

What is Church?

June 17, 2018

Ephesians 2:18-22 ESV

18 For through him we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Ephesians 2:14 ESV

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

John 18:28 ESV

28 Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.

Ephesians 2:18-22 ESV

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

Proverbs 22:28 ESV

28 Do not move the ancient landmark that your fathers have set.

Is what is called "church" today in America true to the foundation, example and teaching of the foundational Apostles and Prophets, those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' life, ministry, teachings, death, resurrection and ascension?

Can we find the contemporary American church in the New Testament writings of our founding fathers? Over the past 2,000 years, how much has the original intent for the Church been twisted, manipulated, polluted and distorted?

1 Corinthians 3:9-17 ESV

9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.

11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw--

13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Ephesians 2:18-22 ESV

21 **in whom the whole structure, being joined together (*synarmologeō - fitly framed together, fitly joined together*), grows into a holy temple in the Lord.**

22 **In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**

- ***The Church is not a human organization nor an earthly institution, but a living, growing, spiritual, eternal body. Church on earth is just a head-start of what will last for all eternity in heaven.***

“One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organization do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team.” — [A.W. Tozer](#)

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 ESV

12 *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*

13 *For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*

Ephesians 5:25-27 ESV

25 *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,*

26 *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*

27 *so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

Revelation 21:1-2 ESV

1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*

2 *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

- ***The Church was not born, it is not maintained, nor does it grow, by human effort or worldly strategies. Today, there are many institutions and organizations called churches, but are nothing more than man’s organization and design, existing for personal and worldly gratification and promotion.***

“If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.”

— A.W. Tozer

Acts 2:1-12 KJV

1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

2 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

3 *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

5 *And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*

6 *Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man*

heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Acts 13:2-4 ESV

2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 5:3-5 ESV

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?

4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."

5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.

- **The true Church is not comprised of members who select a religious affiliation based on consumerism and personal preference.**

John 2:13-17 KJV

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Those that select a church based upon preference and self-gratification are themselves the victims of consumerism.

2 Peter 2:1-3 KJV

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

- **The Church exists to be the habitation of God here on the earth; a living temple which exists exclusively for the worship of God, communion with God and fellowship with His people.**

Matthew 18:20-20 ESV

20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

2 Corinthians 6:16 ESV

16 For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Revelation 21:1-4 ESV

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

"It is now common practice in most evangelical churches to offer the people...a maximum of entertainment and a minimum of serious instruction. It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God's professed children are bored with Him, for they must be wooed to meeting with a stick of striped candy in the form of religious movies, games and refreshments."

—A.W. Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God

1 Peter 2:5 ESV

5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 ESV

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

"During the 1880's a group of American ministers visited England, prompted especially by a desire to hear some of the celebrated preachers of that land.

On a Sunday morning they attended the City Temple where Dr Joseph Parker was the pastor. Some two thousand people filled the building, and Parker's forceful personality dominated the service. His voice was commanding, his language descriptive, his imagination lively, and his manner animated. The sermon was scriptural, the congregation hung upon his words, and the Americans came away saying, 'What a wonderful preacher is Joseph Parker!'

In the evening they went to hear Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The building was much larger than the City Temple, and the congregation was more than twice the size. Spurgeon's voice was much more expressive and moving and his oratory noticeably superior. But they soon forgot all about the great building, the immense congregation, and the magnificent voice. They even overlooked their intention to compare the various features of the two preachers, and when the service was over they found themselves saying, 'What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus Christ!'"

—Spurgeon: A Biography, Arnold A. Dallimore, p.220