

# BIBLICAL PRAXIS OF MISSION

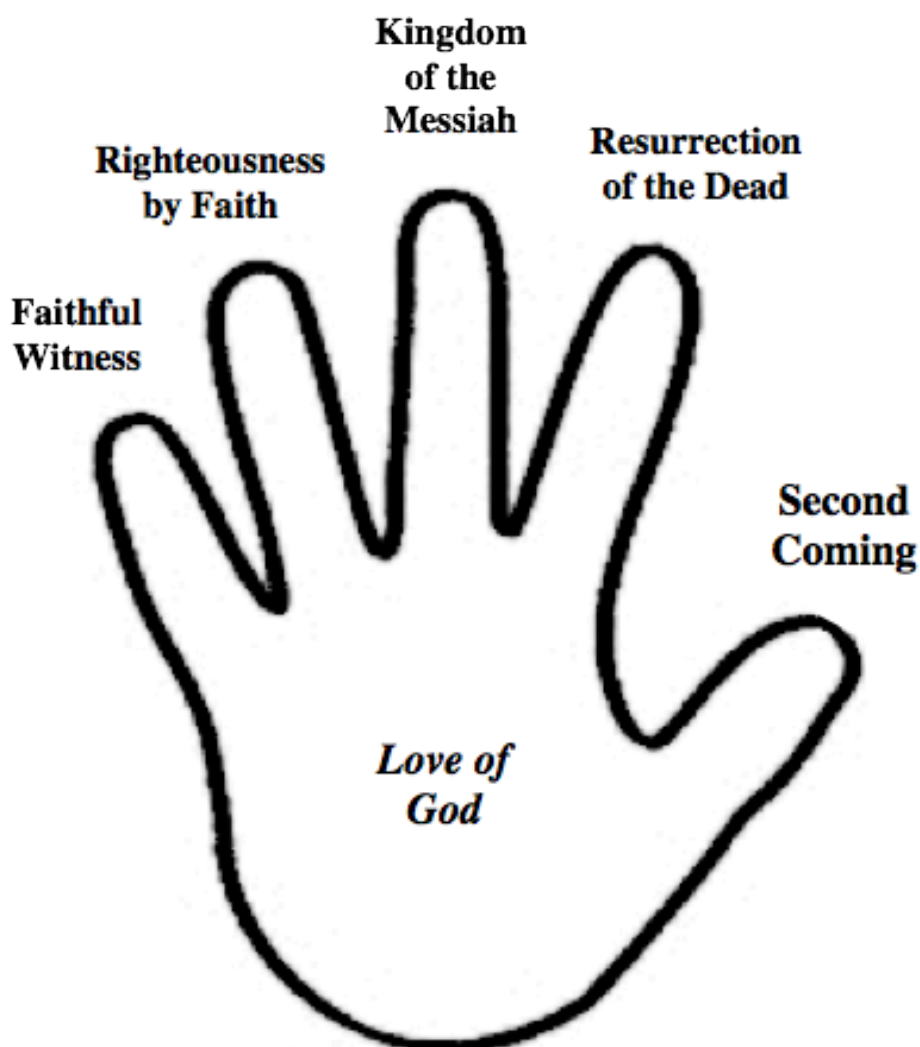
Class 1: Worship In Light Of The Coming Kingdom

John Harrigan

## I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

- A. Considering the creation of the heavens and earth, the sovereign amnestic governance of God from the height of the heavens, the rebellion of man and fall of creation, the promise of restoration and justice at the hands of the Messianic Seed, the calling of the righteous from Israel and the nations—what then is the mission of the Church in this age, and how does it walk that mission out?
- B. This class will assume the theological foundation of *Biblical Theology of Mission*, which focused on the *message* of the Church. *Biblical Praxis of Mission* will focus on the *ministry* of the Church, seeking to establish a clear ecclesiological function and form.

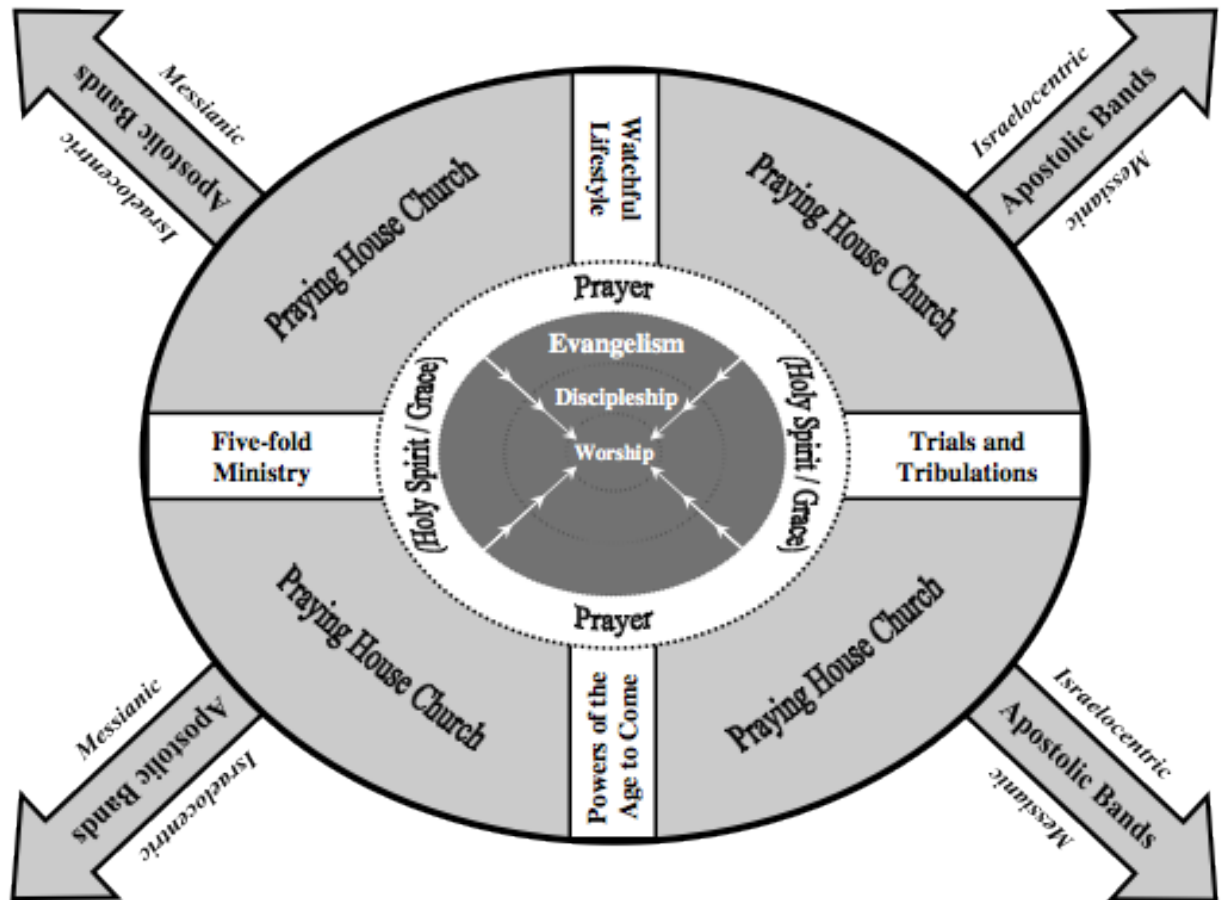
### *Right Hand of Sound Instruction*



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**Missiological Praxis Diagram**



C. As the people chosen for the Kingdom, the Church is a *sovereign entity* under the lordship of Jesus. It has its own government, with its own leadership, its own laws, its own destiny, etc., distinct from the rest of the nations of the earth. Thus, it could be termed a “nation,” unto itself (cf. 1 Pe. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; Tit. 2:14—cf. Ex. 19:5; Is. 26:2; Ps. 106:5).<sup>1</sup>

***I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.*** <sup>12</sup> **What business is it of mine to**

<sup>1</sup> One of the difficulties here is the definition of “nation” itself—“In regular usage, terms such as *nations, country, land,* and *state* often appear as near-synonyms, i.e., they can be used for a particular area or territory, or for the government itself; in other words, a *de jure* or *de facto* state. In the English language, the terms do have precise meanings, but in daily speech and writing they are often used interchangeably, and are open to different interpretations.” (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, “Nation,” available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/nation>.)

I use the term in its most general sense, referring to a governmental entity, without the necessity of ownership of land, e.g. “A politically organized body of people under a single government.” [HyperDictionary.com, “Nation,” in *WordNet*® 3.0 (Princeton University, 2006); available from <http://www.hyperdictionary.com/search.aspx?define=nation>.] Indeed a nation ought to be associated with a region or territory (since groups of human being have to live *somewhere* together on this earth)—“A large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own.” [Dictionary.com, “Nation,” in *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* (Random House, Inc., 2006); available from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nation>.] However, the Church has not yet received its land, i.e. the earth (cf. Mt. 5:5; 19:28; Rom. 4:13; 1 Cor. 6:2; Is. 60:21; Dan.7:18; etc.)

***judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? <sup>13</sup> God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you." <sup>6:1</sup> If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? <sup>2</sup> Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! <sup>4</sup> Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! (NIV 1 Corinthians 5:11-6:4)***

1. To confuse it with any other nation or political entity fundamentally confuses the essential identity of the Church: the people chosen to inherit eschatologically all the present nations of the earth.

***You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. <sup>10</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth. (NIV Revelation 5:9-10)***

2. As a nation without land, the Church is a "pilgrim nation," *submitting* to the rebellious nations of the earth that God has sovereignly instituted and allowed to exist (cf. Mt. 17:27; Rom. 13:1ff; 1 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pe. 2:13; etc.), until their judgment and the church's allotted inheritance (cf. Heb. 9:15; 1 Pe. 2:11).

***You are a chosen race (to inherit the Kingdom), a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him (cf. Day of the Lord) who called you out of darkness (cf. this age) into his marvelous light (cf. age to come)... <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles (governmentally, not metaphysically) to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup> Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. <sup>13</sup> For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution (cf. governments)... (NRSV 1 Peter 2:9-13)***

3. However, the Church is called to strict loyalty and allegiance to one King—Jesus—and one Kingdom—the eschatological Messianic Kingdom. To pledge allegiance or declare loyalty to any other kingdom is treason in the Lord's eyes, punishable by death. This was the great sin of the Constantinian Shift, which was mirrored by Eastern Orthodoxy and was repeated in the birth of Protestantism.

***... that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: <sup>9</sup> That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (NIV Romans 10:8-9)***

***Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NIV Philippians 2:9-11)***

***If anyone worships the beast (cf. "Babylon the Great" v.8) and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand (as a sign of allegiance), <sup>10</sup> he, too, will***

***drink of the wine of God's fury... He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. (NIV Revelation 14:9-11)***

4. The persecution of the Church throughout history has always resulted in greater devotion and greater clarity of proclamation.
- a) One of the reasons for this is because it makes us pledge allegiance to one man, Jesus, and his leadership over us. Thus, the Church begins to identify itself as a separate entity from the surrounding nations, and it aligns itself independently from them.

***Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. <sup>5</sup> All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. <sup>6</sup> God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you... <sup>7</sup> This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. (NIV 2 Thessalonians 1:4-7)***

- b) When the Church enters into mixture in its allegiance with the kingdoms of this age, its function is confused and its form is retarded. This allegiance is almost always due to an underlying theological distortion that identifies the Kingdom with present wealth and power (vs. that which the Church will receive upon Jesus' return).

*Theological confusion, especially in matters which have to do with the Church, will inevitably produce consequences which are of grave practical concern. The identification of the Kingdom with the Church has led historically to ecclesiastical policies and programs which, even when not positively evil, have been far removed from the original simplicity of the New Testament ekklesia. It is easy to claim that in the "present kingdom of grace" the rule of the saints is wholly "spiritual," exerted only through moral principles and influence. But practically, once the Church becomes the Kingdom in any realistic theological sense, it is impossible to draw any clear line between principles and their implementation through political and social devices. For the logical implications of a present ecclesiastical kingdom are unmistakable, and historically have always led in only one direction, i.e., political control of the state by the Church. The distances down this road traveled by various religious movements, and the forms of control which were developed, have been widely different. The difference is very great between the Roman Catholic system and modern Protestant efforts to control the state; also between the ecclesiastical rule of Calvin in Geneva and the fanaticism of Münster and the English "fifth-monarchy." But the basic assumption is always the same: The Church in some sense is the Kingdom, and therefore has a divine right to rule; or it is the business of the Church to "establish" fully the Kingdom of God among men. Thus the Church loses its "pilgrim" character and the sharp edge of its divinely commissioned "witness" is blunted.<sup>2</sup>*

- D. This class will thus analyze how the Church ought to function as a *pilgrim people*, awaiting its promised Lord and eternal inheritance in the Kingdom. In light of this, the Church saw its

<sup>2</sup> Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (BMH Books, 1959), 438-439.

mission as basically three-fold: 1) enduring worship and faith, 2) progressive discipleship and sanctification, and 3) faithful proclamation and evangelism.

## II. WORSHIP, SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. Everything was created by God, by his power and in his love, for the purpose of intimacy and communion. This perfect intent was disrupted by sin, but will be restored on the Day of the Lord in the resurrection. In the interim, God remains *completely sovereign* in his governance over the heavens and the earth. This framework gives context for worship: *the acknowledgment of worth and the declaration of allegiance.*

***In the center, around the throne (representing sovereignty), were four living creatures...<sup>8</sup> Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty (governmentally), who was, and is, and is to come (sovereignly sitting on the throne)...<sup>11</sup> You are worthy (worship), our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power (acknowledgment of sovereignty), for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."* (NIV Revelation 4:6-11)**

- B. The worship of God's sovereign governance over the heavens and earth is the eternal purpose of creation. However, after the Fall it becomes the anchor of hope for all creation, the navigational compass for our sojourning amidst evil and suffering in this age.

***Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling (amidst temptation and evil) and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy (cf. Day of the Lord),<sup>25</sup> to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever (cf. sovereignty). Amen.* (ESV Jude 1:24-25)**

*"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship does not. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever... All of history is moving toward one great goal, the white-hot worship of God and His Son among all the peoples of the earth. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason it is the second greatest activity in the world."<sup>8</sup>*

1. Though evil and suffering continues to exist (because God loves that which causes it), God has complete power over it and will eradicate it in His time. In the interim, the Redeemed confidently trust in a benevolent and sovereign God who deserves absolute worship, even in the midst of death and wickedness.

***The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.<sup>16</sup> But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.<sup>17</sup> To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.* (ESV 1 Timothy 1:15-17)**

<sup>3</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 17-18.

**After they (Paul and Silas) had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. <sup>24</sup> Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. <sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. (NIV Acts 16:23-25)**

- Throughout the Scriptures, it is soteriological context that primarily defines worship rather than divine ontological attributes. It is the revelation of God's absolute *power and love* over creation, culminating in the Day of the Lord, that evokes the greatest response of worship.

**I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in... <sup>32</sup> For God has bound all men over to disobedience (power) so that he may have mercy on them all (love). <sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup> Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? (as Governor over creation) <sup>35</sup> Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? <sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. (NIV Romans 11:25-36)**

- The logical consequence of God's absolute and benevolent sovereignty is the restoration of all things by his ordained means, i.e. the Messianic Seed (cf. Gen. 3:15). If God is a loving and all powerful Ruler over his creation, then the Day of the Lord ought to be expected.

**See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him... <sup>12</sup> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? ... <sup>15</sup> Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust... <sup>21</sup> Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? <sup>22</sup> He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. <sup>23</sup> He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. <sup>24</sup> No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. (NIV Isaiah 40:10-24)**

- Worship of God is the eternal calling of humanity. However, after the Fall there is a shift—a groan that enters into creation. Men began to “call on the name of the Lord” (cf. Gen. 4:26) in eager expectation that the Sovereign God will restore all things.

**The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (i.e. resurrection and Kingdom)... <sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth (cf. Mt. 24:8; 1 Thess. 5:3; etc.) right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as**

**we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently (i.e. groaning in intercession). <sup>26</sup> In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express (concerning the coming of Messiah and the redemption of our bodies). (NIV Romans 8:16-25)**

2. The groan for the restoration of all things directly corresponds to the revelation of God's absolute sovereignty. He is completely able to restore all things, and He completely desires to restore all things.

**When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. <sup>10</sup> They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" <sup>11</sup> Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. (NIV Revelation 6:9-11)**

3. Thus, the opposite side of worship is longing for the Day of the Lord. All true worship of God upon his heavenly throne leads to the bolstering of faith in the coming of the Messiah who will execute the restoration of all things.

**The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." <sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup> saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign." <sup>18</sup> The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. (NIV Revelation 11:15-18)**

- D. Consequently, the Church is exhorted to set her hope fully on the Messiah and the Day of the Lord as the appropriate response in worship. Reverent fear and trembling at the word of the Lord is the natural response to a real belief in the sovereignty of God over creation.

**Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, <sup>11</sup> trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow... <sup>13</sup> Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance... <sup>17</sup> Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. (NIV 1 Peter 1:10-17)**

1. This exhortation is the center of the Lord's Prayer. We orient everything in this age in light of the Day of the Lord.

***But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (on the Day of the Lord). <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. <sup>9</sup> This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, <sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." <sup>14</sup> For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you (on the Day of the Lord). <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (NIV Matthew 6:6-15)***

2. This exhortation is also the center of Communion, which is at the heart of all Christian worship. Communion is inherently related to the Day of the Lord and is meant to anchor the Church in repentance and hope.

***I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." <sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." (NIV Luke 22:15-19)***

***For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread... <sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (NIV 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)***

3. This exhortation is echoed throughout the parables, particularly the Parable of the Widow (cf. Lk. 18:1-8). The context of the parable is the suddenness of the Messiah's coming (17:20-25) and the justice established in the days of Noah and Lot as a sign of the Day of the Lord (17:26-37). Thus, the point of the parable ultimately boils down to "faith" (18:8) in Jesus as Messiah and his appointment as judge of the heavens and the earth (cf. Jn. 5:22-29; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 14:9f; 2 Tim. 4:1-8; etc.).

***"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man." <sup>27</sup> People were eating, drinking (in corruption), marrying and being given in marriage (in immorality) up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all (in judgment, prefiguring the ultimate justice coming to the earth). <sup>28</sup> It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building (by injustice). <sup>29</sup> But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed (as Messiah, establishing justice on the earth)..."***

***<sup>18:1</sup> Then (concerning prior messianic justice) Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray (for the messianic coming) and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "In a certain town (cf. heavens and earth) there was a judge (cf. the Father) who neither feared God nor cared about men (analogical breakdown). <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow (cf. messianic assembly) in that town who kept coming to him with the***



**plea, 'Grant me justice (cf. righteousness on the earth under Messiah's rule) against my adversary (cf. wicked powers in the heavens and on earth).' <sup>4</sup> For some time (cf. amnesic age) he refused (cf. loving intent toward wicked). **But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice (cf. Day of Christ), so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice (at Messiah's coming) for his chosen ones (messianic assembly), who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly (cf. 17:27, 29). However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth (in Jesus' messiahship and lone right to execute justice)?" (NIV Luke 17:26-18:8)****

- E. This gives context for the common New Testament injunction to "wait" for the coming of the Messiah (cf. Rom. 8:25; 1 Cor. 1:5ff; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20f; 1 Thess. 1:9f; Tit. 2:12f; Heb. 9:27f; Jam. 5:7f; 2 Pe. 3:13f; Jude 1:20f). The language of "waiting" is drawn from the prophetic writings in context to the Day of the Lord (cf. Is. 25:9; 26:8; 30:18; 40:31; 49:23; 64:4; Lam. 3:25f; Hos. 12:6; Mic. 7:7; Zeph. 3:8; Ps. 25:3ff; 27:14; 31:24; 37:7ff; 40:1; 62:1ff; etc.).

**And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. <sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup> It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (ESV Isaiah 25:7-9)**

**Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence- <sup>2</sup> as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil- to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! ... <sup>4</sup> From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him. (ESV Isaiah 64:1-4)**

**Therefore wait for me, declares the LORD, for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. (ESV Zephaniah 3:8)**

**Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! <sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. <sup>9</sup> For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land (Hb. erets, "earth" KJV/ NKJV). (ESV Psalm 37:7-9)**

- **For in him you have been enriched in every way-- in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-- <sup>6</sup> because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. <sup>7</sup> Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. (NIV 1 Corinthians 1:5-7)**

- ***But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,* <sup>21</sup> ***who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject all things to himself.*** (ESV Philippians 3:20-21)**
  - ***They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven,* whom he raised from the dead-- Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)**
  - ***It (the "grace of God") teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope--* the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ... (NIV Titus 2:12-13)**
  - ***And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*** (ESV Hebrews 9:27-28)
  - ***Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil* (cf. resurrection), ***being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. <sup>8</sup> You too be patient;* strengthen your hearts, ***for the coming of the Lord is near.*** (NASB James 5:7-8)****
  - ***But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; <sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.*** (ESV Jude 1:20-21)
1. In light of this, the Church is repeatedly exhorted to patience, endurance, and perseverance concerning the wickedness of this age, trusting that God will soon execute the Day of the Lord.

***Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope... (ESV Romans 5:2-4)***

***May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (ESV Colossians 1:11-12)***

***Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. <sup>5</sup> All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. <sup>6</sup> God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you <sup>7</sup> and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. (NIV 2 Thessalonians 1:4-7)***

***Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. <sup>37</sup> For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay..." (ESV Hebrews 10:35-37)***

***Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (NIV James 1:12)***

***I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance... <sup>3</sup> You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary... <sup>7</sup> To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (NIV Revelation 2:2-7)***

***Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them... <sup>10</sup> If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints. (ESV Revelation 13:7-10)***

2. The Day of the Lord is set by the Father. No man, angel or demon can change it. Its destiny is sealed, and no man can manipulate it. To think that a man can change the Day is pure presumption and delusion.

***They asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. (NIV Acts 1:6-7)***

***The disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered... <sup>36</sup> No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (NIV Matthew 24:3-4, 36-37)***

***I charge you <sup>14</sup> to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> which God will bring about in his own time-- God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup> who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen. (NIV 1 Timothy 6:13-16)***

3. This gives context for the problematic translation of the 2 Peter 3, concerning the hastening of the Day of the Lord.

***By His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment (by God) and destruction of ungodly men... <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.... <sup>11</sup> Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for (Gk. prosdokao, "waiting for" ESV/NRSV) and hastening (Gk. pseudo) the coming of the day of God (NIV note: "as you wait eagerly for the day of God to come")... <sup>13</sup> But according to His promise we are looking for (Gk. prosdokao, "waiting for" ESV/NRSV) new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you look for (Gk. prosdokao, "waiting for" ESV/NRSV/NLT) these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless (our role in relation to the day of God). (NASB 2 Peter 3:9-14)***

- <4328> prosdoka,w *prosdokao* {pros-dok-ah'-o}

*Meaning:* to await, expect

*Origin:* from 4314 [Gk. *pros*, “at, near, to, towards...”] and *dokeuo* (to watch);; v

*Usage:* NASB - expect 2, expecting 2, look 4, looking 2, state of expectation 1, waited 1, waiting 2, watching1; 15<sup>4</sup>

- <4692> speu,dw *speudo* {spyoo'-do}

*Meaning:* 1) to haste, make haste 2) to desire earnestly

*Origin:* a prim. word;; v

*Usage:* AV - make haste 3, haste 1, haste unto 1, with haste 1; 6<sup>5</sup>

4. The paradox cannot be overcome. It is inherent in the nature of governance. The Lord also longs to send the Messiah, yet he refrains out of love. We must enter into the tension between groaning for restoration and confident trust in divine sovereignty.

***We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies... <sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (NIV Romans 8:22-28)***

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<sup>4</sup> Matt. 11:3; 24:50; Luke 1:21; 3:15; 7:19f; 8:40; 12:46; Acts 3:5; 10:24; 27:33; 28:6; 2 Pet. 3:12ff.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 2:16; 19:5f; Acts 20:16; 22:18; 2 Pet. 3:12.