

**KNOW THE TRUTH**  
**Lesson 12 - The Church (2 of 2)**

Outline is drawn from pages 307-338 of Know the Truth - A Handbook of Christian Belief by Bruce Milne.

**KEY CONCEPTS FROM CHAPTER 25 - "THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH"**

- I. The Word of God
  - A. Expository preaching
    1. "The public exposition of Scripture in the power of the Spirit has had, and continues to have, incalculable significance for the birthing, renewal and growth of the people of God." (Milne, 307-308)
    2. Why has the importance of preaching been diminished in our day?
    3. "The Scriptures bear consistent witness to the importance of preaching for God's encounter with individuals and communities." (Milne, 308)
      - a) The office of prophet in the OT
      - b) "With the arrival of Jesus, 'in the fullness of time', preaching retains its central position" (Milne, 309)
        - (1) John the Baptist came preaching
        - (2) " Jesus burst upon the world as a preacher: 'After John was put in prison Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God' (Mark 1:14)." (Milne, 309)
          - (a) "His justification of this ministry was on identical grounds: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach...' (Luke 4:18)." (Milne, 309)
        - (3) " The apostles not surprisingly reflect the same ministry priority. Indeed, they consciously shun other legitimate forms of service in order to fulfil it: 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God to serve tables' (Acts 6:4)." (Milne, 309)
        - (4) "Paul in his ministry refers to the commission the risen Lord had given him 'not to baptize but to preach the gospel' (1 Cor. 1:17)." (Milne, 309)
    4. "There are two related theological justifications of this high view of preaching in Scripture." (Milne, 309)
      - a) "First, it arises from our condition as sinners." (Milne, 309)
      - b) "Secondly, the verbal proclamation of the Word of God, when assisted by the Holy Spirit, has a unique divine authority, echoing at a secondary but nonetheless proper level the ancient prophets' regular claim, 'Thus says the Lord.'" (Milne, 310)
    5. "What are the characteristics of such preaching? We can mention five of the most fundamental." (Milne, 310)
      - a) "Biblical: it must base itself for its truth and authority on the words of Scripture. It must faithfully explain the biblical texts and passages so handled.
      - b) Anointed: it must be delivered with a proper sense of its utter weakness, and hence in entire, irreducible and unending dependence upon God the Holy Spirit, to enable the miracle of its God-revealing, life-impacting character to be manifest.
      - c) Contextual: it must be authentically rooted in the life of the listening congregation, and exercised with as accurate an awareness as may be

achieved of the contiguous realities of universal human nature, the immediately surrounding culture(s) and the preacher's own self-hood.

- d) Applied: the message needs to answer the listeners' unspoken questions about how to relate its truth to their spiritual situation and their everyday lives, at all levels.
- e) Passionate: it should reflect the preacher's conviction of speaking on behalf of God, with the deep earnestness and sincerity appropriate to that conviction." (Milne, 310-311)

#### B. Personal study of scripture

- 1. "To be a man or woman of God involves being a man or woman of the Word of God. The discipline of daily Bible study is therefore an obvious and God-owned means of spiritual growth." (Milne, 311)
- 2. "As well as innumerable blessings, there are also dangers in this practice:
  - a) for example, an almost superstitious, 'horoscope' attitude can develop whereby the portion to be studied each day is detached from its biblical context and forced to yield some hidden, special message relevant to the reader's immediate situation." (Milne, 311)
  - b) "We also need to beware of developing a legalistic attitude whereby we presume to earn God's blessing because we have fulfilled our daily devotional obligations, or of becoming burdened with a sense of guilt and the feeling that 'today is bound to go wrong' if we miss our Bible study time." (Milne, 311)

#### C. Group study of scripture

- 1. "We find informal group Bible study in the NT (Acts 17:11). It has certainly been a factor in the church's renewal, particularly during periods when public preaching has been forbidden or has declined. " (Milne, 311)
- 2. "It also has its dangers:
  - a) "It needs good leadership
  - b) and the suppressing of the tendency to digress,
  - c) to air personal opinions,
  - d) or to exchange testimonies which have no clear anchor in the passage of Scripture being studied.
  - e) If these dangers are recognized and avoided, group Bible study is without question a genuine means of grace." (Milne, 311)

### II. The Sacraments

#### A. Introductory Remarks

- 1. "Sacrament' (Lat. sacramentum) may be simply defined as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace' (Catechism of the Church of England)." (Milne, 312)
- 2. "If we limit the term to those ordinances instituted by Christ, there are only two: baptism and the Supper ('the bath and the bread' as Luther denoted them)." (Milne, 312)
- 3. "Some see this confirmed by the two OT ordinances, circumcision and the Passover."

#### B. "A sacrament has three principal elements:

- 1. The visible sign is represented by the water of baptism and the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.
- 2. The invisible grace is that to which the sacrament points and, many would wish to add, of which it is a seal to believers.

3. The sacramental relationship between the visible sign and the invisible grace is understood in a variety of ways, from the one extreme in Roman Catholicism where 1 and 2 are identified, to the other, often associated with the name of the sixteenth-century Reformer Zwingli, that sees the relationship between 1 and 2 as purely symbolic." (Milne, 312)
4. "When correcting the superstitious abuse of the sacraments in Roman Catholicism, the Reformers stressed the need to preach the Word whenever the sacraments are administered.

### C. Baptism

#### 1. The meaning of baptism

- a) "Baptism is a confession of faith in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 8:37), associated with public acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 8:16)." (Milne, 313)
- b) "Baptism is an experience of communion with Christ (Col. 2:12). The candidate is linked by faith with the Lord in whose name he or she is baptized, so as to enter in some sense into the very death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-5)." (Milne, 313)
- c) "Baptism is a consecration to living for Christ (Rom. 6:4-22). Thus careless living is seen as a denial of baptism.
- d) Baptism is a promise of consummation through Christ (Rom. 6:22). Like the Lord's Supper, it points us both back to the great gospel events of the past, and forwards to our share in the future consummation of the kingdom, which we have already entered upon in our faith-union with Christ." (Milne, 314)

#### 2. Baptism and the church

- a) "In the NT period a Christian unattached to a church was unknown, since a person's very response to the gospel in baptism would have brought him or her into the fellowship of a local company of Christ's people." (Milne, 313)

#### 3. Baptism and the Spirit

- a) "A number of Scriptures indicate a link between water and Spirit baptism (Gal. 3:26f.; 1 Cor. 12:12; Acts 2:38)."

#### 4. The proper objects of baptism

- a) Argument for infant baptism

### D. The Lord's Supper

#### 1. Introductory Remarks

- a) "This second Christian sacrament, variously entitled Lord's Supper, eucharist, communion, breaking of bread, is rooted in the Last Supper, when 'on the night he was betrayed' (1 Cor. 11:23) Jesus instituted the supper as a continuing ordinance among his disciples." (Milne, 316)

#### 2. The Roman Catholic view

- a) "In the mass, the elements of bread and wine, when duly consecrated by an apostolically ordained priest, are changed into the body and blood of Christ.

#### 3. The Lutheran view

- a) "Luther rejected 'transubstantiation' and argued instead that the body and blood of Christ are present 'in' and 'under' the elements of bread and wine." (Milne, 318-319)

#### 4. The Zwinglian view

- a) "This position is that the Supper is merely symbolic." (Milne, 319)
- 5. The Reformed view
  - a) "Calvin argued that Christ is truly partaken of in the Supper when the communicant comes in true faith. While it is the whole Christ, flesh and spirit, who is partaken of, stress fell on the spiritual and mystical aspects of communion with Christ through the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit, the church is lifted up in the Supper to experience fellowship with her glorified head and Lord and enabled to feed on him for the nourishing of her faith." (Milne, 319)

### III. Prayer

- A. God moved through prayer in the Old Testament
- B. Jesus prayed and taught us to pray
- C. The Apostles exhorted us to pray
- D. Prayer should be private
- E. Prayer should be corporate
- F. "It is the promise of Scripture that God hears such prayer and is pleased to answer it. The answer may not always be quite in the terms we wish, but we may be confident that it will be in terms of our highest interest and the expression of his deep love for us." (Milne, 320)

### IV. Fellowship

- A. "Fellowship with others in the body of Christ is a powerful means of grace to the people of God. God never intended the Christian life to be lived in isolation; indeed, it is folly to attempt it (John 15:1-8; Eph. 4:1-16)." (Milne, 320-321)

### V. Suffering

- A. "The church is called to be conformed to its head and Lord, in particular in his suffering and rejection (Luke 14:25-33; John 12:23-25; Rom. 8:17; Rev. 1:9).

## **KEY CONCEPTS FROM CHAPTER 26 - "THE CHURCH IN HISTORY"**

### I. Forms of Organization

- A. Episcopalian
- B. Presbyterian
- C. Congregational (independent)
- D. Roman Catholic

### II. Historical Perspectives

- A. The early centuries
- B. The Middle Ages
- C. The Reformation
- D. The modern period
  - 1. Church and state
  - 2. Materialism and secularization of culture
  - 3. Ecumenicalism
  - 4. The "new" Roman Catholic Church
  - 5. Global Christianity and the 'Southern Church'

### III. The Church's Future