

Church.....What's the Point?

personal / group study for use with the message of September 12, 13, 2009

The next three weeks we will be discussing what is the purpose of the church? Does it really matter? If you've ever asked these questions or felt like you were just going through the motions you will want to explore this study.

Introduction.

Each of us is a "living stone" being put together with other "living stones" to build a spiritual house of which Jesus is the capstone'. When we come to trust in Jesus for our salvation, He doesn't intend for us to live and serve in isolation; He intends for us to be a part of a holy priesthood with direct access to God! The church is a spiritual house of which Jesus is the 'capstone'.

Read.

1 Peter 2:5, 9-10: *"You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But 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."* (NASB)

Matthew 16:18: *"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."*

Ephesians 6:12: *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

1 Corinthians 12:12-18: *"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. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."*

1 John 2:12-14: *"I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I write to you fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, you men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one."*

1 Peter 2:2: *"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation."*

Hebrews 5:11-6:1: *"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God."*

*All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.

Questions.

ThinkAboutIt...

1. If you are part of a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, what should we be doing?

ReflectOnIt...

2. Read 1 Peter 2:5, 9, 10 above. Record your observations. Note three things you learn about us as a people.
3. Who gave us the name the “church”? (Matt. 16:18)
 4. Which is a stronger force the church or the forces of evil? (Eph 6:12)
 5. Why is it important that the body works together? Does jealousy or pride have a place in the physical body? How is this like the church body? (1 Cor. 12:12-18)
 6. How do you grow spiritually to make each part of the church stronger? (1 John 2:12-14, 1 Peter 2:2, Heb. 5:11-6:1)

RespondTolt...

7. How can I help cultivate real community in the local church?

Extra.

Read Romans 12:1 and Heb. 13:15 what does it mean to be a spiritual sacrifice?

Church.....What's the Point?

personal / group study for use with the message of September 19, 20, 2009

This is the second lesson that Bob is teaching on the purpose of the church? Jesus was the first to call His followers Ekklesia, the Church, "those who are called out". What has He called the church out for?

Introduction.

Jesus said that the church is called out of darkness and into light. He said that His church is a fighting force and army that storms the gates of hell and rescues those who are held captive. And He taught that His church is a spiritual family, a place for growth. This week's lesson is about "God's Great Passion".

Read.

Genesis 12:2: *"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing."*

Jonah 4:9-11: *"But God said to Jonah, "do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die." But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, Should I not be concerned about that great city?"*

Matthew 9:10-13: *"While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with Him and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and "sinners"?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means" "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." **For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."***

Matthew 9:36-38: *"When He saw the crowds, **He had compassion** on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask (lit. beg) the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."*

Mark 10:17, 21, 22: *"As Jesus started on His way, a man ran up to Him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" **Jesus looked at him and loved him.** "One thing you lack," He said. "Go and sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

Luke 19:10: *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

1 Timothy 2:1, 2: *"first of all, that requests, **prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone**—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."*

1 Timothy 2:3-6: *"This is good, and pleases **God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved** and to come to a knowledge of the truth."*

*All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.

Questions.

ThinkAboutIt...

1. How do you envision God?
2. What do you think God's greatest desire is?

ReflectOnIt...

2. Read all of the passages above from Genesis through 1 Timothy. Is there a theme?

3. Is the heart of God of the Old Testament and the heart of the God of the New Testament different? Explain.
4. Is the gospel exclusive or closed? Explain why you think what you think.
5. Reread the passages from Matthew, Mark and Luke what do you learn about Jesus?
6. Who does God want to be saved?

Respond To...

7. Pray for eyes to see people as God sees them?
8. Pray for a co worker or neighbor that needs to know the love and grace of God through Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
9. Show that one person genuine love, start today!

Extra.

Read Luke 10:25-37 answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?" How does the Samaritan show sacrificial love to the injured Jewish man?