

Sermon Study Guide – September 21, 2025

Greetings!

We're continuing our series about the church. Last week I proposed a definition of the church based on taking the whole of the Bible into consideration:

The Church is

- The people of God
- On the mission of God
- Becoming the image of God in Christ
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit

We're continuing to talk about the "People of God" as we talk about how God has rescued this people from the "household of slavery" and brought them into his household. This is the heart of the story of the Bible. Traditionally Christians have talked about "salvation." Ultimately salvation is not about one's personal eternal fate, though that's part of it. Salvation is about joining God's kingdom, his household, his people, who are free.

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Church is the Rescued People

OT: Deuteronomy 5:6

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

NT: Ephesians 2:19-22

So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Outline

Introduction: Two kinds of rescue

Definition: Church is the people of God, on the mission of God, becoming the image of God in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit

Foundation 1: The People of God are not natives, but are rescued

Foundation 2: The People of God are rescued to be members of God's household

Foundation 3: The People are the Household and the House

Implication (So what?): Salvation is rescue from a household of bondage to join a household of free responsibility.

Application (Now What?): Personal salvation is first and foremost a call, a call to join a people. Eternal life, blessedness in this life, these are secondary benefits.

Study Questions

Foundations: What?

1. Have you considered "Christian" to be a native group-identity? Or have you understood "Christian" as a separate, called-out people? Why might that matter?
2. What are the differences between a story of a rescued people and a rescued person? Are we all prodigals who come back to Jesus, or is Jesus rescuing people from bondage?
3. How does a household make a house in which God can dwell?

Implications: So What?

4. How would you define "salvation"? How does that fit with the language of households?

Applications: Now What?

5. Many/most of us were raised with a gospel of personal freedom from bad choices that merits eternal life by choosing Jesus. What would it change for you if salvation was first and foremost about becoming a people?

Prayer

Prayer is simply talking to God. You can ask God to deliver you from the evil one, as Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer. You can ask God to equip you for the responsibilities of his household. You can always pray that God would rescue others. And of course, you can pray that God would make us a people who join in his mission of rescuing others.