

# Improving the Lord's Church

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“Wait a minute—you can’t do that!”

# But what (who) is the Lord's church?

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We are! We are among those Jesus “purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

# Can WE improve?

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Absolutely!

# The truth is...

- There are some things about the Lord's church universal, and **His plan** for each local church, that **CANNOT** be improved.
- Other things we **CAN** improve, since we are His church.
- So, in **four** different areas, let's look at some things which **CANNOT** be improved, and some things which **CAN**.

# We cannot improve...

- God's plan for the **organization** of each local church.
  - “Elders (pastors, shepherds, bishops, overseers) in every church” (Acts 14:23).
  - Watch for souls; be an example; feed, protect the flock; make decisions to which others submit (Acts 20:28–31; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1–4; Hebrews 13:17).
  - Oversee “the flock of God...among you” (1 Pet. 5:2).
  - Deacons to serve under the elders (Philippians 1:1).
  - Jesus, the chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

# But what we can improve...

- Is the **execution** of that plan.
  - Churches without elders need to work diligently toward having them.
  - Elders can always improve when it comes to fulfilling their responsibilities.
  - And we can do better in supporting and encouraging them, in helping them do their job with “joy and not with grief” (Hebrews 13:17).

# We cannot improve...

- God's plan for the **worship** of each local church.
  - Acts 20:7: Lord's Supper, Bible study
  - 1 Corinthians 16:1–2: Giving
  - Ephesians 5:19: Singing
  - 1 Corinthians 14:15: Prayer
- Some have sought to make improvements.

# But what we can improve...

- Is our **actual** worship, and we can do that by improving our hearts (or minds).
  - “Making melody in your heart” (Ephesians 5:19).
  - “Your word I have hidden in my heart...” (Psa. 119:11).
  - “Discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Cor. 11:29).
  - “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord” (Psa. 19:14).



# We cannot improve...

- The name God gave us—the name Christian.
  - Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16.
  - And yet men call themselves Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, etc.
  - Does anyone really think this is an improvement?
  - Even Martin Luther said, “Don’t call yourselves Lutherans; call yourselves Christians.”

# But what we can improve...

- Is our worthiness of that name.
  - Wearing the name of Christ—a great privilege, but also a great responsibility.
  - We need to show His attitudes, His character.
  - Alexander the Great, to a soldier who had the same name: “Change your name, or change your ways!”
  - 2 Timothy 2:19.

# We cannot improve...

- The doctrine God gave us to follow (2 Tim. 3:16–17).
  - But think of all the creeds and manuals and statements of faith created by men.
  - If just a guide, then why do we hear of denominations voting on whether or not to accept something?
  - We cannot improve on sound doctrine, and we better not try (Revelation 22:18–19).

# But what we can improve...

- Is our understanding, application, and teaching of that doctrine.
  - Must resist the urge to think “we have arrived.”
  - “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).

# Conclusion

- There is a **divine** element to the church, and that part CANNOT be improved.
- But there is also a **human** element. The church is made up of people like you and me and we CAN be improved.