

# The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms

## Lesson 5-The Church

When we discussed the Two Kingdoms in the New Testament, we briefly discussed how it is in the church where we find the redemptive kingdom on earth. Only the church, and no other institution, can claim to be founded by Christ through the covenant of grace. Therefore, for the Christian, the church is of \_\_\_\_\_ importance.

*“The church is primary for the Christian life. Every other institution-the family, the school, the business corporation, the state-is secondary in the practice of Christian religion. The church is where the chief action of the Christian life takes place.”*

### Purpose of Church

There are different ways people talk about the church and its place in the Christians life. However, one common thought is that church is the place where Christians go to get recharged and reprepared to go back into the world and live the Christian life. So, we go to church to prepare ourselves to live the other six days of week in a Christian way. Therefore, church is a means to an end (successful Christian living throughout the week). However, this approach is completely \_\_\_\_\_ in terms of the Christian life for two reasons:

1. It puts the primary focus for church attendance and worship on the \_\_\_\_\_ instead of on God
2. It makes the worship done \_\_\_\_\_ of church more important than the worship that is done corporately as an assembled church.

*“Going to church is not primarily about me or even about us, but about God. I go to church not first of all to benefit myself (though that is a very important secondary effect) but to worship the Lord...The church’s worship and fellowship are ends in themselves. Nothing we do in the world is more important than participating in these activities.”*

*“Worship is an activity of the church. Believers, as individuals and families, are obliged to offer private worship to God...Scriptures special concern, however, is with corporate worship, in the gathered assembly of the saints...Reading Scripture privately is good, but hearing it preached by a faithful minister of the gospel is even better.”*

The primary purpose of the church is for the saints to gather together to worship God through the \_\_\_\_\_ means of grace that the Lord has given. God tells us how we are to worship Him in His Word.

### Why Sunday?

Under the Old Testament the weekly day for rest and worship was Saturday (the last day of the week). However, under the New Covenant the day for rest and worship is Sunday, also called the \_\_\_\_\_ because it is the day that Jesus rose from the dead. Why the change?

*“The day that Jesus lay dead in the tomb turned out to be the last Sabbath of the Old Testament era (for after His resurrection the old covenant was no more) ...The weekly Old Testament Sabbath had looked back to God’s work of creation (Ex. 20:8-11) and reminded God’s people of the first Adam’s original obligation to work perfectly in this world and then to attain His rest. The resurrection now announces that Jesus, as the last Adam, has completed the task of the first Adam and has attained His reward of rest in the world to come.”*

*“As the seventh-day Sabbath of the Old Testament testified that the task assigned to the first Adam remained uncompleted, so the first-day Sabbath of the New Testament testifies that the last Adam has fulfilled it. By resting first and then working, the Christian doctrine of salvation is portrayed in live action. God first justifies us by uniting us to His resurrected Son in heaven apart from any work of our own, and then He calls us to work obediently in this world, not to earn our rest but to express our gratitude that the rest has already been earned by the work of another.”*

**The unique ethic of the church** (forgiveness, generosity, evangelism)

In the common kingdom a system of justice was established by God (Gen. 9:6). The state is to \_\_\_\_\_ a transgressor of the law to uphold justice. However, in the church, justice is not the ruling and governing principle.

*“Jesus announced that this principle of justice is not to apply in the kingdom of heaven. Instead an ethic of forgiveness and reconciliation should characterize the citizens of His kingdom, an ethic that portrays the gospel itself.”*

While our desire for “justice” is so strong (for many different reasons) we must remember the \_\_\_\_\_ and with our brothers and sisters in Christ show grace and mercy to one another. But what about church discipline?

*“The necessity of church discipline is prompted by serious sin against God and neighbor. Yet Scripture never speaks of enforcing justice against the wrongdoer as the goal of church discipline. The goal is restoration.”*

*“In an ordinary civil lawsuit it is irrelevant whether an accused person repents. If he committed the crime, he should pay the penalty, whether he feels remorse or not. This is the demand of justice. But in the church it would be a travesty to continue the disciplinary process after repentance, out of desire to give the sinner his due. All citizens of Christ’s heavenly kingdom rejoice that God has not given them their due...Church discipline aims to forgive, reconcile, and restore, not to enforce justice.”*

*“There are no criminal records in the church. No one who repents is blacklisted and no one is on probation, no matter how many civil crimes he has committed (this does not mean that proper wisdom is not applied in various cases but simply that other Christians do not hold the repentant saints’ sin against them as a block to fellowship). A person might be prosecuted for a crime for which he stands perfectly forgiven in the eyes of Christ and His church...what a beautiful haven of forgiveness the church should be.”*