



## Characteristics of a Prevailing Church

### John 17:13-26

#### 1. Joy is the 1<sup>st</sup> characteristic of a prevailing church

*"Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy."*

*John 17:13 (NLT)*

#### 2. Holiness is the 2<sup>nd</sup> characteristic of a prevailing church

*"I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth."*

*John 17:15-17*

#### 3. Truth is the 3<sup>rd</sup> characteristic of a prevailing church

*"Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth." John 17:17*

#### 4. Mission is the 4<sup>th</sup> characteristic of a prevailing church

*"In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world." John 17:18 (MSG)*

##### • **What is the mission? To communicate the Good News!**

*"I don't care about my own life. The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me — to tell people the Good News about God's grace." Acts 20:24 (NCV)*

If you've ever wondered "what on earth am I here for?"  
The answer is to tell others of God's great love for them!

- Practical point #1 is that all of us should commit to being involved in a circle with non-Christians:
  - Being a friend

- Offering encouragement
- Offering a listening ear and practical help
- Being salt & light

- Our friendship, when aided by the Holy Spirit has additional features allowing you to:
  - Be sensitive to their strengths
  - Their struggles and wounds
  - Their destiny and calling
  - Their image of God, their gold
- Why? Mark 2:17 *"Healthy people don't need a doctor— sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."*
- Interesting thing is He didn't make sinners feel like low life, to contrary, He communicated love, hope and friendship and created a hunger for right living and right relationship.
- **How do I tell others? Find common ground.**  
*"...Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings."*  
*1 Cor. 9:22-23 (NLT)*
- 1 Cor. 9: 22-23 Paul looked for things that he had in common, but he got this idea from Jesus
  - With farmers, Jesus spoke of sowing seed
  - With fisherman, Jesus spoke of fishing for men
  - With woman @ the well, Jesus spoke of water
- 5. **Unity is the 5<sup>th</sup> characteristic of a prevailing church**  
*"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me."*  
*John 17:22-23*

- **Unity is primarily about attitude**  
*“...for you, you should practice tenderhearted mercy and kindness to others. Don't worry about making a good impression on them, but be ready to suffer quietly and patiently. Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony.”*  
 Col. 3:12-14

This attitude is “practiced”. In the original it’s the word most often translated “clothe or put on”

- *Romans 13:14 “clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ”*
- *Eph 4:24 “Yes, you must be a new and different person, holy and good. Clothe yourself with this new nature.”*
- *Eph 4:23-24 “to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self”*
- *Eph 6:10-12 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.”*
- Col. 3 is suggesting that we choose/practice our attitudes when we prepare to be around people...
  - Prepare ourselves to be tenderhearted, showing mercy and kindness to others, not hard and hateful
  - Prepare ourselves to leave others feeling good about themselves and not just good about me
  - Prepare ourselves to suffer quietly and patiently (be patient/tolerant with other’s goofiness)
  - Prepare ourselves to be gentle and not harsh
  - Prepare ourselves to be offended and ready to forgive and not defensive
  - Most of all... Prepare ourselves to let love (Jesus presence) guide us in all we do relationally

- Remember with the Holy Spirit’s help, we can clothe ourselves with these expectations to do relationships just like we literally clothe ourselves for the events of the day.
- **Unity is not the same as uniformity**  
*Eph. 4:2-3 “...with complete lowliness of mind (humility) and meekness (unselfishness, gentleness, mildness), with patience, bearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another. Be eager and strive earnestly to guard and keep the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace.”* Note, in this passage also, that unity is something that we must work at, “strive earnestly to guard and keep harmony/oneness”.
- The Bible does not suggest that unity is the same as uniformity.
- By definition, unity can only be achieved in a party of two or more.
- If we were all clones with identical DNA, we could never have unity, all we would have is uniformity.
- Uniformity, think of military uniforms, haircuts, bunks... all the same.
- Remember God delights in our diversity. We would do well to learn to explore and enjoy one another’s differences instead of being threatened by them.
- This is huge in a successful marriage. Most marital conflicts stem from **not** appreciating a spouse’s differences and therefore trying to make your spouse like you. Not a good idea because you will never succeed and because if you did then one of you would become unnecessary.