Handicapped Churches

Intro: One of the definitions of handicap is “a hindrance, something that hampers or hinders.” We often use the word in conjunction with a person—a handicapped person. It is someone who has been hindered to some degree by something physical or mental. We commend those individuals who overcome any handicap they might have. Congregations of the Lord’s church are often handicapped or hindered. Let us consider some things that hinder the church.

I. THINKING TOO HIGHLY OF SELF
   A. Trying to compete with denominations.
      1. Denominations are not concerned with truth.
      2. We do not have to do something different from the denominational world simply because they do it that way.
      3. We should not go imitating the denominations simply because they have used something and grown in numbers.
   B. Forgetting the message
      1. 1 Cor. 1:21-24 “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”
      2. 1 Cor. 2:2 “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”
      3. 2 Tim. 4:2 “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”
      4. Some are more concerned with themselves and gaining a name than the message; 2 Cor. 4:5 “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”
      5. We have too many preachers forgetting the message we are to be preaching.
         a. Very little Bible
         b. The message is feel-goodism, emotionalism, story telling, moralistic stories, et al.
   C. Forgetting the purpose
      1. Saving souls
         a. Luke 19:10 “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
         b. Accomplished through three ways:
      2. Preaching to the lost
         a. Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
         b. Acts 8:4 “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”
      3. Edifying the saved
         a. Eph. 4:11-13 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”
         b. 1 The. 5:11 “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”
      4. Benevolence
         a. Gal. 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
         b. Jam. 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
5. Far too many have forgotten the purpose of the church:
   a. Recreation
   b. Entertainment
   c. Sports
   d. Et al.

D. Being ashamed:
   1. We are not to be ashamed:
      a. Mark 8:38 “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful
generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with
the holy angels.”
      b. Rom. 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to
every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
      c. 2 Tim. 1:8 “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be
thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;”

2. The oneness or uniqueness of the church
   a. Mat. 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
   b. Eph. 4:4 “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;”

3. The worship
   a. John 4:23-24 “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in
spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24God is a Spirit: and they that worship
him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
      (1) Directed to the Father
      (2) With the proper attitude
      (3) According to God's Word
   b. Singing; Col. 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and
admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to
the Lord.”
   c. Prayer; 1 Cor. 14:15 “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the
understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”
   d. Lord's Supper; Acts 20:7 “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to
break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until
midnight.”
   e. Preaching; Acts 2:42 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in
breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
   f. Contribution; 1 Cor. 16:1-2 “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to
the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in
store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

4. The organization
   a. Phi. 1:1 “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at
Philippi, with the bishops and deacons;”
   b. Elders (bishops, overseers, pastors, or shepherds):
      (1) They oversee the work, making sure that the work God has given us to do gets
done.
      (2) Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy
Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own
blood.”
(3) They have the obligation of making sure the congregation is properly fed; 1 Pet. 5:1-2 “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;”

c. Deacons:
(1) The Bible does not deal specifically with the work of deacons.
(2) Our understanding is taken from the word itself.
(3) Deacon means one who serves.
(4) They are special servants working in the areas assigned to them by the elders.

5. The plan of salvation
a. Hear God’s Word; John 6:44-45 “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”

b. Believe; Heb. 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

c. Repent; Luke 13:3 “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”

d. Confess; Rom. 10:9-10 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that he is risen from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

e. Be baptized for the remission of sins; Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

E. We must put an emphasis on God’s Word.

II. Members Developing Unbecoming Habits

A. Christians should set the example of good moral living.
1. 1 Tim. 4:12 “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

2. Tit. 2:7-8 “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

3. Tit. 2:11-13 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

a. We are to deny:
(1) Ungodliness—lack of reverence toward God
(2) Worldly lusts—desires of the world that estrange a person from God

b. We are to live:
(1) Soberly—soundness of mind, rationally, showing self-control
(2) Righteously—just, what is proper or right
(3) Godly—devout, piously, rendering to God the reverence and worship emanating from a holy life

c. We are to look: For the appearing of Christ.

4. 2 Pet. 1:5-7 “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.”
B. **Christians must eliminate wicked ways.**

1. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

2. Gal. 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

3. Col. 3: 5, 8 -10 “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:... 8But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:”

C. **We are well able to live the life God expects.**

III. **Filthy Mouths**

A. **The tongue possesses great power.**

1. Jam. 3:5 “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!”

2. Pro. 18:21 “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”

B. **Christians should use their tongues in the proper way:**

1. Col. 4:6 “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

2. Truth
   a. Eph. 4:15 “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:”
   b. Eph. 4:25 “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”

3. Encouraging words
   a. Satan uses discouragement and often words to accomplish it.
   b. Words can instill the proper spirit and courage in him.
   c. Pro. 12:25 “Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.”

4. Good words
   a. Pro. 15:23 “A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!”
   b. Pro. 16:24 “Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

C. **Improper use of the tongue**

1. Lying
   a. Pro. 6:17 “A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood”
   b. Pro. 13:5 “A righteous man hateth lying; but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.”
   c. Col. 3:9 “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;”
   d. Rev. 21:8 “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
2. Profanity
   a. Exo. 20:7 “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guileless that taketh his name in vain.”
   b. God’s name is to be held in reverence; Mat. 6:9 “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
3. Foul, morally perverse speech
   a. Eph. 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”
   b. Col. 3:8 “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”
4. Gossip and slander
   a. Gossip is revealing “personal or sensational facts about others...rumor or report of an intimate nature.”
   b. Pro. 11:13 “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.”
   c. 1 Tim. 5:13 “And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”
5. Angry speech
   a. While anger itself is not sin, it allows us to become susceptible to sin, especially with the tongue.
      (1) Jam. 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”
      (2) Song: “Angry Words”
         Angry words! O let them never from the tongue unbridled slip; May the heart’s best impulse ever check them ere they soil the lip.
         Love is much too pure and holy, friendship is too sacred far, For a moment’s reckless folly thus to desolate and mar.
         Angry words are lightly spoken, Bitterest tho’ts are rashly stirred, Brightest links of life are broken by a single angry word.
         Chorus: Love one another, thus saith the Savior, Children obey the Father’s blest command. Love one another, thus saith the Savior, Children obey the blest command.
   D. We will be judged by our use of the tongue; Mat. 12:36-37 “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

IV. Worldliness
A. Christians are in the world but not of the world.
   1. Speaking of Himself and the apostles;
      a. John 17:11 “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”
      b. John 17:15-16 “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”
      c. John 15:19 “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”
   2. We are not to be like the world:
      a. Rom. 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
      b. Jam. 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
B. The worldly are opposed to God

1. 1 John 2:15-17 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

2. Jam. 4:4 “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
   a. Not only actions are condemned here.
   b. “Will be” is from the Greek βούλομαι which “expresses a passive desire, propensity, willingness.”

C. Worldliness is partaking the things of the world:

1. The works of the flesh; Gal. 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
   a. Four sins against purity:
      (1) Adultery: the unlawful sexual intercourse of a married person with another.
      (2) Fornication: unlawful sexual intercourse in general.
      (3) Uncleanness: lustful living.
      (4) Lasciviousness: unbridled manners including filthy words, indecent bodily movements, and unchaste handling of males and females.
   b. Two sins of irreligion:
      (1) Idolatry: worshiping of false gods.
      (2) Witchcraft: pretense of communication with invisible powers.
   c. Eight sins dealing with disposition:
      (1) Hatred: bitterness or feelings of animosity.
      (2) Variance: quarrelsome attitude.
      (3) Emulations: feelings of resentment because of advantages accruing to others.
      (4) Wrath: anger expressed at others.
      (5) Strife: promotion of party spirit that creates contention.
      (6) Seditions: breaking of fellowship within the congregation.
      (7) Heresies: results from the breaking of fellowship within the congregation.
      (8) Envyings: unhappiness or resentful begrudging of the good fortune of another.
   d. Three sins of excess:
      (1) Murder: the unlawful killing of human life.
      (2) Drunkenness: condition of stupor brought on by consumption of alcohol.
      (3) Revellings: wild partying involving drinking, music, and dancing.

2. Worldliness is loving pleasure more than God; 2 Tim. 3:1, 4-5 “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.... 4Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

3. Worldliness is failing to set our minds on things above: Col. 3:1-3 “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

D. Christians must come out of the world:

1. 2 Cor. 6:14-18 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16And what agreement hath the temple
of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

2. It means we might have to find new friends; 1 Cor. 15:33 “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals. [ASV]” “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’ [NKJV]”

E. **Worldly Christians become a handicap to the church:**
   1. When we act like worldly people act.
   2. When we go to places worldly people go.
   3. When we talk like worldly people talk.
   4. This line of distinction has become cloudy through the years.

F. **Worldly Christians must be withdrawn from:**
   1. 1 Cor. 5
   2. 2 Th. 3:6 “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

Conclusion: Are you a handicap to the Lord’s church?