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Introduction to Systematic Theology
Lecture 8 – The Doctrine of the Church
First Presbyterian Church of Orlando
Spring 2017

I. Introduction

- A. Review of ST and why it matters
 - 1. From *self-centered* to *God-centered* perspective
 - 2. Teaches us *that* we belong, *where* we belong, and *why* we belong
- B. Overview

II. Christ and the church

A. We cannot properly understand the *nature* of the church unless we properly understand the *relationship* between Christ and the church.

- 1. What the Protestant Reformation was all about

B. Ten Theses of Berne (1528)

- 1. The holy, Christian Church, whose only Head is Christ, is born of the Word of God, abides in the same, and does not listen to the voice of a stranger [Honors Christ as **sole Prophet** in the church].
- 2. The Church of Christ makes no laws or commandments without God's Word. Hence all human traditions, which are called ecclesiastical commandments, are binding upon us only in so far as they are based on and commanded by God's Word [Honors Christ's **sole Kingship** in the church].
- 3. Christ is our only wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and payment for the sins of the whole world. Hence it is a denial of Christ when we acknowledge another merit for salvation and satisfaction for sin [Honors Christ's **sole Priesthood** in the church.]¹

C. Christ, our Prophet, Priest, and King, and *our sole Head*. The church, *in and under Christ*, is a "kingdom of priests."

III. The story of the church: God's building project

A. Introduction

- 1. "I will build my church" (Matt 16.18)

¹ Cited from Arthur C. Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*).

2. The story of the church is **God's building project**.
 - a. Reformed ecclesiology ("doctrine of the church") is a "**two testament**" ecclesiology.

3. Three descriptions: people, place, and purpose

- a. "Church" = covenant assembly—**people**
- b. A tabernacle/temple/sanctuary—**place**
- c. A kingdom of priests—**purpose**

B. **In the beginning:** a kingdom of priests

C. The church as postlapsarian institution

1. Promissory form

- a. Gen 35.11

2. Pattern form

- a. Exod 19-24: "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7.38)

3. Prophetic form

- a. Jer 1.10; 24.6: a building *established, torn down, and rebuilt*

4. Perfected form

- a. Christ the builder and the cornerstone
 - i. Christ the builder: "I will build my church" (Matt 16.18)
 - ii. Christ the cornerstone: "Destroy this temple..." (John 2.19); "The stone that the builders rejected..." (Matt 21.42)
- b. Inaugurated: 1 Pet 2.4-10; Rev 5
- c. Consummated: Rev 22.1-5

IV. People, place, and purpose: three descriptions of the church

A. 1 Peter 2.4-10

B. These three descriptions are rooted in Exodus.

1. **Purpose** (kingdom of priests): 19.4-6
2. **People** (covenant assembly): 19-24
3. **Place** (tabernacle/temple): 25-40

C. A common combination of descriptions

Psalm 147.2: "The Lord *builds up* Jerusalem; he *gathers* the outcasts of Israel

Matt 16.18: "I will *build* my church"

D. What these descriptions teach us about the church

1. **The church's relation to God: *receiving* and *responding*** (Heb 12.28-29)
2. **The church's relation to the world: *going* and *gathering*** (Isa 2; 66; Matt 5.14-16)
 - a. John Piper: Missions exists because worship does not.

V. Conclusion: Happiness *in* God *with* one another

- A. **Glorification:** the grace for which we *long*...
 1. Creation as the theatre of Jesus' glory
 2. Our happiness in him
- B. **The fullness of *Jesus' glory* is expressed in the fullness of *God's people*:** every tribe, tongue, and language (Rev 5)
 - a. Sunday worship is a preview and foretaste of eternity.
- C. **The fullness of our *happiness in* God is a *shared* happiness.**

Anselm: "What joy there is indeed and how great it is where there exists so great a good! . . . But surely if someone else who you loved in every respect as yourself possessed that same blessedness, your joy would be doubled for you would rejoice as much for him as for yourself. Therefore in that perfect and pure love of the countless holy angels and holy men where no one will love another less than himself, each will rejoice for every other as for himself. If, then, the heart of man will scarcely be able to comprehend the joy that will belong to it from so great a good, how will it comprehend so many and such great joys?"