

I. Introduction

- a) Let's spend a few minutes reviewing what we have learned so far in this class. The table below shows the differences between the Traditional/Institutional Church and the Organic/New Testament Church.

Traditional/Institutional Church	Organic/New Testament Church
Mixture of pagan practices and Christianity, handed down to us by the Roman Empire.	Handed down to us by the apostles.
In place for the last 1,700 years after Constantine.	In place for the first 300 years of the church.
Church is a place you go to on Sunday.	Church is a people who regularly gather together.
Church is a building.	Church is Christ's very own body. It's a gathering of those who have His indwelling life.
Church is a 2-hour service with music, a message, and ministry.	Church is a gathering of Christ's body under the headship of Jesus Christ, where we wait on Him and learn to express His indwelling life together.
Church is an organization under the government of man.	Church is a living organism under the headship of Christ.
A church service is comprised mostly of consumers who pay their tithe in exchange for an anointed and excellent performance by a skilled worship band and eloquent communicator.	Church is a gathering comprised of active participators who have sought the Lord for a word, song, exhortation, and teaching for that gathering (1 Cor. 14:26). These participators have taken ownership and responsibility for each gathering and have learned to express Christ's indwelling life together interdependently in divine order.
Depends upon the pastor and the worship team to experience God.	An interdependent body of individuals who know how to experience God independently but also realize their dependence upon the entire body for life and growth.
Can function without the Holy Spirit and no one even notices.	Can only operate by divine life.

Traditional/Institutional Church	Organic/New Testament Church
This well-oiled machine runs by the gifts, talents, skill, wisdom, and creativity of its leaders.	If we don't live by the indwelling life of Christ and rely upon the Holy Spirit's leading, direction, and moving, we don't have church.
Leadership is hierarchal and positional, where the main leader has a special title and gives chain-of-command orders to those "under" him.	A leadership team of elders who function as shepherds. Together, this team of pastors oversee the church and watch over the flock.
Led by one pastor.	Led by a team of pastors.
An institution and organization built upon org charts and organizational models.	A family and community that functions organically by divine life through deep and personal relationships.

II. Charismania Kids

- a) Having spent over 25 years helping to lead a Charismatic church, I have accumulated numerous stories of charismania. I have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly in the Charismatic movement. With that in mind, I want to introduce you to the *Charismania Kids*.
- b) These *Charismania Kids* are fictitious characters that have been developed using various traits that I have witnessed during my 25-plus years of being in the Charismatic movement. The point of this is to teach us valid principles for divine order.
- c) As it relates to the *Charismania Kids*, these fictitious characters contain lessons for us so that we would have divine order as we learn to express Christ's life together. So far, we have looked at Close-Talker Carl and Puffed-Up Patrick. This week we will look at Messenger Mitch.

III. Messenger Mitch

a) Profile

As his name implies, Messenger Mitch is a messenger of the Lord—at least in his own mind. Messenger Mitch's biblical heroes are Elijah and John the Baptist. Messenger Mitch dreams of walking into a church, calling down fire from heaven, and seeing all the lukewarm Christians consumed by God's fire.

For his birthday, Messenger Mitch wants a custom-made camel's hair cloak, a replica of Moses' staff, and he wants to eat Middle Eastern locusts with honey.

Messenger Mitch frequently experiences the "Elijah Syndrome." That is, he thinks every American believer is lukewarm, living in compromise, and is committing spiritual adultery with the world. In his mind, Messenger Mitch is the only one who has not compromised with the world system. Everyone but him has bowed down to Baal. He is the only one left who is truly seeking the Lord.

Messenger Mitch doesn't believe a prophetic word is truly from heaven if it doesn't contain a call to repentance. Therefore, every time Messenger Mitch gives a word it points out everything wrong

with a church or a person. There's never any love, encouragement, grace, or kindness. Every message he speaks is condemning and harsh.

Because Messenger Mitch has no fear of man, he will boldly speak the truth loud and clear for all to hear. Though he loves the truth (which is good), Messenger Mitch is fiery, harsh, and severe. His favorite sermon topics are the end-time judgments of God and the scourging of the Lord.

When preachers talk about God's grace, love, and kindness, Messenger Mitch instantly thinks the preacher has been compromised by hyper-grace. To him, hearing these attributes of God is like fingernails scratching on a chalkboard.

b) *Lessons*

1. A true messenger wants people to hear what God speaks through them.
 - Before delving too deep, every believer is a messenger in one way or another. Whether we speak from a platform, write, have one-on-one meetings, or with our children, each of us are called to speak on behalf of the Lord.
 - Paul lays out divine order in 1 Timothy 3:4-7. In short, divine order is as follows: 1) Within ourselves; 2) with our spouse; 3) with our children; 4) at work; and 5) within the church.
 - Ask yourself these two questions: 1) Do I want to be a messenger who speaks what God says? or 2) Do I want to be a messenger who people hear what God speaks through me?
 - If we are only concerned about being a messenger who speaks what God says, it won't matter to us how we speak, when we speak, or the tone in which we speak. It won't matter to us whether the people receive it or not. We think, "We're just a messenger. Our responsibility is to deliver the Lord's message. It's the people's responsibility to hear it and receive it." Our main concern is to be a messenger who faithfully delivers God's truth to the people who need to hear it. How we speak a message is really irrelevant.
 - On the other hand, if we want to be a messenger who people hear what God speaks through us, then we will care deeply about the people to whom we are speaking. We will find the best way to faithfully speak the truth in love to the people that God loves deeply. We will use the most appropriate speech, tone, analogies, and words to articulate God's heart to the people He loves and died for.
 - If *all* you want to be is a messenger who speaks what God says, it's actually selfish. You are only concerned about your responsibility to speak God's truth. You are not concerned about the people and their response to the message you are speaking.
 - On the other hand, if you want to be a messenger who people hear what God speaks through you, then you care about the people to whom you speak. You love them and want them to hear what the Lord has put on your heart. Yes, you still care about faithfully speaking God's truth, but you also have love for the people who will hear your message.
2. If we want to speak God's words (sermons, teachings, prophetic words, etc.) to His people, having a shepherd's heart is imperative.
 - If you want people to hear what God speaks through you, then it's important to develop love, care, and compassion for the people to you whom speak. See Jeremiah 3:15.
 - It's not enough to hear what God says. Because we love the people we speak to, we want to say it in way in which they can receive it. We want to use the right words at the right time so that they can hear what we say, take it to heart, and hopefully be changed by our words from the Lord.

- It's important to know the people we speak to. We need to know the hard things they're going through. We need to know their fears, anxieties, challenges, and the pressures they face. This will help shape the messages we deliver, whether a sermon, teaching, or prophetic word. This will help mold the truth we speak with love, compassion, and genuine concern for their wellbeing.
 - The fear of man brings a snare (Prov. 29:25). So, not having a fear of man is a good thing. That doesn't mean, however, that we go to the other extreme and become rude, harsh, and severe with God's children. Freedom from the fear of man doesn't free us from walking in love, compassion, and concern for the people God loves so dearly.
3. Speak the truth in love, seasoned with grace.
- Ephesians 4:15 states, "But speaking the truth in love." When speaking any type of message for the Lord, we want to ask: What's the best way that I can say this so that the people I speak to can best receive it? What tone and method should I use to best communicate this truth?
 - Mike Bickle believes that for every word of correction you speak, you should speak 10 words of encouragement.
 - In Revelation 2-3, Jesus spoke words of commendation before He spoke words of correction. He revealed what they were doing good before pointing out their faults.
 - People who always speak words of correction and who always see what's wrong with others usually have something wrong within them. One of the ways Jesus sees us is by our potential. The Lord called Abraham the father of many nations while he was still in his barrenness. Jesus called Peter a rock, though he was still unstable. In the same way, the Lord sees who we can become because of the indwelling Spirit. He sees our potential through His eyes of faith and calls "those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17, KJV).
 - Jesus sanctifies us by speaking into our potential. He knows who we can become because He knows who dwells within us. Jesus knows that we will become be a rock even though we're beset with weaknesses. Jesus knows that we will be a father of many nations even though we are barren. As messengers, we want to emulate the Lord Jesus Christ. We don't want to always see what's wrong with people. We want to see their potential and speak into their potential.
 - Paul said, "So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. . . . Let all things be done for edification" (1 Cor. 14:12,26). Edification means "to build up."
 - Colossians 4:6 states, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."
 - Grace is the unmerited and undeserved enablement of God. It's His power that gives us the ability to be who He wants us to be and to do what He calls us to do. Grace empowers us to obey Him, walk with Him, fulfill His calling, and become Christ-like. When we speak the truth, grace should always be present, imparting spiritual power inwardly to those who hear. Our words should activate grace within people, giving them the ability to obey the truth that we speak.
 - Paul said, "But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation" (1 Cor. 14:3). Our words, no matter how truthful and pointed, should seek to edify, exhort, and comfort God's people. That doesn't mean we refrain from speaking the truth. It means that we work hard to speak the truth with love and grace. We have to be careful that our words are not condemning. People will tune us out if they detect any hints of condemnation.