

Love The Church

Harvesters Class (6-20-21)

“This ‘personal walk with Jesus’ makes a good point, but it has also caused great harm to the body of Christ as it fuels self-centeredness and a consumer mentality. We have a corporate walk with Jesus.” – Randy Smith

What is the Church?

- “Church” derives from the Greek word *ekklēsia*, which connotes the idea of “assembly.”
- The term is found in the NT 114 times.
- The majority uses of the term refer to NT Church, often describing a gospel-centered assembly in a specific location.
- The “Church” is the people of God who have been saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and have been incorporated into his body through baptism with the Holy Spirit.
- “A local church is a group of Christians who regularly gather in Christ’s name to officially affirm and oversee one another’s membership in Jesus Christ and his kingdom through gospel preaching and gospel ordinances.” – Jonathan Leeman

What is the Church?

“The church is that assembly of people who belong to the Lord, who are gathered together for Him. The gospel of Jesus Christ calls individuals out of the world of sin and death and into eternal light and life; it takes people who were no people and turns them into a special people for God (1 Peter 2:9-10). That’s what the church is. It’s the assembly of people living under the rule of Jesus and committed to each other in the faith.” - Thabati Anyabwile

What is the Church?

The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ its head; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him who fills everything in every way. - WCOF 25.1

The visible Church before the law, under the law, and now under the Gospel, is one and the same and consists of all those who make their profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, together with their children. – BCO 2-1

What is the Church?

The visible unity of the body of Christ, though obscured, is not destroyed by its division into different denominations of professing Christians; but all of these which maintain the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true branches of the Church of Jesus Christ. – BCO 2-2

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon BarJonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:16-18)

The Church

1. God is building His Church!

The Church

- 1. God is building His Church!**
- 2. We have a mission!**

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:9)

“Some go to church to take a walk; some go there to laugh and talk.
Some go there to meet a friend; some go there their time to spend.
Some go there to meet a lover; some go there a fault to cover.
Some go there for speculation; some go there for observation.
Some go there to doze and nod; the wise go there to worship God.” –
Charles Spurgeon

The Church

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3. The Church is not perfect.

This catholic Church has been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular Churches, which are members of it, are more or less pure, to the extent of the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, means of grace administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them. (WCOF 25.4)

The Church

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3. The Church is not perfect.
4. I need the Church and the Church needs me.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor. 12:7)

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Cor. 12:27)

“On Sundays God wants us to do more than sing songs together and have wonderful worship experiences. He wants to knit the fabric of our lives together. For many, church has become all about me – what I’m learning, what I’m seeking, what I’m desperate for, what I need, how I’ve been affected, what I can do. We see ourselves as isolated individuals all seeking personal encounters with God, wherever we can find them. Sadly, this reflects our individualistic, me-obsessed culture. Rather than seeing ourselves as part of a worship community, we become worship consumers. We want worship on demand, served up in our own time, and with our own music.” – Bob Kauflin

“For many years I took an individualistic approach to the Christian life. I was concerned about my growth as a Christian, my progress in holiness, my acquisition of ministry skills. I prayed that God would enable me to be more holy in my personal life and more effective in my evangelism. I asked God’s blessing on my church and the Christian organizations I worked for. But as I learned more about true fellowship, I began to pray that we as the Body of Christ would grow in holiness, that we would be more effective witnesses to the saving grace of Christ. It is the entire Body – not just me – that needs to grow.” - Jerry Bridges

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5. Leaders are given authority by God.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 16:19-20)

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. (Matt. 18:15-20)

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

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