

A City Set On A Hill

Franklin Church of Christ
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September 7, 2003
AM Worship

Introduction:

Today marks the beginning of what I believe will be a great relationship and a great future. As we look forward into the future of the Franklin Church of Christ, we need to begin with a great vision of the future. What does God intend this church to be? What do we need to do to be what God intends us to be? When we look into that future, our vision should be guided by the principle found in **Matthew 5:14**. God means for us to be the light of the world, like a city set on a hill which cannot be hidden. God wants us to stand out. Too many churches today are willing to blend in with the cities down in the valley. Too many are willing to just look like everyone else with only simple variations of the mainstream man-made religion theme. We must not be satisfied with blending in. We must be devoted to standing out, unable to hide, shining brightly for all to see. That is what we are to be and that is what we will become.

Discussion:

- I. Why should the Franklin Church of Christ be like a city set on a hill?
 - A. We must not strive to be a city set on a hill in order to be seen and praised by men. There should be no desire to have reputation among men. As **Revelation 3:1** reveals, having a reputation means very little.
 - B. Instead, this church needs to stand out as a city set on a hill to fulfill the teaching of Jesus in **Matthew 5:16**. People should see what this church is doing so God will be glorified.
 1. The world needs to see us as a city set on a hill so that they may be influenced by the love, faith, doctrine and teaching of this church. Some, seeing us stand out, will want to be part of us in order to serve and glorify the God who sacrificed His Son for them, just as Peter taught in **I Peter 2:11-12**.
 2. Other churches need to see this church as a city set on a hill in order to see that doing things God's way does work. Let's face it, there seem to be two kinds of churches today. The one kind does not believe God's plan really works, so they change it. The other kind does not really believe God's plan works, so they faithfully follow His guidelines but without expecting success, so they rarely have any. The Franklin Church of Christ is poised to be a third kind of church, blazing a trail of unprecedented growth and success. We can be an example for other churches, letting them see that God's way works.
- II. What should stand out about the Franklin Church of Christ?
 - A. *Stand out in doctrine*—**II John 9** claimed that we must abide in the doctrine of Christ. The cities down in the valley do not care what doctrine is taught, they teach their concoction of man-made, creedalized, self-serving doctrine. And what they do is in vain (**Matthew 15:8-9**). We must never be satisfied to blend in with all the churches around us. We must stand out and be different.
 - B. *Stand out in teaching*—**Romans 10:13-15** said no one will be saved if no one does any teaching. Too many "sound" churches today want to ride a fence. They want to maintain doctrinal purity. But they do not want to say it out loud too much, lest they offend someone. The early churches stood out as cities on hills and were accused of turning the world upside down (**Acts 17:6**), but people were being saved. No one will be saved if God's people do not do some world-turning evangelism. We must proclaim the gospel. Folks need to see us teaching.
 - C. *Stand out in love*—**John 13:34-35** said the world will know we are Christ's disciples when they see our love for each other. Too many churches are willing to settle for a mediocre love that is hardly different from that of any social organization. The kind of love we must have for one another is described in **John 15:12-13**. We need to sacrifice ourselves for one another. We must not put ourselves forward, but rather put others forward, loving them. People will only know that we are Jesus' disciples when we stand out in love.
 - D. *Stand out in faith*—**I John 5:4** said our faith is what overcomes the world. If this church is to be a city set on a hill, we must stand out in faith. We must believe the promises of God. Accept that His way works. Too many churches believe God needs our help and innovations. They are not willing to just stand out by doing things God's way. We must surrender ourselves to God's will living by faith (**Galatians 2:20**). We must let people see that we trust God and will do things His way, because He does not need our help. He wants our obedience.

III. What will it take for the Franklin Church of Christ to be a city set on a hill?

- A. If we are to be a city set on a hill, it will begin by loving God and loving His truth. As Jesus said in **John 14:23**, when we love Him, we will keep His word. Paul explained that it is by the love of the truth that we will be saved in **II Thessalonians 2:10**. We need to remember Jesus' warning in **Matthew 10:34-37**. We will only stand out when we love God and His truth above all other things. If we allow our love for people or things to exceed our love for God, then we will compromise and the city will slide from the hill into the valley blending in with all others and accomplishing nothing useful. But, when we love God above all, He will accomplish great things through us. If we are going to be a city set on a hill, we must begin with loving God and His truth.
- B. If we are going to be a city set on a hill, it will take personal sacrifice. Note how Jesus continued in **Matthew 10:38-39**. Those who love God more than anyone or anything else will be taking up a cross and losing their own life. We read **Galatians 2:20** earlier which pointed out that we are to be crucified with Christ. We have put ourselves to death that Christ might live in us. Paul also explained in **Romans 12:1-2** that to be different, standing out from the world, means being a living sacrifice. This sacrifice means no longer living by our own personal will, but living by God's will at all times, no matter what we give up to do it. If we are going to be a city set on a hill, we must love God, sacrificing ourselves and our will for Him.
- C. If we are going to be a city set on a hill, we must have the courage to think, speak, act and look different. Standing out is not easy. It takes guts. Look at Jesus' words to the 12 in **Matthew 10:16-26**. While there are some specific issues meant for them alone, the principles of persecution and courage apply to us as well. When we stand out as Jesus did, we will suffer for it. People will not like us. They will make fun of us. They will attack us. The one problem with being the city set on a hill is that every enemy who wants to prove his strength will attack to claim that he is king of the mountain. We must be prepared for this and never willing to back down. If we are going to be a city set on a hill, it will take courage.
- D. Finally, if we are going to be a city set on a hill, we must be focused on the vision and the goal. We must not allow ourselves to be distracted by everything that goes on around us. We need to remember that everything we are doing is about going to heaven. It is not about popularity contests or politics. It is not about having the biggest church or the grandest facilities. It is about serving God faithfully and going to heaven when this life is over. That is what being a city set on a hill is all about. Paul encourages us in **Colossians 3:1-2**, that we must keep our minds focused on things above, not on things below. Consider Moses, a great example to us. **Hebrews 11:24-25** explains how he was able to stand out and be different. He was focused on the reward, not on the passing pleasures in the world around him. If we are going to be a city set on a hill, we must have a focused vision, not allowing distractions to turn our eyes away from the goal.

Conclusion:

I want you to know as we begin this relationship together, how excited I am. I want you to know what I see for our future together. I hope you will share this vision with me. The Franklin Church of Christ can be and must be like a city set on a hill, shining the gospel light for all to see, beckoning everyone to come to Jesus and follow Him with us.