

THE ROCK

What is the Church?

Matthew 7:24-25 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

-THE HEART OF THIS SERIES! ALL AGES TOGETHER!

-SOAP: Scripture.....Observation.....Application.....Prayer

CHURCHWIDE!

WEEK 1: WHO IS GOD?

WEEK 2: WHO IS JESUS?

WEEK 3: WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT? (TRINITY)

WEEK 4: WHAT IS THE BIBLE & PRAYER? (LORD’S PRAYER)

WEEK 5: WHAT IS SIN & SALVATION

WEEK 6: WHAT IS BAPTISM & COMMUNION

TODAY: WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

THIS WEEK’S VERSE:

Hebrews 10:23-25 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH???

- Is the church just a building?
- Is it a weekly service?
- Is it a tradition people keep?

Scripture tells us something much deeper

-The church exists because God is forming a people who belong to Him and live for His purposes.

The word “church” is a translation of the Greek word “ekklesia” which is defined as “an assembly” or “called-out ones.”

-The root meaning of *church* is not that of a building, but of people.

First time we hear that word was from Jesus:

Matthew 16:18 “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Key truths:

-Jesus Himself is the builder of the church. IT IS “HIS” CHURCH!

The church exists because **Christ is creating a people who belong to Him.**

-To continue HIS mission to SEEK & SAVE the Lost!

-To be HIS hands and feet!

AND 2nd truth: The gates of Hell can’t stop it!

SO: Why does the Church exist? (CAPITOL “C” CHURCH)

The church was not humanity’s idea. It was Christ’s plan.

Today we will look at three biblical reasons the church exists.

-Along the way we will see how God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things.

1. The Church Exists to Worship God

1 Peter 2:9 “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

-The church exists because God deserves praise from redeemed people.

Romans 12:1 Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

-Worship is not just music. Worship is **a life surrendered to God.**

(STYLES & TRADITIONS & PREFERENCES)

-FIND WHAT FITS!

Hebrews 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

WE HONOR GOD TOGETHER! (Sometimes easy....sometimes hard)

Something beautiful happens: We become a lighthouse!

-A lighthouse does not exist for itself.

-It exists to shine light into darkness so ships can find their way safely.

-The church is like that lighthouse.

We gather to lift up the light of Christ so the world can see

-who God is and how good He is

Our worship becomes a signal that says:

“There is hope here. There is grace here. There is salvation here.”

2. The Church Exists to Help us Grow

Christianity was never meant to be lived alone.

Ephesians 4:11–12 Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

-The church is not an audience watching a performance.

It is a body where everyone has a role.

Hebrews 10:23-25 LET US hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And LET US consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ LET US not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but LET US encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching

- We need each other's prayers.
- We need each other's encouragement.
- We need each other's faith when ours feels weak.
 - The church exists so that our faith grows together.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 ⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

The devil thrives in confusion, division and isolation!

-The ENEMY of our soul has always tried to BREAK us through ISOLATION!

-THIS IS WHERE SO MANY LIVE AND ARE STUCK!

PRACTICAL: Bad church experiences & church hurt! REAL!

-Restaurant: Bad service.....still go out to eat! TRY AGAIN!

AS PASTOR: I WANT TO SEE THIS BE A PLACE OF “LOVE”

I WANT TO SEE EVERYONE CONNECTING AND GROWING!!

BUT THE PROBLEM “MORE PEOPLE.....MORE PROBLEMS”

-A “HOSPITAL” not a “COUNTRY CLUB”

-Pay the same for both.....totally different experiences!

Church leaders given:

Ephesians 4:12-16 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

GROWING IN LOVE TAKES A LOT OF WORK!

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (Unity and Diversity in the Body) Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ 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 stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ 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? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in

the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, **there are many parts, but one body.**

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ **so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.**²⁶ **If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.** ²⁷ **Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.**

WHAT MAKES THE WATERS SO GREAT! THE PEOPLE!!!!

WE ARE A FAMILY! Family is not perfect

-There is no perfect family

-NO PERFECT CHURCH!

.....in fact, you don’t get to CHOOSE your physical family,

but you can choose your CHURCH FAMILY!

We gather because we need each other.

-Some weeks you come strong and encourage someone else.

-Other weeks you come weak and someone encourages you.

The church exists so that **faith grows stronger together**

SO: WE WORSHIP GOD

WE GROW IN OUR FAITH

3. The Church Exists to Reach the World

-The church also exists to bring the good news to the world.

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

EVERYONE HAS BEEN GIVEN THE SAME MISSION BY JESUS!

Matthew 28:18-21 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

AND GOD HAS MADE YOU TO BE HIS HANDS AND FEET ON THIS EARTH!

WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING!

WE ARE FILLED UP TO BE Poured OUT!

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

YOU ARE NOT SAVED BY YOUR WORKS

YOU WORK BECAUSE YOU ARE SAVED!

WHY ARE YOU HERE???

TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS!

-TO MAKE AN IMPACT!

EPHESIANS 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

-THERE IS A LOT THERE!

1 John 3:18 Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

-ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.....TALK IS CHEAP!

John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

-Known for LOVE! (For each other! UNITY)

-The Disciplines that make us grow.....help us LOVE BETTER!

OUR MISSION IS CLEAR..... WE ARE HIS BEACON OF HOPE

Matt 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

-Light shine.....good works

Good works don't get us into heaven.....they show a bit of Jesus in us!

- The church is not just gathered people.
- The church is people with a mission.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

HERE.....THERE.....EVERYWHERE!

The church is:

- A family where we belong
- A body where we serve
- A mission where we go

And at the center of it all is **Jesus**.

REACHING PEOPLE IS MESSY!!!! It is a priority!

Let's take a quick run through the first half of the NT together!

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.....JESUS LIFE AND MINISTRY!

ACTS: Birth of the NT church!

John 14 You will do greater things than me
I will send you the holy spirit
-the advocate
-the spirit of Truth!

-ACTS 1 Jesus again promises the Holy Spirit

ACTS 2 it happens! Peter preaches and 3000 got saved and baptized in one day!

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WAS BIRTHED & EXPLODES!

-AND THAT IS WHEN THINGS BECAME A "HOT MESS"

THERE WERE HOME CHURCHES EVERYWHERE.....NO TRAINING!

- PRIDE SETS IN
- SELF RELIANCE SETS IN
- SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS SETS IN
- SIN SETS IN
- SELFISHNESS SETS IN

NEXT 7 BOOKS ARE WRITTEN BY PAUL....A LITTLE HOLY CLEAN UP!

SO EASY TO GET OFF MISSION!

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

WE ARE ALL ON A RESCUE MISSION!

I CLOSE WITH THIS:

John 13:33-36 “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. ³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” ³⁶Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

One day we will see the church gathered in eternity. (WE WIN)

Revelation 7:9 A great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

- That is where the church is heading.
- Until that day, we remember why we exist.

- We worship God.
- We build up believers.
- We reach the world with the good news.

- We worship.
- We grow.
- We go.

And when the church lives the way God intended, it becomes something beautiful.

A place where broken people find hope.

- Where sinners find grace.
- Where strangers become family.
- Where Jesus is lifted high.

Acts 1:8: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”

The church exists to be a living testimony that Jesus saves, heals, restores, and redeems.

- Every act of love
- Every word of truth
- Every moment of compassion
- Becomes a signpost pointing people to Christ!!

The church is God’s plan to reach the world.

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Are you growing? (Last 2 years? Track record?)

Are you going? Many Christians are Spiritually constipated!

(Soph Ileus) Time, Talent & Treasure

Philippians 1:3-11 I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.