

3.11.18 ~ So, We Are The Church of God...

The Greek word [*ekklesia*] translated *church* in our Bibles, means "the called out ones," this is speaking of the community, congregation, body or family of genuine believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

The word "church" might be used of a local group of God's people, but it is clearly not talking about a physical building; instead it has a more supernatural and universal meaning, speaking of all those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, which is given to each one who, upon their personal confession of sin and belief in God's Son as Lord and Savior, becomes a child of God, now and forever.

Ephesians 1:13-14, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of His glory."

Acts 2:38, "Repent... ..in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

1Corinthians 12:12-14, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many." ***18-20***, "But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body." ***27***, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

Colossians 1:18 He [Christ] is the head of the body, the church.

Revelation 5:9 says, Jesus "purchased men for God from every tribe, language, people and nation, by His own shed blood.

Christians are chosen by God; in fact they are bought at the cost of the shed blood of God's own Son, that they might be born of God, to live forever with Him.

John 1:13-14, "Yet to all who received Him [Jesus], to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

John 3:3 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" [from above]. ***8*** "So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Christians, as members of the body of Christ, the church, of which He is the head, are indeed peculiar people; Peter says (1Peter 1:1) we are alien residents on earth, pilgrims, strangers in the world - for our true citizenship is in heaven.

1Peter 1:3-5, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1Peter 2:9-10, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful Light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Paul clearly lays out the problem between sinful humans and the Holy God of Creation (we are all sinners); but God also provides the sovereign prescription and cure, by which we can be healed of an otherwise terminal eternal illness, the remedy is found in **Romans 3:10-12, 23; 6:23; 5:8; 8:1;10:9-10, 13.**

Ephesians 1:3-10, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."

Ephesians 3:10-11, "His [God's] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

At the moment of heart repentance for sin and genuine belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, God's Spirit comes to indwell and seal you as the eternal possession of God. As a child of God, a member of God's church, and as one whose sins have been forgiven through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, you should live differently from those who continue to reject God's Son.

1Corinthians 6:19-20, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

23-24, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men... ...It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

2Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you - unless, of course, you fail the test?"

We are commanded (**Colossians 3:16**), "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," (**Galatians 5:25**), "live and walk in the Spirit," (**Ephesians 5:15-17**), "Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is," (**Romans 12:2**), "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will."

God's Word tells us to live under the control of God's Spirit, in obedience to God's Word, exemplifying the character of God's Son, bringing glory to God the Father.

The purpose of the church [all true believers and followers of Jesus] is to love Christ by obeying the Word of God (**John 14:15**), "If you love Me, you will obey what I command," (**verse 21**), "Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me," (**verse 23**), "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching."

Love and obedience are synonymous: As you feed on God's Word, applying it to your life, you are changed, being conformed to Christ through the Word of God, by the Spirit of God.

Romans 12:1, "I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship."

Every Christian is a member of God's church, of which Christ is the Head (**Ephesians 1:22-23**), "God placed all things under His [Christ's] feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way."

Jesus loves His church so much He laid down His life for us (**Ephesians 5:25**), "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her."

Jesus commands us to love our brothers and sisters in Christ the same way; for this distinguishes God's people from the world's people (**John 13:34-35**) "As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love [agape - sacrificial, willful, unconditional] one another."

Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

As individual believers we should seek to know God more intimately and honor Him more consistently, with our life, as we endeavor to encourage one another [in the church], where God's Word is to be taught, obeyed and honored, as we proclaim the message of Jesus Christ, to all who will listen, so that people might be saved.

Paul's love for Christ and His church is clearly and repeatedly expressed in the books of the New Testament.

Paul's sincere and earnest desire for each member of God's family to know the unconditional love and the incomprehensible presence, pleasure and power of God in their life, is exemplified in the following prayer:

Ephesians 3:14-21, "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Pastor Mike

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