



Making the Bridge Ready

Poverest Road Baptist Church 19/11/2023

Prepared by: Csaba Kelen

Outline

- The mandate of the Church – but how?
- Life in the Spirit vs Life under the Law
- Four Ingredients of life in the Spirit
- The Challenge
- Four Ingredients in Detail + Bonus
- The Conclusion

The Mandate of the Church

- **Ephesians 5:25-27 (NIV):** "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."



Problems in the Early Church

- Corinthians (NIV): Divisions and Cliques, Immorality, Abuse of Spiritual Gifts
- Galatians: Legalism
- Ephesians: Division between gentiles and jews
- Philippians: Division and selfishness
- Colossians: False teaching (human tradition, asceticism, immorality)
- Timothy: False teachings (false doctrines, myths)
- Timothy / Titus: Possible problems with the behaviour and/or qualification of elders
- James: Problem of “Easy believism” – faith without works

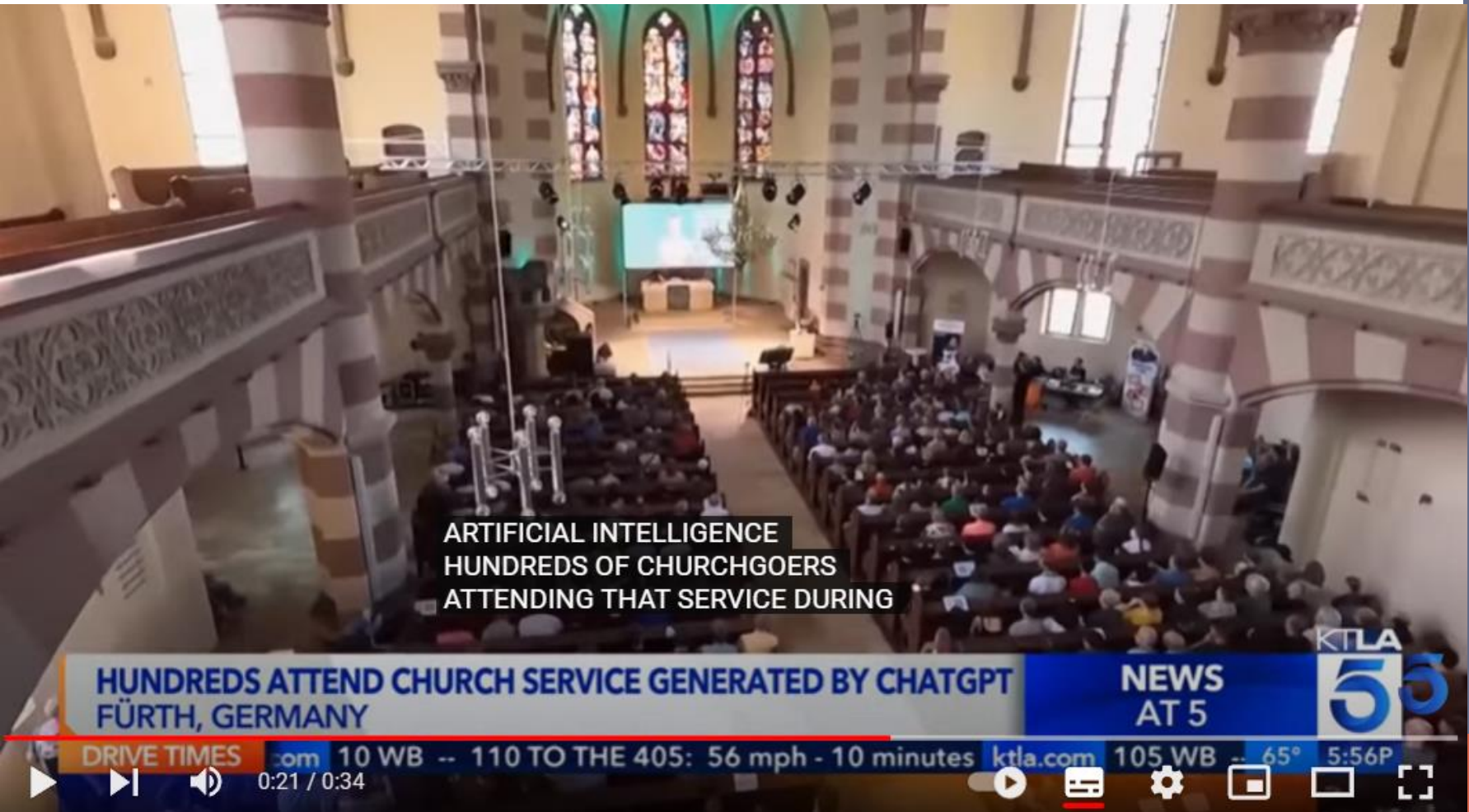
Leadership Problems in the Early Church

- **Galatians 2:11-14 (NIV):** Paul confronted Peter because at a certain point he separated himself from the Gentiles i.e. did not eat with them.
- **Acts 15:36-39 (NIV):** Paul and Barnabas separated during the second mission trip after a sharp disagreement whether they should bring Mark John along with them.
- **3 John 1:9-10 (NIV):** John describes Diotrephes, one of the church leaders as a malicious gossip, and one who does not show proper hospitality to other believers etc.

How to achieve the Perfect Church?



AI Church Service in Fürth, Germany




Ways to Manage Problems in Church

- Law of Sin and Death: Live by rules, regulations, systems and processes...
- No Rules – people do as they please
- Law of the Spirit: We all submit to Christ and strive to live according to the Spirit of God

Life in the Spirit vs Life in the Law

- **Romans 7:6 (NIV):** "But now, by dying to what once bound us, *we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit*, and not in the old way of the written code."
- **Romans 8:1-2 (NIV):** "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the *Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death*."
- **Romans 8:5-6 (NIV):** "Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; *but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*"

Living According to the Spirit

- **Repentance: Acts 3:19 (NIV):** "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."
 - **Restitution: Luke 19:8 (NIV):** "[Zacheus]: Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount".
 - **Forgiveness: Ephesians 4:32 (NIV):** "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
 - **Reconciliation: Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV):** "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."
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- **Fruits of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV):** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

The Challenge

- **Have you repented of your sinful past completely?**
- **Is there anything that you need to repent now?**
- **Have you forgiven those who wronged you, abused you, hurt you?**
- **Do you hold back forgiveness because you feel that the sin committed against you is just too big to simply pardon it?**
- **Do you hold back forgiveness because you are waiting for the person to say sorry?**
- **Have you paid restitution for the damage caused by your sin?**
- **Do you owe people money, time, attention?**
- **Do you have outstanding promises that you have not fulfilled?**
- **Do you need to reconcile with friends, relatives, colleagues etc. where the relationship got broken?**
- **Have you done your best to say sorry and forgive them?**
- **Is your heart is full of piece, joy and love considering the above?**

1. Repentance – [Metanoeo = change of mind]: Being sorry for your sin & change of behaviour

- **Mathew 3.1-2, 5-6:** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.[...] ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.
- **Mathew 4.17** From that time on Jesus began to preach, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
- **Acts 26.20** [Paul] First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their **repentance by their deeds** [show fruits appropriate to repentance]”
- **Luke 17.3:** “[Jesus] So watch yourselves. If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they **repent**, forgive them.”

Repentance*

- **Psalm 51.1-17** Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
- Asking for forgiveness
- Godly sorrow
- Confession:
- Renounce sin
- Affirming God as judge
- Asking for restoration

Consequences of the Lack of Repentance*

- **Psychological and psychosomatic health problems: Psalm 32.1,3-5**
Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. [...] ³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy on me my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” And you forgave the guilt of my sin.
- **Lack of freedom, bondage to sin: John 8.34-36 Jesus replied,** “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- **Lack of forgiveness results in bitterness / defilement: Hebrews 12.14-15** Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

2. Restitution: Repair the damage caused by sin

- **Luke 19.1-10** Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.[...] ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! **Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.**” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Restitution

- **Numbers 5.6-7:** “Say to the Israelites: ‘Any man or woman who wrongs another in any way^[a] and so is unfaithful to the LORD is guilty ⁷ and must confess the sin they have committed. They must make full restitution for the wrong they have done, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the person they have wronged.”
- **Romans 13.7-8:** ⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. ⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

3. Forgiveness [Aphiemi = to send away, to dismiss]: Pardon others for their sin

- **Matthew 18:21-22 (NIV):** "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"
- **Mark 11.25** [...]when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."
- **Col 3.13** "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Forgiveness

- **Matthew 18. 21-35** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.
- ²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[b] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.
- ²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[c] He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.
- ³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Consequences of the Lack of Forgiveness

- **God will not forgive you: Matthew 5.14-15** [After the Lord's prayer] ¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.
- **Bitterness, defilement: Hebrews 12.14-15** Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
- **Bitterness, slander, malice: Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV):** "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
- **James 2:13 (NIV):** "[...]because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment."

4. Reconciliation*: Restore relations marred by sin

- **Matthew 5.23-25** [After Jesus's talk about murder and anger]
"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be **reconciled** to them; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."
- **Matthew 18.15** "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have **won them over**."

Reconciliation

- **Gen 45.3-5,14-15** [Joseph to his brothers] “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.[...] ¹⁴ Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

The Conclusion:

1. Examine yourself if there is anything in your life that was or is not right, repent before God and change your behaviour.
2. Ask trusted fellow believer from church if you need support as you go through this process.
3. If your behaviour caused damage to others, make reparations financially, physically or any way that is practical.
4. If you are aware that someone has something against you, go and ask forgiveness and be reconciled.
5. If someone sinned against you practice love and forgiveness at the first instance because “love covers a multitude of sins”.
6. If the person’s sinful behaviour is a pattern that continues to cause damage to you and others, rebuke the person in love and help him/her to change his/her behaviour including repentance.
7. Strive to restore relationships with your family members, relatives, friends, colleagues and fellow believers.

Closure: Has the bride made herself ready?

- **Revelations 19.7-8:** Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.
- **Revelations 22.17:** ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.



MADE *Ready*

Jesus is returning for His church