

The Sovereignty of God over **All** of Life

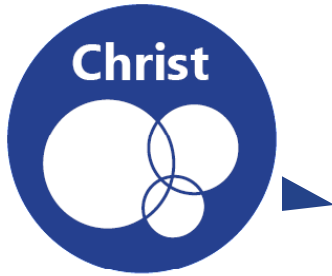
Part 3


The Sphere of Church
Guest Speaker: Brent Underwood

TALKING WALKING POINTS

Leaders' Guide

2025.1.19



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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep", too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- 1 Earlier in life, was your experience of "church" mostly positive or negative? Tell us about it please.


Observation—*What do I see?*

- 2 Under **I. Roles and Responsibilities of the Church** (see the **Sermon Summary**) are five ways we glorify God. Discuss and decide which are "vertical" (us toward God) and which are "horizontal" (people to people). Were there any which appear to be both vertical and horizontal? Explain.
- 3 Now consider how we are to **III. Influence the World**. If non-believers were to critique this list, which items do you think they would appreciate, which would they resent? What might they say is missing?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 4 We are commanded to "glorify God **in everything**" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Is God...a *megalomaniac*??
- 5 What is the alternative to this command? Does **that** seem like an appropriate purpose for mankind?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 6 Do **you** chafe at the idea that your purpose is to glorify God in everything? Why or why not? What do **non-believers** say about that purpose for living? Are you satisfied with the degree of difference between your thinking and theirs?
- 7 Together as a group, watch the trailer to the film "The Essential Church" here.  Did these churches exercise authority within their proper jurisdiction? **Why** do you think that?
- 8 Compare the actions described in "Essential Church" with the ways we are to influence the world. **How** should we evaluate whether they were "successful" in fulfilling their mandate? How do you think TCC corporately is doing in this regard? How are you doing personally?



- 1 Don't get bogged down in lengthy stories, but do take note of those who have been hurt by the church. Make plans to grab coffee and hear more. Tell them about BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com.
- 2 Again, don't get bogged down, but do try to get an idea of who may be confused by these functions.
- 3 Here's the point: non-believers **love** some of the sociological **benefits** of Christendom (disaster relief, Habitat for Humanity, after school tutoring programs, etc.)—although they are loathe to admit that these benefits are the direct result of our transformed lives. But they **hate** the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 1:23-25; John 15:18-21)—and gospel-preaching is the main “good” that we are commanded to do towards non-believers. Non-believers definitely want more “social up-lift programs”, but they detest the “narrow-minded exclusivity” of saying that Jesus is the only way to God. But God's wrath is mankind's biggest problem, and resolving that problem is our focus. All of the other social benefits are the result of being born-again and transformed by the renewing of our minds.
- 4 No, he **actually is** glorious! Nobody resents the Grand Canyon's majesty; because it **is** majestic. If someone on a cross-country train trip realized that they were passing the Grand Canyon in a few minutes, everybody would **thank** him for waking them up so they wouldn't miss it! So it is with God; non-believers are slumbering in their sin. The gospel awakens them from their sleep so that they won't miss seeing “the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).
- 5 The alternative to praising the most glorious Being in the universe is that we praise inferior things: “Even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the likeness of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures” (Romans 1:21–23).
- 6 Wait for others to think and step-up with their answers. The temptation will be to give trite, “Sunday School answers” rather than being honest about our resentment at being **commanded to praise** God. Not only is God the most glorious Being in the universe, he knows that he is most glorified in us when we find our ultimate satisfaction in him. (Your spouse is robbed of glory when you simply honor him/her “because you ought to”. Yes, we **ought** to honor God (ie, we are morally obligated to do so), but it is a hollow honor when it does not come from a place of blissful, soul-satisfaction in him. Non-believers think that God's requirement that we honor him is ugly megalomania; we know it is beautiful.
- 7 Take note of folks' honest responses. True, we are to “be in subjection to the governing authorities” (Romans 13:1)—but only to the degree that they observe the God-given limits to **their** authority (Acts 4:19-20. Then, we must be ready to suffer for having done right (Acts 5:40-42).
- 8 Wait for others to think and step-up with their answers. Take note of folks' honest responses, following up individually as necessary.

Sermon Summary

Throughout this series we have been exploring God's sovereignty and how He mediates His sovereignty through three "spheres" of human experience. Last week we focused on the sphere of the family and its role to shepherd and evangelize in the home. Next week we will conclude with an exploration of the role of the state in human flourishing. This week we will discuss the sphere of the Church and its role in the kingdom of God by asking several questions.

I. What is a Christian and what are his roles and responsibilities in the Church?

One month ago, we celebrated our Savior's birth. Jesus lived and died as a perfect sacrifice, accomplishing salvation for all who repent and believe. One day all Christians will be gloriously righteous in every way. The Church is the community of those who have been given by the Father to His Son (John 6:35-39). Our purpose is to **glorify God in everything**. We do this by:

- **worshiping corporately** (Hebrews 10:25)
- **reading and studying God's Word** (Psalm 1:1-2)
- **loving each other** (1 John 3:14-19; 4:20-21; 5:1)
- **submitting to God** (Matthew 28:20; 1 John 5:2-3)
- **being unified** (Ephesians 4 1-7)

II. What is the Church's role and authority?

The Church engages in **Christ-centered worship** through:

- **prayer** (Colossians 4:2-4)
- **singing and encouragement** (Ephesians 5:19)
- **baptism** (Matthew 28:19), which is the public display of our faith and our entrance into the local Church
- the **Lord's Supper** (1 Corinthians 11:24), which is the ongoing feast with the saints
- the **reading of the Word and the preaching of the Gospel** (Psalm 1, Luke 4:16, 1 Peter 3:14-15)

The Church also has the role and God-given authority to:

- **make disciples** (Ephesians 4:11-13)
- **evangelize non-believers** (Matthew 28)
- **promote discipline in the Church** (Matthew 18:15-20 & 16:19) through:
 - **formal membership** into the Church
 - **reconciliation** in the Church (and, when necessary, **removal** from the Church, to maintain purity)

III. How are Christians to influence the world?

So, what is the Church's role to the non-believing world? We have a **prophetic calling** to: **advise and rebuke** unrighteousness (think of John the Baptist and Herod). We also are salt and light, **teaching** citizens (first and foremost through the proclamation of the Gospel). Finally, we have the responsibility to **extend honor** to, and to **pray for**, our leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

The Church has this promise from Christ: *"...on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:18). So let's be at work as we are Christ's bride, one body. Christ has already secured our victory. As the Church let us serve our Lord and Savior, by being united, as one body, sharing the good news with each other and the world, until He returns in His final glory.

Beginning Soon!



We all make small talk—but think about **that one friend** who **listens** especially well, **asks** good questions, and **connects** the riches of Scripture to what's on your mind. That's a **redemptive relationship!**

We can **learn** the art and skill of spiritual friendship.

Who?

all TCC adults

What?

learn to have wise friendships that bring people closer to God

When?

Twelve weeks, beginning February 5th.
Wednesday nights (6³⁰-8⁰⁰pm) **or**
Thursday mornings (9³⁰-11⁰⁰am)

or anytime **On-Demand!**

Where?

TCC campus

How?

simply **scan here** for complete info →



Less than 3 weeks!



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Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*Is the church just "one institution (or, even a 'club') among many?" Or is it special?
Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to see what God says...*

Monday— *To whom* does the church belong? (1 Timothy 3:15) **Whose** household is it?

Tuesday— *Who* controls the church? (Ephesians 1:22 & 5:23) What is the significance of that?

Wednesday— *Who* walks in the midst of the church? (Revelation 1:12-20) How is he described?

Thursday— *What* does the church support? (1 Timothy 3:15) What is the significance of that?

Friday— *What* and *to whom* is made known by the church? (Ephesians 3:10)

Saturday— *Who* loves the church? (Ephesians 5:25 & 29) **How much** do **you** love it?

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]