

“Flickering Lamps – Christ & His Church” (Blackaby)

Week 2: ‘Christ’s Plans for His Church’

September 23, 2020

Introduction: Moses

“‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’” **Is. 55:8-9**

“When churches assume their thinking and planning is identical to God’s they try to accomplish God’s work the world’s way. It is arrogant to assume God seeks to be glorified and to make disciples of all nations, yet He leaves the local churches to figure out the details.”

“Christ not only builds His Church; He also directs it. When Christ said He was the Head of the Church, He was not referring to a token, nominal figurehead (Col. 118). He intends to be actively involved in every aspect of church life.”

I. I Know Your Works (Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 3:1, 8, 15)

“Many churches across our land need a word from the risen Christ.” Blackaby

II. Trusting God for Our Plans

“I have learned the key to honoring God is not to develop my own plans and then ask God to bless them. God already has a plan. Noah did not develop a plan and then pray for God to bless it. He had never even heard of an ark before! The key is to cry out to God and beseech Him to reveal His plans to you. As a church, you have the Holy Spirit present within you who knows God’s mind (1 Cor. 2:9-12). His role is to guide you into the will of the Father.”

“I have also learned that if you pray for God to guide you, you had better keep your spiritual eyes open, so you recognize where God is already at work.”

III. Influential Principles Learned and Applied

1. Seek First the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33)

“There is a big difference between building your church and building God’s kingdom.”

“Few things are less God-glorifying than a selfish person or church.”

2. Let God Direct Your Steps (Prov. 3:5-6)

“...and whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear His command behind you; ‘This is the way. Walk in it’” (Is. 30:21)

3. Give Yourself Away (Matt. 16:25)

“One of the most insidious lies Satan whispers into churches’ ears is this: ‘Don’t obey what God asks until you have the resources.’”

“The truth is, you can rarely afford to obey what God asks because He wants you to rely on His provision. The question is not, ‘Can we afford to obey?’ The crucial question is, ‘Can we afford not to obey?’ When we step out in faith, He is always faithful to provide what we lack.”

“Better to obey what God asks immediately than to wait until we think we are in a position to say yes. We can become so concerned with what it might cost us to obey that we fail to consider the tragic price of disobedience. The truth is, you are never more like Jesus than when you give yourself away.”

4. Love One Another (John 15:12)

“The fastest way for a church to experience revival is when it returns to a love relationship with Christ and with one another.”

“Christ wanted our church to be more than an institution; He wanted it to be family. Organizations experience ebbs and flows in attendance. But families care for each individual, regardless of how they are behaving.”

“Cults try to retain members by using fear, intimidation, and manipulation. Churches keep their members with love...You cannot prevent people from leaving your fellowship, but you can and should keep loving them. It is much easier to leave an organization than it is to abandon a family.”

Conclusion: “Your planning will not build God’s kingdom. That is God’s work. But you can wholly surrender yourselves as a church to Christ’s lordship and allow Him to build His kingdom through you. If you will place your plans, your building, your budget, your programs, and your preferences on the altar, Christ will take your church and use it mightily for His purposes. Have you sought His heart and mind for your church? Are you prepared to do whatever He asks? What God tells you may be difficult. It could be costly. But with His command will also come His powerful presence. It is an awesome thing to be on mission with God!