

HAVING, DOING, BEING

By Bob Young

When the church genuinely becomes church, everything changes.

Church is no longer defined only by what happens on Sunday.

Those preaching God's Word on Sunday are preparing God's people to go forth as church.

The life of the church is not to be measured on Sunday. A more accurate measurement is found in what happens on Monday through Saturday. Daily life is the best measure of the church's life.

Those assembling and celebrating on Sunday gather expectantly because have experienced community during the week, hearing the word, studying, and applying the word as part of the faith community.

Those who preach in a group-oriented, family-oriented church know this to be true.

Many sermon texts are available for Sunday preaching.

The first question is often, what are the congregation's personal needs? Or, what are the desired behavioral changes of this group?

More important is the realization that the congregation needs to hear the Word of God and be clearly shown how to apply and experience God's Word in their own lives.

The life of the church is experienced in community, always going beyond mere individualism.

Preaching God's Word points to the real experience of community, orienting the community for the shared studies and interactions that help hearers apply God's Word.

During my years in local church ministry, the church always had at least one week-long series each year to dive deeper into God's Word. Deep biblical themes nourish and strengthen the congregation and reach out to unbelievers. I preached such a series at a church in Ohio, focused exclusively on the book of Hebrews. One person remarked, "I've never attended a gospel series where only one book of the Bible was preached."

In preaching, my words went beyond what the people heard on Sunday. Always my fondest hope, dream, joy—that the hearers would take my preaching and apply it the context of their own personal communities—in the faith community, shared spiritual endeavors, and the larger community around them—that we would genuinely BE church, going forth to lead others ever closer to the faith community.