

The Church in Historical-Theological Perspective

In Summary:

When we view the church in this perspective we realize that the Lord is the One building it and He has shown us His ability in the midst of our failures. Our dependence and expectations are of Him. His presence and interest are guaranteed and His program has not failed nor will fail. It is our joy to know Him and our privilege to serve His purposes. These cautionary notes are needed in the ideal of the advice Paul gave to the churches of his labor and their continuing effect even to our day.

1. Doctrinal soundness is a vital part for any program. Not the splitting of hairs but the understanding of sound doctrine as in the Timothy letters. It is necessary that we know what the Bible teaches rather than developing an idea and hunting it in the Bible.
2. Believers must learn to work, pray, and commit together. Total understanding of every issue is not needed but love, appreciation, and understanding are always in order.
3. A sense of commitment and perseverance is a necessary part...see the book of Nehemiah for a good picture of this.
4. Understand that power, wealth, and prestige can be great foes as they make us feel superior to others and even to God.
5. Love for the work, person, and will of God is an emotional value that sustains the worker and glorifies God in the fulfillment.
6. Ultimately truth will conquer...patience and persistence help us very much.
7. The practical study of God's Word and the application of it to all of life is a necessary activity for all of us.

The testimony of God is here to stay. It has withstood many storms. It is our desire to be with it, in it, and honored by it. No institution known to humanity has done as much for our culture and souls as the church. We should be very thankful to be enabled to be part of it---by the grace of God.