The Measuring Line

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday March 19th, 2023

Text: Romans 2:16; Ephesians 4:11-13

### Intro

1. Any project that involves building, will involve measuring.
2. A measuring line (tape) allows the builder to see how close (or far) the project is to the plan (standard).
3. Zechariah 2:1-2: Zechariah saw “a man with a measuring line.”
   1. The Jewish exiles who returned to Jerusalem were to rebuild the temple and finished it by the instruction of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-15).
      1. God was saying He would measure Jerusalem and that it would one day richly populated and wouldn’t need walls because God would protect it.
   2. God often ordered structures and items to be measured to see if they were to His pattern.
      1. *Gen. 6:14-16:* The measurements of the ark were to be exact!
      2. *Ex. 25:8-40:* God gave the measurements for the Tabernacle & its furniture, the Ark of the Covenant, and told Moses to build it according to God’s pattern.
      3. *I Chr. 28:11-12, 19:* The Temple was to be built according to divine pattern.
4. Do we recognize the standard (pattern) we are to measure up to?
   1. Romans 2:16: The “secrets of men” will be judged through Christ: held to His standard.
   2. Ephesians 4:11-13: Christ has equipped the saints to be built up together until we attain maturity, and grow “to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”
   3. It is not our opinions, feelings, what others think, what other churches do, or majority opinion that matters!
5. The only true standard of what matters is in God’s word *(Jn. 8:32; 17:17; II Tim. 3:16-17).*
6. The church and the saints that make it up are God’s temple today (I Cor. 6:19-20) – How do we measure up?

# Measuring the Church

* 1. Just as the temple had to be measured according to divine pattern, the church (God’s temple) must be measured by the word of God.
     1. Ephesians 2:19-22: Saints make up the church, and the church is to grow together into the temple, the dwelling place of God! (Eph. 4:11-13)
     2. The Tabernacle, then the temple *(II Chr. 7:12)* was the place God met with His people, and today it is the church – Matthew 18:20
  2. To know one is in the right church, the dwelling place of God, one must measure it…
     1. Begun in the right place: Jerusalem – Isaiah 2:2-3; *Acts 2*
     2. At the right time: last days, when all nations flow into it – Is. 2:1-2; Dan. 2:44
     3. Must be built by Jesus: If not built by Christ it is in vain – Mt. 15:13; 16:18; Ps. 127:1
  3. Many churches and organizations claim to have the truth, but their “truths” are exposed as lies when measured against the word of God!
  4. The Measuring Line of God’s word will let you know if you are in the church God built & Jesus died to save!

# Measuring the Work of the Church

* 1. Many argue and debate over what the work of the church is and is not.
  2. Had God just said to the church, “Do works,” it could be whatever it wanted. But God was specific in what the “good works” *(Titus 2:14)* of the church are:
     1. Evangelism – Romans 10:14; Ephesians 4:11-12, 16; I Thessalonians 1:8
     2. Benevolence towards the saints – Romans 15:25-26
     3. Edification of the saints – I Corinthians 14:12; Ephesians 4:11-12, 16
  3. Man has added many “good works” to what the church is to do, forgetting what Jesus said of “good works” done outside His authority:
     1. Matthew 7:21-23: Those outside the will of God are cast aside!
  4. The Measuring Line of God’s word will tell you if the congregation of God’s people is doing the work God has called it to do!

# Measuring the Organization of the Church

* 1. Men love titles!
     1. In ancient times through today, people love to be recognized by a title!
  2. Organization is essential for anything to run smoothly; the church is no exception.
  3. God has given the plan for the organization of His church, and it is on a local scale:
     1. Elders (pastors – Eph. 4:11) – Phil. 1:1 (KJV: bishops; NAS: overseers)
        1. In every church – Acts 14:23
        2. In every city – Titus 1:5 (elders, “overseers” in 1:7)
     2. Deacons – Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-13
  4. Elders and Deacons aren’t titles as much as they are job descriptions!
     1. The scope of the elder’s *(I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)* oversight *(Acts 20:17, 28)* begins and ends with the local church *(I Pet. 5:2).*
     2. Deacons are “servants,” “ministers”: Men appointed to serve! *(I Tim. 3:8-13)*
  5. Man has placed emphasis on religious titles for the glory of man!
     1. In many religious organizations today, men & women wear titles.
     2. If a person wears a title not found in the word of God, or misapplied *(pastors are elders, but the title is given to just evangelists),* then not God’s pattern!
  6. The Measuring Line of God’s word will let a congregation know if its organization is within the will of God!

# Measuring the Assembly of the Church

* 1. Just as many argue over the work of the church, so also do men believe, feel, and teach that the church can worship (serve) God in any method it chooses.
  2. God has directed the church (assembly) in the way it is to worship (serve) Him:
     1. Vocal music (singing a cappella) – Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16
     2. The Lord’s supper on the 1st day of the week – Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:26; 16:2
     3. Giving as we have prospered & purposed in our hearts – I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:7
     4. Preaching – Colossians 4:16; II Timothy 4:2
     5. Praying – Ephesians 6:18-20; I Timothy 2:8
  3. The Measuring Line of God’s word will show if our assembling together is in the authority of God!

# Measuring Our Steadfastness & Faithfulness

* 1. Our steadfastness and faithfulness should not be overlooked when measuring…
     1. We all need to measure (test) ourselves – II Corinthians 13:5
     2. We must be “steadfast and immovable” – I Corinthians 15:58
     3. We are stewards and “must be found faithful” – I Corinthians 4:2; Revelation 2:10
     4. Must “continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away” – Colossians 1:23
  2. The Measuring Line of God’s word reveals that death is the finish line for our faith or when Jesus returns (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 2:10) – How do we measure up?

##### Conclusion

1. As Zechariah saw “a man with a measuring line” to measure Jerusalem, one day we will stand before God and will be measured to the standard of Christ! *(II Corinthians 5:10)*
2. Timothy was admonished by Paul and stands as example for us today to:
   1. “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.” (I Tim. 4:16)
3. Just as in building anything it is important to measure, so in living for Christ it is important we measure ourselves to His standard! *(Romans 2:16; Ephesians 4:13)*
4. ***How do you measure up?***
5. If you are not a Christian, you are outside the family of Christ. Repent & be baptized!
6. If a Christian not measuring up, make the needed corrections! Repent and be renewed.
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!