

VII. Progressive Christianity in Biblical Perspective
Historic Biblical Christianity and Contemporary Progressive Christianity
“The Seven Marks of Progressive Christianity—Part 2”

I Corinthians 3:1–18

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Let’s look at that wonderful letter written to a presbytery of seven churches in Asia Minor and that’s the book of Revelation – Revelation 2. What happens when the leadership of a church is committed to the agenda, the theology and overall philosophy of ministry that is proposed in contemporary progressive Christianity, instead of historical Biblical Christianity? In this study I will outline for you seven marks of progressive Christianity in that church. In the previous study I showed you why these marks exist and why they need to be evaluated. The Biblical foundation for this came from three passages of Scripture.

One was from I John 4:1–6, where we’re instructed not to believe every prophet or teacher, but to examine them in two areas – the spirit that drives them and the content of their ministry, do they preach Christ Incarnate who came to save His people from their sins? This is why the Bereans were noble minded for they received the Word with eagerness – they were teachable, but they were not blind in their listening. They were discerning, discriminating, not skeptical or cynical or critical but they would discern what was being taught because they examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Another passage was from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount with the illustration He used to expose false teachers, false shepherds and false preachers. That is from Matthew 7:15–20. Jesus used the illustration of a diseased tree because it was diseased in the root and shoot/trunk which will always produce diseased fruit. As you examine the fruit then you will know about the shoot and the root. The opposite is true for good, solid trees produce good fruit and bad trees produce bad fruit so He says that you will know the teachers, preachers and shepherds by their fruit, but that also means you have to have a Biblical understanding of what fruit is when you start evaluating the fruit. Fruit is not that they have a lot of people listening to them. There was a time Elijah preached at Mount Sinai but didn’t have the big crowd, for Baal had the big crowd. We’re not talking about numbers but content and Gospel impact in the lives of men and women and the Gospel of the Kingdom into the earth. If you want to know what good fruit is, you can start with the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus also tells us what good fruit is in John 15:8 when He says [8] *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.* Good fruit is a lifestyle that gives glory to God and manifests a personal, robust, vital relationship with Christ as Lord and Savior.

The third passage I shared was from I Corinthians 3 in which the Apostle Paul says God has gifted leaders of a church that when they minister, if they are ministering faithfully, then their ministry will be gold, silver and precious jewels. They could be ministering falsely and still be saved but their ministry gets burned up and consumed at the day of Judgment because it is wood, hay and stubble. If they are being faithful to the Lord then they are building on the foundation for Christ and they begin to produce gold, silver and precious jewels and the Day of Judgment burnishes it and shows it for what it is.

Before we get to the text for this study and dive into the seven marks, I want to sum up the three texts from the last study with these three statements. One is that leadership always works – good leadership produces good fruit (Christ is exalted), bad leadership produces bad fruit (teaching twisted things and leading people astray). Jesus said in Luke 6:40, [40] *A disciple*

is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Jesus also said in Luke 7:35, [35] *Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.*

The second statement from the three texts of the last study, is that good leadership has identifiable fruit that honors the One who gives the fruit. It is God glorifying good fruit. Secondly, bad leadership produces bad fruit which is detrimental, destructive, divisive and it will show up in the overall demeanor and deportment that is taking place within the church. It is not that the church is ever perfect, but in bad fruit the growth of grace is not seen, only the demise in the bad ministry is seen if not faithful to the Word of God. It is not about numbers for there are times when God is bringing good fruit that He actually reduces the numbers. Gideon had to get down to 300 for God to bring forth what He wanted done, so the point is not necessarily in numbers. Although, statistical growth is certainly recorded in the Scripture.

The third statement is historical, Biblical Christianity, if you understand these three texts, is constructive, creative, not that it is innovative but things are developed out of it, and being faithful to God's Word is always produced. They are always trying to find out how to reach people and grow people. It is also Biblically Spirit-empowered constructive – we're being built up as living stones and the temple is growing, the field is bearing fruit. Sometimes this produces statistical growth and it produces functional growth where Christians are growing in their ability to worship, share their faith and to love one another. Followership is learning how to encourage leadership. Leadership is learning how to sacrificially and servant heartedly guide the followership. There is spiritual growth in the roots of the life of that congregation. There is functional growth in that congregation as it fulfills the Great Commission and lives the great commandment with a great commitment to Christ as Lord and Savior and Head and King of the church. Normally this would lead to more impact statistically – more Christians, more small groups, more ministers, more missionaries. It is building up.

If that's the case, then what if it is false leadership and false teaching? Then it is no longer constructive for it is destructive. It is no longer productive for it's parasitic. It is no longer developing for it is diminishing. Just as Spirit-empowered, Biblically faithful, Christ-exalting and Biblical ministry is taking place to fulfill the Great Commission, being faithful to the Word of God it is creative, constructive and growing up things in the Lord and for the Lord, but not so when there is false teaching. What do I mean when I say it's parasitic? A parasite lives off of its host and it can only live as long as the host lives, but it's not giving to the host, it's taking away from the host. It is drawing the nutrients out from the host and it's deconstructing its host plus it's diminishing the beauty, vitality, ability and power of the host as it lives off of the host.

Contemporary progressive Christianity, as its cousin – liberal Christianity, because it's cut from the same bolt of cloth, the same fabric and has the same motivation – to make the church culturally relevant. Progressive Christianity now says if you don't listen to us you're going to lose the next generation and will be on the dustbin of history. The same slogans were used in liberal Christianity. Just like liberal Christianity told the mainline Protestant church their mission was to transform the culture, which truly is a blessed effect of ministry but it's not the mission of ministry. The mainline Protestant church is actually on the dustbin of history now because liberal Christianity has just sucked all the life out of it. The same thing is happening to the evangelical church this century as they listen to contemporary progressive Christianity telling them they will make them culturally relevant and that means their job is the flourishing of the culture. Cultural transformation is not a by product of your ministry but progressive Christianity is telling them it is the mission of their ministry, not the transformation of sinners although it's great if it happens but their aim is to transform the culture.

Then what happens? Such churches, movements, seminary, college or denomination in progressive Christianity, they never start anything. They are never creating for they always come in, insinuate their theology, philosophy and their ministry parameters and then they begin to draw the life out of its host. The seminary, college, denomination and the church begin its demise. Why? It is because false teaching and false leaders are parasitic for they live off of what was done faithfully for the Lord and drawing out of it their life as it is based upon it.

I've had people tell me they know some progressive men who have gone out and planted churches and I do too. I know our national missions ministry, as diligent and prayerful as they are, people know what to say, then we find out they are using the money and resources of this congregation to plant a progressive church that goes into a demise. Or progressive Christian leaders come into a Christian church through the pastoral leadership that develops within the session and what happens? Faithful elders move out. Faithful Biblical preaching is abandoned. The Great Commission takes a back seat. Then all of sudden you have a deconstruction of the church and that means a diminishing of the church spiritually, functionally and statistically.

I could support that anecdotally for I know that is just what happens, because God's Word is clear. If you are unfaithful and you don't repent, I'll remove the lampstand (Revelation 2:5). God says this to a number of the churches in the presbytery in the book of Revelation. Do you know the two hot spots of Christianity in the opening years? One was in northern Egypt, specifically Alexandria. It has the greatest Christian library that has ever existed. Before that was Asia Minor and many of the books of the New Testament were written to Asia Minor – Galatians, Ephesians, Philemon, Revelation, Colossians – because there Paul's second and third missionary journey and possibly one of Peter's journeys was a hot spot of Christianity and at the end of the century a letter is written to the current overseer of ministry whose name is John.

Jesus is warning them – I'm taking the lampstand out if you don't repent. I want to look at one of those churches – Thyatira – in Revelation 2. Revelation 2:18–29 says [18] *“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.*

[19] “‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. [20] But I have this against you (false teaching and false leaders), that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. [21] I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. [22] Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, [23] and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. [24] But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. [25] Only hold fast what you have until I come. [26] The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, [27] and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I Myself have received authority from my Father. [28] And I will give him the morning star. [29] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Basically, here there is false teaching that is accommodating sexual sins and promoting false worship. Instead of God-centered worship, it's man-centered worship that is even embracing the resources of idolatry. There is always this Gnosticism – those who are really in the know – and those in progressive Christianity will say things like ‘you need to sit back and

listen because these people are really in the know. Just be silent, don't bring your Bible verses.' Faithfulness to the Word of God is the aim of Christianity.

The mother church of Ephesus was told if they didn't repent then God would remove the lampstand. The hot bed of Christianity in the first and second century was Asia Minor but today that is a place of spiritual darkness. The Christian church, praise God is experiencing some revival now but for hundreds and hundreds of years no lampstand was there. God's people need to be on the alert and need to be testing the pastoral preaching of God's Word. Is it faithful to the Word of God? What about the servant leadership of God's ordained officers of elders and deacons? What is the commitment of the ministry to Christ? No church is perfect by any means but you can see the graciousness of how the Lord with His church and His patience with His church, but He warns us not to tolerate that which will destroy, is deconstructive, parasitic and diminishes for that stuff has to be removed. We have to repent and if not, the Lord removes the lampstand.

So, I'd like to get started in giving you the seven marks of progressive Christianity which deserves much more treatment than I have time for but will give you what I can on them. How do you identify progressive Christianity when it lays hold of the church? As we go through these remember these two words – deconstruction and diminishing.

The first mark is there is the deconstruction and the diminishing of the church's and the leadership's view of the supremacy of Scripture. What is the supreme authority of what we believe and practice? When the Reformation came the present church at that time, the Roman church, magisterium was found in the tradition of the church presented through clerical authority. It was supposedly a twofold authority – the Bible and the speaking church. There are never two masters for one always outshines the other, therefore the functional authority in the Roman church was the supremacy of the counsels of the church speaking through the counsels and clerics of the church – the magisterium of the church.

The Reformation starts off with how a man can be right with God – the doctrine of justification – but within two and half years when the church brings Martin Luther to bay and he has to come and defend himself at the Diet of Worms. It becomes abundantly clear the reason he is holding to salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, is because of Sola Scriptura. The Scripture alone is our only rule of faith and practice so how does Luther end that moment of defending his position? He says 'Unless I am convinced by reason or Scripture, here I stand for I can do no other. God help me.'

Whenever a church is motivated for cultural relevance, its mission is cultural transformation, then its message will begin to be massaged and controlled by the culture out of the desire for cultural acceptance and then the message is marked by cultural accommodation. Then Biblical magisterium, out of the sovereign supremacy, will be diminished and there will be the loss of Sola Scriptura, the abandonment of Biblical magisterium for cultural magisterium. Just listen how the pulpit begins to be silent about the issues of the day that the Bible speaks to as you preach and teach the whole counsel of God, but the pulpit quits speaking to it because the culture says don't speak to it.

In progressive cultures you will see pulpits rightly speaking to the issues of racism, justice and sex trafficking and praise God, to preach the Gospel of God in the power of God to confront those issues, calling men and women to repentance and equipping God's people to be salt and light. Although in those same pulpits there is a silence now on gender issues, marriage, Biblical sexuality as a gift from God to be exercised in a covenantal, heterosexual, monogamous marriage, and the sanctity of life. Why? It is because the culture says 'don't speak' and they want to be relevant and have a seat at the table because they want to be cultural shapers. But

what is really happening with cultural magisterium is, they are not transforming the culture but the culture is transforming your church. So, what begins to happen is not Sola Scripture but sola cultural.

Keep your eye out for this for one of the ways it is furthered is a constant slogan out of progressive Christianity – churches need to quit talking so much about what they believe, for it's more important to belong. People need to belong and then we'll take care of their believing. There is only one problem with that for the Bible says you're saved by faith in Jesus and you can't be saved by faith in Jesus and walk by faith for Jesus with the people of God until you believe in Jesus. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Believing leads to belonging. If people haven't believed it doesn't mean they are not loved for they are absolutely loved. We have friendships that extend outside the body of Christ into the world for we create relationships. We don't build walls, we build open doors, but we don't church, we bring Christ. When they came to Christ and baptized in Christ, they were added to the church. That is, you have to know Christ to be a part of Christ's church.

That means we have to reject progressive Christianity's setting up in conflict for it's a false dichotomy – believing and belonging. It's reaching, believing and belonging. It's seeking them that they may believe and belong to Christ, then added to His church. The church can't save them so that is not the objective to be church-ed. The objective is to come to Christ and to bring Christ to them. To be church-ed is the testimony of belonging to Christ. Does that mean we wait to love people when they join the church? No, we go to the hiways and biways to love people and bring Christ to them.

The second mark of progressive Christianity is when you lose the supremacy of Scripture you have the deconstruction and diminishing of the sufficiency of Scripture – that God's Word is enough. When the motivation is cultural relevance and the mission is cultural transformation then for cultural acceptance there is cultural accommodation in the issues and words that are preached. That means the message is messaged, which is the Gospel of the whole counsel of God, but all of a sudden, the whole counsel of God is not being preached nor is there thought that the Word of God is sufficient in progressive Christianity.

Liberal Christianity had the same thing for it said they wanted to be relevant to the culture, transform the culture and we'll bring in the Christianity century. They even did a magazine titled the Christian Century. They were going to save the mainline Protestant church from the dustbin of history. They began to have a seat at the table with the cultural players and decided they needed to get rid of some of the doctrines that the modern mind would not accept. Things like, the inerrancy of God's Word, the supernatural dynamics of the virgin birth, the resurrection, the exclusivity of Christ and salvation, the need of a vicarious atonement, were not unacceptable to the modern mind so liberalism felt the need to jettison those things which ended up being liberal theology which came out of liberal Christianity. Now the Protestant church is on the dustbin of history.

Progressive Christianity does the same thing. Out of a motivation to be culturally relevant it tells the evangelical church that the rising generations will not listen to them unless they are culturally attuned. Therefore, you have to be committed to the transformation of the culture, the issues the culture brings to you and the concerns the culture brings to you. Jesus tells us it's not cultural transformation but it's sinner transformation for cultural transformation is a byproduct. Progressive Christianity produces a progressive theology that doesn't go after the inerrancy of Scripture but the sufficiency of Scripture. You begin to see it when you hear people say the Bible is inerrant, sufficient, supreme and sovereign as people are challenged in their theology and the Word of God. I'm not talking about tertiary doctrines but what the Bible says

about forgiveness of sins, transformation of sinners and besetting sins and as you look at this you being to raise the flag of the sufficiency of Scripture, the Gospel and Christ. Then you hear the same things hurled in the days of liberal Christianity – you legalist, fundamentalist, hard rights. These are the epitaphs to silence the voice calling for faithfulness to the supremacy and sufficiency of the Word of God. From the pulpits, is no longer the exposition of Scripture, but the functional canonization of extra Biblical publications that are political, sociological and psychological.

One might say to me at this point, don't I believe in common grace? Yes, and don't I believe unbelievers can have truth every once in a while with common grace so why don't you eat the meat and spit out the bones? The problem is that this literature isn't produced by common grace, but it is produced as literature against the truths of God's grace. It is designed to tear down a natural family, the church and the Gospel for it is rooted in that. This isn't chew the meat spit out the bones for this is a thirsty person on the raft in the ocean looking at the sea water thinking they can drink it and spit out the salt. No, you drink that and you die. Therefore, the pulpits get adulterated. The next step is apostacy, then heresy and I don't use that word lightly.

The way I was trained heresy is not theological error. All of us have theological error and that's why you test all who preach with God's Word, the Bible. I won't call you a fundamentalist when you do, because I believe in the supremacy, sovereignty and sufficiency of Scripture. The fact is, as you deal with the Word of God, if we begin to canonize those things written against the Bible and claims and promises of the Gospel, then you get doctrine adulteration, then apostacy because you begin to embrace heresy – it's not simply theological error, but you have the millennium wrong, church government wrong and those are secondary doctrines. You can get those wrong and still get to heaven, but heresy is when you are knowingly, communicating, and believing Biblical doctrines that are heretical and false and these doctrines have to do with first order issues, for when you get them wrong you spend eternity in hell. Heresy is soul damning doctrines and they come out of a loss of the supremacy and sufficiency of Scripture, it's deconstruction and diminishment.

The third mark of progressive Christianity is the deconstructing and diminishing of the Gospel promises, the integrity of the Gospel. All of a sudden we're told that there are sexual sins that are so powerful and besetting that you can get forgiven but you can't get liberated. The Gospel is prevailing to declare you just and adopt you, but the Gospel cannot be prevailing over some sins. I recently read something from a man who said he had been a Christian for 30 plus years – I'm forgiven, a child of God, justified – but my erotic desire for same sex has not changed at all for over 30 years. If someone comes to me with that, my heart breaks because I know if what they are saying is accurate, there is one of three things happening. One, they are not saved. Two, they are saved but they don't know how to measure the progress and give glory to God. They think they are managing sin – they are and need to be killing it – and they are not able to see the progress is of the Lord. I want to help them see it and don't bring suspicion upon the promises of regeneration and sanctification or thirdly, they have not been put under Godly, Biblical discipleship. I'm not talking about this exodus psychology behavior modification stuff that was done 20 to 30 years ago.

I'm talking about Biblical discipleship that immerses someone in the means of grace. I love what is says in Psalm 1:1–3; *[1] Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; [2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. [3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*

What does it mean to be like a tree? It happens by cutting out the sap that brings the sin out and it is immersing yourself in the new sap – you put off and put on. I have two trees in my backyard. In the fall, the sap stops rising and the leaves fall off and that's what happens in sanctification. You don't feed it by walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of the sinner and sitting with the scoffers. I have another tree in my backyard where the leaves stay on all winter and they don't leave until the new sap comes up and brings the new fruit that drives it out. We need to cut and pull off the old and by God's grace and sanctification put in the new to push out the sin in our life.

I never doubt the promises of God. I believe when God causes you to be born again you still have sin living in you but you do not live under the power of sin. You can say 'no' and you can grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. I believe while everything else in the Gospel is monergistic, God does it all. God calls you, justifies you, regenerates you, adopts you and one day God will glorify you. In sanctification it is synergistic – it's one hundred percent God and one hundred percent you – and the church that believes the Gospel takes people and helps them with besetting sins so let's go ahead and immerse ourselves in the Word and the Spirit to drive out sin, cut off that which feeds sin what the old man would feed on, and build up that which feeds the new man. The Gospel is true, now let's apply it faithfully, persistently and He never tells you perfection is on this side of eternity, but He does say 'such were some of you.' But you have been born again, washed with the blood and sanctified – we believe that and we do not diminish the Gospel by anecdotal statistics. We apply the Gospel with confidence because we believe that God cannot lie and if any man be in Christ he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come (II Corinthians 5:17).

How do progressives get around that? They have another slogan – we've got to quit curing people and start caring for people. Why is that a dichotomy? The Gospel forgives, changes and transforms and we care enough for you to tell you that and help you walk through it. That is what God has called us to do with you.

The fourth mark of progressive Christianity is the deconstruction and diminishing of the primacy of preaching. Less and less will you find in progressive pulpits a commitment to expository preaching. There will be talks and references to the Bible as a jumping off point to the talk that is given that usually comes from extra Biblical literature that has been effectively canonized. There are two types of architecture in Christianity – the facility and the liturgy. When the Reformation came they looked at the facilities and took the pulpit off the side wall and put it right in the middle elevated. I Corinthians 1:21 says *[21] For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.* The elevated sacramental table was brought down to the floor of the people underneath the pulpit because it's the pulpit that brings integrity to it and they have to come by faith and faith comes by hearing the Word (Romans 10:17). So the architecture changed to reflect the theology of the supremacy, sufficiency and integrity of Scripture and the Gospel.

Then they did the architecture of the liturgy of worship and every element of worship had to come from the Bible. The central primary act was the preaching of the Word of God but in the progressive church ritual begins to replace the preaching. Sacramentalism comes back in, in ritual. I love the Lord's Supper and baptism but they are meaningless without the Word of God preached faithfully. This is why Paul says in I Corinthians 1:17, *[17] For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.* Expository preaching with authoritative declarations, not because the preacher is authoritarian but because the Word has authority and this is replaced with

vague references, discussions and talks. Progressives will say ‘have you reconsidered ‘thus saith the Lord’?’

The fifth mark of progressive Christianity is the deconstruction and the diminishment of Biblical ministries. Discipleship is gone. Now instead of discipling people to mortify sin and vivify obedience, there is no the managing of the syndrome in your life – manage your sin. The Bible says through discipleship we are to kill sin for Jesus and we are to live unto Jesus, not because of what we do saves us, but because we love our Savior. Then there is the diminishment of the ministry of worship. You will find one of two things in progressive churches – either worship becomes a concert of entertainment or it becomes it becomes a liturgical, heavy sacramentalism that begins to take place. Personal evangelism is lost in getting people to church.

I beg you to bring people you are sharing the Gospel with to church. I will bleed out the Gospel to them if you will bring them here (to Briarwood), for I promise you that, but the real work of evangelism is not done on Sunday morning. The real work of evangelism is done Monday through Saturday when you personally share with others. I was preaching on one of the most important texts of Scriptures this Sunday morning and my email and FaceBook were inundated with things that would distract me from it and I know that is what Satan wants me to do – is get distracted from God’s Word. But if you fill up my social media with – Pastor, I was sharing the Gospel with someone about this, can you help me? Or would you pray for me as I get ready to talk with someone about their decision for Christ? – I will help. I would love to see social media filled up with people scattering to the hiways and biways telling people about Christ, seeking to save the lost.

In a progressive church it will be about whatever the next cause is or the next community action for no longer are preachers and ministers of the Gospel but they become community organizers. O how I thank the Lord for our elders here at Briarwood. We lose leaders that are committed to both pastoral care and theological fidelity and instead it’s events and social engagements. It’s a social gospel in the name of social justice instead of a Biblical Gospel that produces Biblical justice. Roles are lost and the dynamics are lost.

The sixth mark of progressive Christianity is the deconstruction and diminishment of Biblical contextualization. We are not allowed to retreat from the world. In other words, as long as you ask me to serve you under the authority of these elders, I will never bring a proposal that Briarwood would sell everything to go buy a hundred acres and start a commune. That is not Biblical separation. We are to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:15–21). We are to contextualize in the world but we are not to let the world contextualize us. That means we speak to the culture and its people in the terms they can understand, not the terms they demand.

Think of a boat in a lake. If to save the boat you take it out of the lake and put it up on the dry dock, you save the boat but it’s useless. What good is a boat that is up on a dry dock? Or if you put the boat in the water and it springs a leak and the leak doesn’t get repaired, then what good is a boat that sinks to the bottom of the lake? When you get contextualized by the world, the world gets in the church and sinks us. We want to be in the lake, not the lake in us. It brought the cultural accommodation in the name of contextualization and the loss of a Biblical understanding of contextualization, which brought the demise of the mainline Protestant church and is now just a piece of the furniture if it exists at all, as long as the endowments last and the evangelical churches are headed the same way, unless we understand that we are in the world but not of the world and the world does not determine our motivation, our mission or our message – Jesus does.

The seventh and final mark of progressive Christianity is the deconstruction and diminishment of Christ’s church. I have gone into progressive churches now for the last three

years and there is no joy. I watch them speak of Christ's church and its failures. I know the church isn't perfect and we need to repent but it's sad to go into these churches where there is no joy. I hear men speaking in these pulpits about Christ's bride (the church) in ways they would never speak about their own bride. There is no reverence or honor. I know the church needs help and that's why God has the leadership here – to wash the bride (His church) with the water of the Word, but we do not diminish her, demean her or deconstruct her. This church doesn't exist to give me a job. This is Christ's church and we're all here to do a job. This church belongs to Him – it's the bride of Christ and we have a mission, a message and ministries from Christ. We'll talk more about the ministries later but He has given us all of that to be faithful to.

I went to a church to preach that had 500 people that was full of the joy of the Lord and came back recently, four years later, under a progressive pastor and it's now diminished statistically from 500 to 100 – no this no that. No joy and this pastor came in a deconstructed and diminished it. When I stepped in, I had never seen such cynical and joyless people. So, don't let the world get your heart strings. Get in the Word of God. Get your eyes fixed on Jesus. Spend time in prayer. Pick one news station to listen to. Know the Good News. Be filled with the joy of the Lord, the joy of Christ, the joy of your salvation and let's make sure Christ's church whom we love – the bride of Christ – is on mission, on message and in ministry. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Lord, mend our flaws and give us repentance, but let us rejoice in Your church, Your bride, Your lampstand – keep it burning, burning, burning, until the break of day. Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the Lord Jesus, the King and Head of His church. For these people as they process this, Lord help them as they work their way through it. God, please help us understand what is happening so that we can help our brothers and sisters in such churches. God, give us seminaries producing pastors who are ministers of the Gospel of grace who believe in the supremacy, sufficiency and inerrancy of Scripture, the integrity of the Gospel and the discipleship of the church can be effective to the glory of God. He can not only justify and adopt but He can transform and make us new creations and grow us in grace all the way to glory with varying degrees of progress until we get there. Father, help us to love Christ's church, even as You loved Your bride and gave Yourself for her. Help us say 'no' to that which is parasitic, deconstructs and diminishes and 'yes' to that whereby we walk in the confidence of the Spirit of God, not triumphalism, but the triumph of Christ, for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

SEVEN MARKS OF PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

The Deconstruction and Diminishment of the...

1. Supremacy of the Scripture
2. Sufficiency of the Scripture
3. Gospel Promises and Its Integrity
4. Primacy of Biblical Preaching – expository
5. Great Commission Ministries and Means
6. Biblical Doctrine of Contextualization
7. Christ's Church – His Bride