

Rapture Without Relationship?

March 1, 2015 AM

Ephesians 5:24–27

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, **EVEN AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH**, and gave himself for it;

26 **THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD,**

27 **THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT, OR WRINKLE, OR ANY SUCH THING; BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.**

As Christians, we are waiting for the next great event of the Church, the imminent return of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Hope, the rapture. Our mission is to be ready to meet Him in the clouds by living pure and holy lives, separate from sin and worldly corruption and separate unto Him in relationship and service.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER TO BE READY FOR JESUS' IMMEDIATE RETURN AS A LONER, OUTSIDE OF BIBLICAL RELATIONSHIP FROM THE BODY OF CHRIST?

1 John 3:2–3

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 **AND EVERY MAN THAT HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM PURIFIETH HIMSELF, EVEN AS HE IS PURE.**

Individual initiative is required for readiness, but communal relationship is also just as required.

Ephesians 2:19-22

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 **IN WHOM ALL THE BUILDING FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER (to join closely together, to render closely jointed) GROWETH (to increase, become greater) UNTO AN HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD:**

22 **IN WHOM YE ALSO ARE BUILD TOGETHER (to construct out of several to build up one whole) FOR AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.**

The Kingdom of God, including the local church assembly, functions by RELATIONSHIP.

The local church DOES NOT function by:

- legislation
- human administration
- dictatorship or democracy
- business & marketing strategies
- “customer” experience or service strategies
- outreach campaigns
- social media, media ministry

The Church lives, grows and prepares herself for the imminent return of her Lord by being in proper relationship - first with the Jesus the Head and then with the Body, the members in particular. How the Church has been distracted and derailed from the mission and the method!

THE STRONGER AND CLOSER THE RELATIONSHIPS, THE STRONGER AND HEALTHIER THE CHURCH.

Colossians 2:18–19

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 **AND NOT HOLDING THE HEAD, FROM WHICH ALL THE BODY BY JOINTS (bond, connection, ligament) AND BANDS (that which binds together) HAVING NOURISHMENT MINISTERED (to supply, furnish, minister), AND KNIT TOGETHER (united in affection, to drive together), INCREASETH (to grow) WITH THE INCREASE (growth) OF GOD.**

We will not be ready to meet the Lord when He comes without relationship - relationship first with the Head of the Church Jesus Christ and then relationship with the individual members.

To think you will be ready for the return of Jesus Christ without the proper relationship to the Head and His Body is as ludicrous as thinking your body is whole without and does not the eyes to see, nor the ears to hear, nor the hands and feet.

1 Corinthians 12:12–21

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.
15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?
16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?
17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?
18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.
19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?
20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.
21 **AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY UNTO THE HAND, I HAVE NO NEED OF THEE: NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU.**

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PASTOR TO CONGREGATION

1 Thessalonians 1:8–2:13

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.
9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and **HOW YE TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS TO SERVE THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD;**
10 And **TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN**, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.
1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:
2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.
3 **FOR OUR EXHORTATION WAS NOT OF DECEIT, NOR OF UNCLEANNESS, NOR IN GUILE:**
4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, **EVEN SO WE SPEAK; NOT AS PLEASING MEN, BUT GOD**, which trieth our hearts.
5 For **NEITHER AT ANY TIME USED WE FLATTERING WORDS**, as ye know, nor a **CLOKE OF COVETOUSNESS**; God is witness:
6 **NOR OF MEN SOUGHT WE GLORY**, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.
7 **BUT WE WERE GENTLE AMONG YOU, EVEN AS A NURSE CHERISHETH HER CHILDREN:**
8 **SO BEING AFFECTIONATELY DESIROUS OF YOU, WE WERE WILLING TO HAVE IMPARTED UNTO YOU, NOT THE GOSPEL OF GOD ONLY, BUT ALSO OUR OWN SOULS, BECAUSE YE WERE DEAR UNTO US.**
9 For ye remember, brethren, **OUR LABOUR AND TRAVAIL: FOR LABOURING NIGHT AND DAY, BECAUSE WE WOULD NOT BE CHARGEABLE UNTO ANY OF YOU, WE PREACHED UNTO YOU THE GOSPEL OF GOD.**
10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, **HOW HOLILY AND JUSTLY AND UNBLAMEABLY WE BEHAVED OURSELVES AMONG YOU** that believe:
11 As ye know **HOW WE EXHORTED AND COMFORTED AND CHARGED EVERY ONE OF YOU, AS A FATHER DOTH HIS CHILDREN,**
12 **THAT YE WOULD WALK WORTHY OF GOD**, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, **WHEN YE RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD WHICH YE HEARD OF US, YE RECEIVED IT NOT AS THE WORD OF MEN, BUT AS IT IS IN TRUTH, THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH EFFECTUALLY WORKETH ALSO IN YOU THAT BELIEVE.**

The relationship of a pastor to the congregation must have the three fundamental principles of shepherding:

- *nurturing care* - vs. 7-9
- *holy example* - vs. 10
- *patient instruction* - vs. 11

When the relationship of pastor to congregation has those three fundamental principles operating in pure motives, the Word of God will effectually work in the church community.

- *speaking the full counsel of God's Word purely in the fear of God, not adding to nor taking from* - vs. 3-4
- *ministering for the eternal good of the people, never for selfish gratification or advantage* - vs. 5-6

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MEMBER TO MEMBER

Hebrews 3:12–14

12 **TAKE HEED** (*to look at, to perceive*), **BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF, IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD.**

13 **BUT EXHORT** (*to call to one's side, to comfort, to encourage, to console*) **ONE ANOTHER DAILY, WHILE IT IS CALLED TO DAY; LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.**

14 **FOR WE ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST, IF WE HOLD THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONFIDENCE STEDFAST UNTO THE END;**

Hebrews 10:24–27

24 **AND LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER TO PROVOKE UNTO LOVE AND TO GOOD WORKS:**

25 **NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS; BUT EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER: AND SO MUCH THE MORE, AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.**

26 **FOR IF WE SIN WILFULLY AFTER THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS,**

27 **BUT A CERTAIN FEARFUL LOOKING FOR OF JUDGMENT AND FIERY INDIGNATION, WHICH SHALL DEVOUR THE ADVERSARIES.**