

Title: the beauty of church II – going down
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A beautiful church is a humble church. *We have to go down, so that God can take us up.*

What makes a church a real church?

Leadership.
Worship.
Prayer.
Preaching & teaching.
Stewardship.
Discipline.

A city set on a hill

Matthew 5:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ ***"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*** ¹⁵ *Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.* ¹⁶ ***Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.***

- **A hill of manure?** Few things are as ugly as arrogant Christians.
- We exalt truth above love and become judgemental.
- ***Major on the minors.** Pride causes us to miss the heart of God and turn things upside down. (Matthew 23:23)

Going down?

A humble church is set on a hill. God will set the church there. A humble church is a beautiful church.

Humility? Being a member of a church with the right attitude.

Humility? Value other churches and Christians even when they are different.

Misunderstanding Jesus

We misunderstand the church, because we misunderstand Jesus.

Matthew 16:21–23 (NKJV) ²¹ *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.* ²² *Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"* ²³ *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, **for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.**"*

- **Not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men:** when we focus on the things of men, when our minds are moulded by earthly ways of thinking, then we will resist the will of God.

***Many have an underlying suspicion that the church wants to use people and take their money.**

Issue #1: Money – "the church wants to take my money"

***The more biblical a church becomes, the more it will offend a Christian if they misunderstand Jesus.**

Luke 21:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ *And He looked up and **saw the rich** putting their gifts into the treasury,* ² *and He saw also a certain **poor widow** putting in two mites.* ³ *So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all;* ⁴ *for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."*

- **More than all?** Because Jesus looks at the percentage of giving, not at how much.

- **Does the church want to take your money?** No. God has instituted the church, (1) to help us deal with our hearts that hold onto money (2) so that He can bless you when you give.
- ***We misunderstand the church, because we misunderstand Jesus.***

Issue #2: Serving – “the church wants to use me”

**It's not hard to surrender your life when you see Jesus. Not hard. Yet if you don't see Jesus, it seems absolutely foolish and even reckless to sacrifice.*

Jesus came to serve, we should do the same.

Matthew 16:24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ *Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”* ²⁵ *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

- **Church? God's instrument to give us opportunities to humble ourselves and serve.** Why? Because it is good for us. Why? Because it is humbling to serve other people.
- ***Try it.** Try to live selfishly for 6 months, then for six months try to put others first every opportunity you get. Evaluate the results.

Matthew 19:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, **shall receive a hundredfold**, and inherit eternal life.*

- We lack faith in God's promises. Jesus says we will receive a hundredfold return for every sacrifice for His kingdom.
- So is the church trying to take from people? No. We are teaching / preaching biblical principles so that people can be truly blessed.
- The church is the community of the blessed. We position ourselves where we get blessed so that we can bless others.

The church becomes beautiful when each of us humble ourselves to give and serve. That is when the church becomes the community of the blessed.