

What is the work of the church?

By Bob Young

We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. —Victor Linscomb

What is the work of the church? How would you fill in the blank? The church exists to _____. How you fill in the blank depends on the problem you see.

Here is an important principle: How you understand the work of the church depends on the problem you see.

What are the problems in this world that the church should address? Many answers could be and have been given. As a result, many churches are involved in one or more of these things.

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Drug addiction
- Hunger, malnutrition
- Lack of medical care
- Lack of education
- Social injustice, inequality
- Disintegrating families
- Unhealthy relationships, conflict

What is the greatest need in our world? We must sharpen our view; we must recognize God's purpose for the church. The greatest need in our world is the need for Jesus. The real crisis in our world is a Jesus crisis. The greatest problem in our world is the absence of Christ in the lives of countless souls. Jesus is the answer to broken relationships. Jesus shows us how to live abundantly. The only lasting solution to the problems listed above is Jesus.

We think that the greatest injustice is the lack of justice, but the greatest injustices are not in the things we often point to. The greatest injustice is the lack of Christ, and that those who can be justified by Christ do not know it and do not accept it. —Bob Young

Our world needs righteousness. In Greek, the same word is translated justice. The great injustice is the lack of justice. The great injustice in our world is the lack of righteousness. Righteousness (justice) is impossible through human efforts. God's way of bringing justice and righteousness to this world is to bestow his own righteousness on us through justification in Christ. Will not the God of heaven do right (righteousness)? Will not the God of heaven do justly?

The world has misdefined and misunderstood justice. God is just; what God does is just. Jesus suffered injustice. Paul suffered injustice. Christians suffer injustice. Is God unjust? The world's view of justice is that God has somehow come up short so we have to help him along. Satan does not want us to believe that God is just. Satan does not want the world to see that justice (righteousness) comes only from God and is possible only through Jesus.

The greatest injustice is to miss heaven. Everything has been done, all has been paid, all has been arranged. Jesus came seeking and saving the lost. His righteousness is available to all. The work of the church is to fulfill God's eternal purpose to unite all things in Christ. The work of the church is to declare the saving (justifying) work that God has done in Christ.

What is the work of the church? Your answer depends on the problems you see.

The work of the church is to bring justice to an unjust world through the righteousness of Christ. The crisis in our world is a Jesus crisis. How seriously is the church working to counteract the greatest injustice—that people who can be declared just in Jesus do not know it and therefore miss heaven?

Do everything you can to ease the pain in the world, but never forget that the greatest need in this world is the need for Jesus!