4:59] A young man can keep his way pure by keeping steadfast in the word. He can cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

It's the word that washes and cleanses and purifies. The washing of water by the word will ensure the church is pure. Our desire is to be a church that is steadfastly true to the sure word of God. Psalm 1 is that beautiful scripture. I love that one. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight shall be in the law of the Lord.

And in his law doth he meditate day and night, and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. And so on. The word of God.

We want to be planted. Rock solid. Steadfast. Grounded. Gaining our nourishment from the word of God. Planted, as it were, by the rivers of water.

[6:06] Not going in the way of the ungodly, the sinner's way, the scornful's way. Every word of God is pure. It says in Proverbs 30 verse 5.

Every word of God is pure. He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Now as a church we will not use Bibles that cast doubt upon the word of truth.

In some quarters we're seeing the King James Bible abandoned. We're seeing sound doctrine mixed together with falsehood. We know of a church where they've specifically said, Oh, we're not going to have the King James.

It's a local church. They won't have the King James Bible. I think that's a shameful thing. We want to stand on the word of God. It says in 1 Peter 1.22, Seeing you have purified your souls and obeying the truth through the Spirit.

There's a purification. There's a washing of water by the word. We want to love the truth and obey the truth. Yet the very Bible people are using in some quarters is not the word of God.

[7:18] It's not. It's a poor substitute. It's a sad counterfeit. It's lacking in so many ways. It has the same content in some degree, but it is not, is not a reliable Bible.

A pure church needs the pure word of God. Are we truly Bible believers? Then we need the King James Bible. It does matter. It does matter.

Isaiah 8.20, it says, To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

The King James Bible, we know, is a Bible we can count as true and faithful. It's a reliable translation.

And we disobey God's word at our peril. What are we seeing in the world around us, in the church scene around us? Isaiah 3.12, in part it says, Women rule over them.

[8:25] Now this is no denigration of women, but the Bible says that it's a sign of the end times. And we see that in churches around about us, women rule over them.

They disobey the word of God. The word of God is very clear on such matters. That women are not to be in positions of leadership over men.

That's not to say they haven't got many wonderful ministries and many giftings and many qualities that they can use for the Lord's glory and in his service. But disobedience to the word of God is very evident in many churches today where they just neglect such truths.

We are in the middle of a truth war. A truth war where carnality and confusion prevails. God's word has fallen in the street. Doctrine is something worth fighting for.

In Jude 1 verse 3, it says, It matters.

[9:44] It does matter what Bible we use. It matters what doctrine. It matters that we stand for the truth of the gospel. And we must stand solidly lockstep for the truth of the gospel.

Now when we say we stand for the truth of the gospel, it means we stand against some things too. We stand against error. And we must deal with error. Error must be exposed and countered.

The prosperity gospel is very popular today. It's sweeping across much of Pentecostalism. It's becoming mainstream.

I put it to you, especially in the Pentecostal side of Christianity. The prosperity gospel is doing untold damage. Just this afternoon I watched a video about how it's sweeping across Nigeria where this false gospel is being propagated and pushed on the people.

The healing, health, wealth, prosperity gospel. It's dangerous. It's demonic. I put it to you. It is destructive. And we're seeing these things today.

[10:49] Suppose it latter-day revelations. Suppose it words from the Lord. Prophecies. Suppose it trips to and from heaven or hell or both. Suppose it's apostles and prophets.

The mindless gibberish of false tongues. We're seeing this today. And it's overtaking Christianity. I watched this video, another video today.

It was about Joel's army, the new breed. It's amazing the doctrines of the latter days that are coming and being promoted.

I'll put you in touch with this material if you're interested. It's alarming stuff. It's alarming what is going on. Why? Because the word is missing. The word is missing.

Discernment is missing. It's gone out the window. You know, this is a quote, and I recall having read this in my journey out of Pentecostalism myself, and I'll quote it to you.

[11:49] A preacher called Babcock's. He says this. He says, In my case, there were four simple words that played a decisive role in changing my heart. Thus saith the Lord.

To me, these were most unsettling words. And the more I comprehended their meaning, the more I understood what the prophets meant when they spoke them, and what the Holy Spirit meant when he inspired them, the more unsettling they became.

Thus saith the Lord. What abuses I had seen of those words. What bitter fruit I had seen borne by men and women speaking these words. I've seen people married on the basis of guidance received from personal prophecies, only to be divorced a week later because of a terrible scandal.

Many lives have been harmed by such prophetic guidance. What actions, what conduct have been counted as by it, and thus saith the Lord. The moment of truth came when I heard a prophecy spoken at a charismatic church I was visiting, I was sitting in the church trying to worship God while dreading the approach of that obligatory moment of silence which signalled that a prophecy was about to be spoken.

The silence came and soon it was broken by a bowl and commanding, Thus saith the Lord. Those words triggered an immediate reaction. Conviction, like water rising against a dam, began to fill my soul.

[13:15] Listen, my people, the prophecy commenced. Until finally the dam burst. This is not my God, I cried within my heart. This is not my Lord. You've got to be so careful about presuming to speak.

First person is God, as it's so commonplace. Friends, we must hold fast the word, the word, and reject those who oppose the word. In Romans 16, 17, it says, if their doctrine is contrary, we're to mark them, we're to avoid them.

Beware, savage wolves, beware, strange fire. And yet, instead of their message, mark them, avoid them, we're getting the message, join them, join them.

You know, this is what I read just a few days ago. I'll quote this, it's a local invitation. Listen to this, every Christian from every Christian church is invited to attend a unique and wonderful time of praise, worship, teaching, and fellowship on Pentecost Sunday night.

The Northern Christian Leaders Network, an informal group of Christian ministers and leaders, have arranged for Pastor Ian Shelton of Toowoomba City Church to bring a message on Christian unity.

[14:34] based on their stories and experience of unity in that city in Queensland. It goes on, be sure to encourage every believer in Christ you know to come along and pray together for the transformation of the northern suburbs of Adelaide.

It will be hosted by the Craigmore Christian Centre. What is this? What is this? Everyone's hooked in. You know, you read in the background material of what is this Northern Christian Leaders Network.

Who's a part of this? Certainly this church is not a part of this Northern Christian Leaders Network. Who is? Paradise North tend to be called Influences North.

Salt Church, Seventh Day Adventists are part of it. Lutherans, Hope Central, the Salvos, the Uniting, Clayford Baptist, Anglican, Craigmore Christian Brethren.

It's all a big conglomeration, a big getting together. Why would you link us with the Seventh Day Adventists for one? With the Uniting Church, with its abomination, with its, the violence of the Uniting Church as it stands today with lesbianism and homosexuality condoned and promulgated, the paganism of such things.

[15:52] So who exactly is Ian Shelton? Who is Ian Shelton? I looked him up on the internet. I listened to one of his messages. He preached us from the so-called Living Bible.

He's a driving force for the ecumenical movement in Toowoomba, a key leader in the charismatic movement. Friends, these things are dangerous. We won't have a bar of it.

We will not have a bar of it. We want to be a church that is pure. Seeking the purity of the Word of God, of doctrine that stands sure and faithful.

Could these people be wolves in sheep's clothing? Let's cut to the chase, friends. It's apostasy. That's what it is. It's apostasy. This man, he's from the charismatic movement.

You know, I thought better of the criminal Christian brethren, to be honest, and I'll name them.

Friends, it's apostasy. Why would you link us with false doctrine such as that? You know, you can review the tragic history of Pentecostalism and see the history of Pentecostalism.

[16:58] I can give you much material on this. You can see the lives of the founders, the pioneers of the Pentecostal movement, their failed prophecies, their false doctrine, all manner of extra-biblical revelation and strange manifestations.

It's strange and it's getting stranger. They're mystics, false prophets. We must stand true to the word of God. Come out. Come out from among them and be ye separate.

Friends, many of these churches we talked about, I know the Baptist Union churches are part of the Baptist World Alliance. It's part of the World Council of Churches. The Salvation Army, I know I'm treading on toes tonight, but the Salvation Army is a member of the World Council of Churches.

And these are all joining together as if they could. It's dishonouring to the word of God. Friends, I'll put it to you. We must stand true to the word of God, not associate with false doctrine.

So, one mark of purity is faithfulness to the word. The word of God, the pure word of God.

Secondly, the worship. The worship. The worship matters.

[18:08] We want to worship with godly songs to fellowship with godly worship. I'm going to quote Dan Lusserini. Dan Lusserini, he was formerly a contemporary praise leader.

He was a part of the charismatic praise kind of service. And he said this, he's now come right out of all of that.

He says, I'm now convinced that God will not accept our worship when it is offered with music styles that are also used by pagans for their immoral practices.

He is a jealous God. If you grasp this principle alone, it will change forever the way you lead a worship service. Another quote, David Cloudy says, contemporary Christian music does not merely unhesitatingly borrow from the world's music.

It actually boasts of doing so. There is no sense of separation, of sacredness, or of holiness. The word says in Romans 12, to be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

[19:19] In Romans 12, verse 9, it says, Adhor, or hate, that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Dan Lusterini goes on, he says, when you combine the sensual dancing with the immodest dress of the women on the platform, in contemporary praise teams, you place a very large stumbling block in front of the men of the congregation.

congregation. This is the book, Confessions of a Former Worship Leader. Ezekiel 22, 26, it says, that priests have violated my law and have profaned my unholy things.

They have put no difference between the holy and the profane. Neither have they showed the difference between the unclean and the clean. There is a difference.

There ought to be a difference between the holy and the profane. Lusterini describes the worldly influence of contemporary Christian musicians. Now friends, we've been there and done that.

My children, when I was in the Pentecostal movement, I'm ashamed to say it, we sent them to Youth Alive. It's where my children learnt how to do headbanging. It makes me sick to the stomach.

[20:28] That's where my children learnt to do headbanging at the Youth Alive concert in the former church that we were part of. It's a reproach.

It's a reproach. Lusterini says this of such things. He says, We took teens to concerts given by popular CCM artists. They were not the radical heavy metal or hip hop artists but the middle of the road performers who seemed to be good role models but we noticed that the artists probably under the influence of their recording companies imitated secular artists in music, concert performance, techniques, dress, hairstyle and merchandising.

Everything seemed to be geared to making money by winning fans and the poor teens were manipulated in the same way as when they were listening to their secular teen idols. They were hooked in the beginning by safe, careful lyrics and moderate music but the artists always progressed, always progressed to an edgier, rockier and harder music style with lifestyle and image to match and the teens followed along.

The CCM artists became role models for different kinds of immorality, indecent dress, rebellious images. This is again Luzerini confessions of a former worship leader.

We've seen that, we've come out of it. Thank God we're out of it. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

[22:04] Friends, we need to be guarded and careful. What is worship? What is worship? What is worship in some circles today? It's hysterical laughter, it's ridiculous antics, it's demonic counterfeits, it's staggering, it's slaying, it's carpet time, it's supposed spiritual drunkenness, it's supposed private prayer languages.

I believe the Bible teaches none of these things. It teaches supposed apostles and prophets of the latter day, altered states of consciousness alike to hypnotism, where people are supposedly falling in the spirit.

Sensual music, mind-numbing choruses, you know, repeated over and over and over. 1 Timothy 4, 1, it talks of seducing spirits, it talks of doctrines of devils.

In some places we see very much the spirit of the world is evident. You see some of these worship services and many churches are adopting Hillsong, for example, but then the people buy the Hillsong tapes, they buy the Hillsong DVDs, they see the people dancing and jiving with the smoke machines and the coloured lights.

It's the thin end of the wedge. Don't open the door. Don't open the door. Keep it firmly shut. And yet, if you open the door, it just comes in like a flood.

[23:25] But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

We don't want the world. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. That's Ephesians 5.11.

Just by the by, the New King James weakens this. The New King James says, Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. But it's much, much more than exposing them.

It's reprove them. It's reprove them. It's speaking against them. We need to judge them and condemn them the unfruitful works of darkness. We will not budge in our worship.

You know, the sun have come of late and just said, Oh, can't we have some of these different songs? And we want to be guarded about what we sing. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

[24:31] You know, if the source is charismatic, we will not have it in our song book. The purity of the church. The purity of the church. Number one, the word of God.

Secondly, worship. Thirdly, our walk. Our walk is important to the purity of the church. In 1 John 4 verse 1, in part it says, Try the spirits.

We must watch that we don't sacrifice truth on the altar of unity. Instead of following the ecumenical ground, we need to long for sound doctrine. Sound doctrine.

Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 verse 16. He also said the same in 1 Timothy, shun profane and vain babblings. There's a lot of that going on.

It's profane, it's vain, babblings. You know what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the tongues movement of today. It's profane and vain, babblings. There's a drift, there's a shift, and sometimes it's not so subtle.

[25:31] Can two walk together except they be agreed? You know, again, back to this man coming to have some big one world church kind of ecumenical gathering, everybody get together, invite everybody.

He's charismatic. That's where he stands, that's what he's promoting, that's what his doctrine is. Mark them, avoid them, have nothing to do with them. Friends, there's a drift, there's a shift, and sometimes it's not so subtle.

Amos 3, 3, it says, can two walk together except they be agreed? We want to be lockstep, standing firmly, squarely, purity of the word of God, purity in our worship, purity in our walk with God.

2 Corinthians 7, 1, it says, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Now, some would say, preacher, you're being too negative. You're being too negative, you're being too critical, let's judge Mansour. David Cloud said this, he says, is it not positive to warn people about false prophets, about false gospels that can lead them to hell?

[26:42] Is it not positive to keep people from straying out of the will of God? Is it not positive to rescue the sheep from the clutches of the wolves? The fact that the shepherd has to deal harshly with the wolf does not mean he is not a positive, kind-hearted fellow.

The end times apostasy is characterised by the rejection of strong biblical absolutes and reproof and doctrine by teachers who pamper instead of preach, who generalise instead of being specific, who are positive rather than negative, who build self-esteem rather than call for repentance.

2 Timothy 4 it says, preach the word, the instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.

We will not yoke together with those who pervert the gospel. We will not, we must not, we dare not, we dare not. Now again, I'm going to tread off some toes tonight, I'm going to tread off some toes, I'm going to name some names.

Consider Billy Graham's disobedience to the word of God. Yes, Billy Graham. There's much, much more we could say about this man, but just a couple of references.

[28:07] And some say, oh, in his early days he was okay, and I used to kind of think that way to a degree, but as early as 1957, Graham said this in an interview with the Santa Francisco News, he said, quote, Billy Graham, anyone who makes a decision at our meetings is seen later and referred to a local clergyman, Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish.

What? They make a decision for Christ and you send them back to the Catholic Church, to the synagogue. The whore of Babylon, the...

God forbid, what's at the synagogue? Another quote about this man, in 1987, a Catholic priest of St. Jude's Church was supervisor of the councillors, he wasn't just one of the councillors, at the Billy Graham Denver Crusade, and from one service alone, 500 cards of individuals were referred to, St. Thomas Moore Roman Catholic Church in the suburb of Denver.

This is Billy Graham. Friends, we need to be very careful. And friends, Franklin Graham is following in his father's footsteps, the same kind of compromise.

It's compromise. It's compromise. Now, I'm not saying that we can't associate with like-minded churches.

[29:34] There's hundreds of churches that have got a magazine at the back. There's hundreds of churches that are like us in many ways, and particularly in the stands that they take for sound doctrine, as much as there may be variations amongst us, and that's the nature of independent churches.

But there is that love for the word of God. There is that love for standing against the tide of compromise. And we need to join together with like-minded churches, not with those that are going to join hands, with Seventh-day dentists, with Catholics, and so on, with the Uniting Church and other abominations.

Proverbs 4, 26, it says, Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left. Remove thy foot from evil.

We want to remove our foot from evil. We don't want to stand in that camp. We don't want to sit on the fence or dabble our toes in the water. We want to remove our foot from evil. The fact is apostasy is sweeping the world today.

And the church is losing ground in terms of these three markers of purity, in the word, in the worship, and in the walk. The world is creeping into the church.

[30:48] False doctrine and charismatic confusion is becoming endemic and mainstream. We want a few churches that want to join party of all of this stuff. That's not to say we've got our own problems to work out and we're not by any means perfect, but we're not going to join party with such things that think it's okay that pretty much anything goes and basically follows the charismatic pie pipers.

Friends, we must keep unspotted from the world. James 1.27 Friendship of the world is enmity with God. James 4. 4. 1 Peter 1.16 We're exhorted, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

There is a difference between the holy and the profane. There is a difference between the clean and the unclean. We're not going to adopt the smoke machines and the disco lights and all that razzmatazz if it's taking away from God's glory.

You're not the audience here. We're not here to make you feel good. We're here to worship a whole holy God. They're jealous God. With a word before which we tremble, we heard this morning of the reverence for the word of God.

We want to take it very seriously and it's a holy thing. We don't want to mess with that which is holy.

1 Peter 2.11 says, dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which walk against the soul.

[32:22] It's a war and there's fleshly lusts and it's in the churches. They cater into the fleshly lusts. We don't want to do that. I'd rather you all get upset with me and walk out than I offend a holy God.

God forbid. I'd rather have a slug of Julie stays with me. We want a holy church. We want a church that's pure. Amen? Don't we want that?

Don't we want that? It doesn't matter how many there are of us. Who gave himself for us. Titus 2.14 That he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify, purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

That's the kind of church we want to be. To stand fast for the purity of the church. Pray for those where they're not. We pray for our brothers and sisters in other churches, the churches I've named. Pray that they'll see what's going on. A subtle, creeping compromise and they'll want to stand fast for the truth of the word. They'll want to stand fast for worship which is God glorifying and not worldly entertaining and for a walk that is holy and pleasing unto our God.

[33:39] Not a confusing mishmash. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you. Dear Lord, we've heard much tonight about things that are not pleasing to you.

We pray for Billy Graham. We pray for Franklin Graham. We pray for all of these churches in the Northern Christian Leaders Network. We pray for all the churches that are in the World Council of Churches, Christians, but more particularly the individual Christians who are still part of such a thing.

Help them to see what is going on. Help the people in the charismatic movement to see the falsehood, the sham of it, the lies, the seducing spirits.

Help the people who are in the false cults to see that the word of God is very clear about the gospel, about salvation, about the truth of living for Christ.

Lord, help people to see. Help us to be a church that is not going to be ashamed. Help us, Lord, to stand firmly and squarely on your word and that each of us individually won't be ashamed of standing strongly for your truth.

[35:00] If there's any here yet to be saved, Lord, we pray that you might stir their heart, stir their very core of their being, that they might realise the great emptiness, the great lack of peace, the great damnation of their sin that awaits them if they're outside of Christ.

Lord, help people to see our only hope is in following you, in trusting your finished work. Lord, help us to be that church which is a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, such that will be presented to you without blemish, Lord, as a perfect spotless bride. Help us to be aspiring to be that church, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. CONGRATIST