

The Church- Part 1

An overview of the church

“...Christ is the head of the church, and He is the savior of the body,” (Eph. 5:23). The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is founded on His work while in the earth. As we see His act of love as the pattern for the church, we will understand that it is not a building, a denomination or movement, or any other temporal expression. Instead, the church, following the pattern of Jesus, is a people who are joined together, laying their lives down for others. Most people have a distorted picture of what the church is because of the traditions of men. A clear distinction must be drawn between the traditions of men and the real activity of the Body of Christ, the church.

1. The Foundation of the Church The foundation, or substructure on which the church is built is the realization that Jesus is the anointed Son of God. This is the beginning of understanding the church; “...Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” (Matt. 16:18).

- A. Christ the Rock. Peter had a revelation of what the church was founded on. Matt. 16:13-19.
1. Others did not know that Jesus was the Christ. (vs. 13-14)
 2. Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ. (vs. 15-16)
 3. This was a revelation from God. (vs. 17)
 4. It is on this revelation that “Jesus is the Christ” that the church is founded. (vs. 18-19)
 5. The church founded in Christ will have all authority and power. (vs. 18-19).

IMPORTANT POINTS

Describe the importance of Peter’s revelation of Jesus as the Rock.

- B. Christ the Life. Paul understood that the foundation of the church was the life of Christ.
1. Jesus is called the foundation. (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
 2. Jesus is called the cornerstone. (Ps. 118:22; Ac. 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:6; Isa. 28:16)

IMPORTANT POINTS

How is it that Jesus is the life?

II. Purposes of the Body of Christ The church is the channel through which God is accomplishing His works in the earth today. “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” (Eph. 3:10) This wisdom includes His purposes to:

- A. Show forth His Glory and Praises. (1 Pet. 2:9) This is done through:
 1. Supernatural gifts of the Spirit. (Matt. 15:31; Ac. 4:21-22).
 2. Answered prayer. (Jn. 14:13; 11 Thes. 1:11-12).
 3. Completing His work. (Jn. 17:4; 1 Pet. 4:11).
 4. Entire consecration. (1 Cor. 6:20; Jn. 21:19; Rom. 12:1).
 5. Good works. (Matt. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:25).
 6. Unity. (Jn. 17:22-23; Rom. 15:5-6).

IMPORTANT POINTS

In what ways does the church show forth God’s glory and praise?

- B. Show forth His Word. We are to establish the kingdom of God in other people’s lives. (Lu. 5:10, 9:60; Jn. 17:18)
 1. Jesus prayed that the church would show the world that the Father sent Him. (Jn. 17:23)
 2. A short time later His command was to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. (Mk. 16:15).
 3. The early church was obedient to this command. (Ac. 8:4-5; Ph. 2:16).

4. Even as the Lord called Paul to be His witness, so He also calls us—individually and corporately as a church. (Ac. 9:15-16, 22:14-15).

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Why should the church show forth His Word?

III. Portraits of the Church The word church comes from the Greek ekklesia which means “a calling out, a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation.” The form in which the “called out” people of God come together in is described by several types.

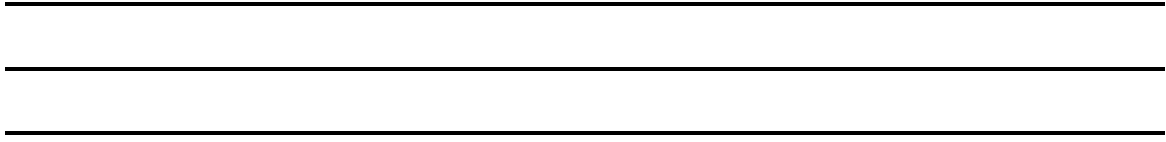
IMPORTANT POINTS

What is the meaning of the word church?

- A. The Bride. The organization which we call a church is a bride.
 1. Jesus is our bridegroom. (Matt. 9:15; Jn. 3:29)
 2. We are promised to Christ in marriage. (Rom. 7:4; 11Cor. 11:2; Hos. 2:19-20)
 3. We are to be a ready and pure bride. (Rev. 19:7-8; Eph. 5:28-32; Ps. 45:10-15; Song of Solomon 4:7).

IMPORTANT POINTS

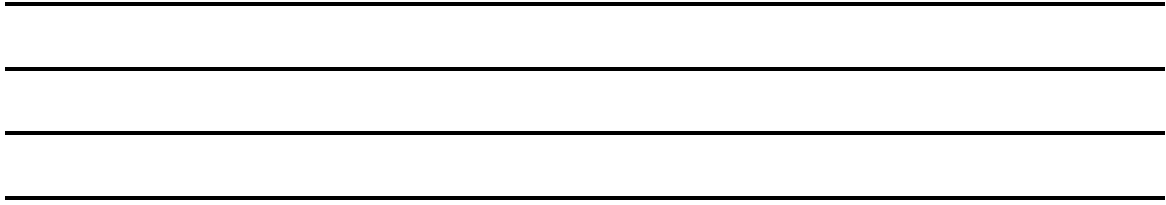
Describe the church through the portrait of a bride.



- B. The Temple. We are the place where God dwells by His Spirit.
1. The word temple is used to describe:
 - a. Jesus. (Jn. 2:19-21).
 - b. Every individual. (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19).
 - c. Christians joined together. (11 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22).
 2. God inhabits this temple of people rather than a building on a corner. (Eph. 2:21-22; Ac. 17:24).
- C. The Body. We are the body of Christ with Jesus as our Head. (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:22-23).
1. Christians are not just the body which belongs to Christ, but the actual functioning Christ in the earth today. (11 Cor. 5:20; Jn. 20:21).
 2. Each Christian is a particular member of the functioning Body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:14-27).
 3. Each part needs the other. (Eph. 4:15-16).
- D. The Branches. Jesus is the Vine and we are branches. (Jn. 15:1-8).
1. He is the Vine. (vs. 1)
 2. We are the branches (vs. 5)
 3. As we abide together in relationship with Christ and each other, we bring forth fruit. (vs. 2, 4, 7-8; Ac. 2:42-47).
- E. The Army. The church is an army at war.
1. Christians are called
 - a. As soldiers. (11 Tim. 2:3-4).
 - b. To fight. (1 Tim. 6:12; 11 Tim. 4:7).
 - c. In an army. (Joel 2:1-11)
 2. Jesus is our King and Commander. (Deu. 20:3-4; Rev. 19:11, 14-16).
 3. The battle we fight is a spiritual battle. (Matt. 11:12; 11 Cor. 10:3-6; 1 Thes. 5:8).
 4. We must fight with the full armor of God. (Eph. 6:11-17; Rom. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:8).
 5. God's army has been given the victory to overcome. (1 Cor. 15:57; Rev. 12:11; 1 Jn. 5:4-5).

IMPORTANT POINTS

How is the church a fighting army?



- F. The Family. Christians are in a family relationship with God and each other. (Matt. 12:50; Mk. 3:33-35; Lu. 8:21)
1. God is our Father. (Isa. 63:16, 64:8; Matt. 6:9, 7:11; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).
 2. We are called sons. (Rom. 8:14, 16; Jn. 1:12-13; Gal. 4:7; Hos. 1:10).
 3. We are called the family of God. (Eph. 3:14-15, 2:19).

IV. Point of Decision The church, then, is all of the activity which results from a foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the daily lives of those people called Christians acting as God's representatives and showing forth His wisdom and glory in the earth. It can be painted as a called out family which is the temple or abiding place of God, becoming the beautiful bride, growing together like a vine and functioning like a single body to establish the kingdom through war.

PERSONAL APPLICATION – AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHURCH

1. My church should be built on the foundation of ...

2. My overall purpose of being a part of the body of Christ includes....

3. At this point of decision in my life, I especially see myself as the church portrait of
