



The Power of the Pattern

July 26, 2015

A Few Initial Thoughts

There is much to say in future months about “the pattern” and our call to be a pattern house. First, what is the pattern? Paul spoke about it in our primary text for today:

2 Timothy 1:13 ESV Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. (Emphasis mine)

In the same Epistle, Paul mentions it again, but in different way: ☺

2 Timothy 3:12-17 ESV Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, (13) while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (14) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it (15) and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (Emphasis mine)

The *pattern* can be described as:

The fundamental doctrines, expressions, and traditions given to the Church by Christ through the New Testament writers.

The *pattern* is simply:

“Who Christ intended His church to be, what He intended it to teach, and the way He designed it to operate. All of this is clearly illustrated in the New Testament.”

The Apostle often encouraged the church build according to the Scriptures, which is another way of saying, “follow the pattern.” He also called it “holding to the traditions” they were taught. (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thes 2:15)

This is no small matter. He wrote to the church at Thessalonica:

- ***2 Th 3:6 ESV (6) Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.***
- ***2 Th 3:14 ESV (14) If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.***

Another way he preached this pattern principle was his call to imitate him. He said to the church at Corinth:

1 Cor 4:16-17 ESV (16) I urge you, then, be imitators of me. (17) That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

Obviously, there is a lot about “following the biblical church pattern” we don’t like. However, this church preaches through large portions of Scripture to position ourselves to align with the Lord of Church’s desires that He spoke through the New Testament writers, not our own. He alone reaches and teaches and releases.

Make no mistake: the Lord of the Church is in charge! Don’t think so? Remember, in Revelation when Jesus spoke **authoritatively** to His Church?

1. *Rev 2:1 ESV "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.*
2. *Rev 2:8 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.*
3. *Rev 2:12 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.*
4. *Rev 2:18 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.*
5. *Rev 3:1 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.*
6. *Rev 3:7 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.*
7. *Rev 3:14 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.*

Jesus is LORD and He is Lord over all, including His Church. He still leads it, loves and nurtures it, and commands it. He is its Priest, Prophet, Provider, and Protector!

Today, I’d like to read just a few powerful parts of the pattern to encourage you. His direction for His church can be trusted; His Word is **good**; His patterns are best for us! 😊

The Power of the Pattern

The Fledgling Church in Acts

Act 2:40-47 ESV And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." (41) So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. (44) And all who believed were together and had all things in common. (45) And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (46) And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they

received their food with glad and generous hearts, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The Church in Rome

Rom 12:9-21 ESV Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. (10) Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. (11) Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. (12) Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. (13) Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. (14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. (15) Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (16) Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. (17) Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (20) To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Church at Ephesus

Eph 4:17-32 ESV Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. (18) They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (19) They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (20) But that is not the way you learned Christ!-- (21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, (22) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, (23) and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, (24) and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (25) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. (26) Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, (27) and give no opportunity to the devil. (28) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (29) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (32) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

The Church at Colossae

Col 3:8-25 ESV But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (9) Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices (10) and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (11) Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (12) Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, (13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (14) And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (17) And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (18) Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. (19) Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (20) Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (21) Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. (22) Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. (23) Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, (24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (25) For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

The Church at Thessalonica

1Th 5:11-24 ESV Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (12) We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, (13) and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. (14) And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. (15) See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. (16) Rejoice always, (17) pray without ceasing, (18) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (19) Do not quench the Spirit. (20) Do not despise prophecies, (21) but test everything; hold fast what is good. (22) Abstain from every form of evil. (23) Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (24) He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Study some of these patterns, CRCC. Look at the admonishments...

1. To walk in **unity**
2. To love deeply and encourage
3. To submit to one another
4. To rejoice in the Lord
5. To be **generous**

6. To allow the word of Christ to richly dwell in you
7. To be quick to forgive
8. To walk in holiness
9. To show **hospitality**
10. To be meek and humble

So much more could be read and said! But here is my point today: I'm no longer uncomfortable with our call to pattern ourselves according to God's instructions. When I was young, I thought the world's methods could be mixed with ministry. I was wrong. I'm asking this church to stand with me in honoring our Lord and seeking to obey His Great Commission. I'm asking you to do that as YOU see outlined in the holy text of Scripture and in great love.

Right now, the elders and deacons of our church are reading through the Pastoral Epistles. Join us? Also, take another look at questions 57-62 of the Westminster shorter catechism.

Let us build according to the pattern. Let us love deeply and sacrificially for His glory. **The pattern (the Scripture) is powerful!** We cannot do any better than following God's instructions. 😊

Amen.