

Identity Crisis: The Church

Stand Read 1 Peter 2:1-10 Pray

What is the Church?

A social club? A Hospital? A Building? A Network? A Concert? What is it?

The Word Church= Ecclesia, A called out Assembly, where we get our world for Ecclesiastic.

There is much confusion in the church today about who she is and what her purpose is. There is a huge Identity Crisis happening and is a direct sign that we are in the last days.

Remember our points:

The Church is

The Church is Holy

The Church is Righteous

The Church is Love

The Church is Relatable

First, The Church is...

Founded by Christ:

Matthew 16:13-20

13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

Well, it wasn't the Pope! The church wasn't founded by Peter. It's a play on words between the little stone and the big rock. What was that? The confession that Jesus is the Christ! That is how you become part of it as we will see before we leave today.

Built on His Word:

Ephesians 2:19-21

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord

The foundation is the Canon of Scripture given to us by the Apostles of the New Testament and the Prophets of the Old.

Is His Body:

Ephesians 4:11-16

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16

from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

That means that the church is not a building or title but a Body, a living breathing organism. And, just like a body it takes itself to function. We are alive in Christ! And, if functioning correctly will self-replicate.

That means if the Church is His Body, and the Church is you, then it should reflect the Person Who is the Head...Christ!

The Church is Holy

You are called that

1 Corinthians 1:1-2

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be **saints**, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours

The word Saints is the word Hagios which is the same Greek word for holy

“Well, I don’t feel very Holy” It’s not a feeling but a position. You have been called out of the world and our now born into the Church. It is your identity. NO, we are not perfect. But God is working in and through us. Look at what Paul called those in the church of Corinth...saints. Before he rebukes them and corrects them, he lets them know who they are. Who you are!

Remember you are a work in progress!

Romans 8:28-29

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren

The Church is also righteous!

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 John 3:7-9

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

You and I are a work in Progress!

But did you know that we are Love?

The Church is Love

John 15:9-17

9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is

doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.

1 John 4:7-11

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Matthew 5:43-48

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

OH, Ouch! Yep, we are Love Positionally, Personally and Outwardly!

Because of that we are relatable!

Encourage one another:

Hebrews 10:24-25

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Work out your differences

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Point out our wrongs:

Matthew 18:15-17

15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Remember we always strive for reconciliation!

2 Corinthians 2:3-11

3 And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. 4 For out of much [a]affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

5 But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. 6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. 9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For [b]if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

James 5:19-20

19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

How does one become part of the church?

You are Born into it!

John 3:3

You must be born again!

1 Peter 1:17-25

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because

“All flesh is as grass,

And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.

The grass withers,

And its flower falls away,

25 But the word of the Lord endures forever.”

Now this is the **word which by the gospel was preached to you.**

You must Confess and Believe

Romans 10:9-13

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That is how you become a Member of the Body of Christ!

What about church membership? We are not opposed to such, but it is not required. Many churches take it too far. They lord it over them. Use the threat of excommunication to get them to do what they want. Mail them tithe reminders and in some cases send elders to check up on them. One church makes people apologize on a Sunday in front of everyone for missing church for three weeks in a row! As if the Sunday meeting is the church.

Another thing is some churches have membership that translates into ownership. Meaning, the church in a democracy. They vote the pastor in and vote the pastor out. They decide on everything. That is NOT how the church works in the Bible.

Titus 1:5

For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you

In Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-13 is where we get the calling and qualifications for leadership and the placement of these is the leader, whether it was Paul or Timothy or Titus.

But the church is a local community!

We are in the process of putting our constitution and bylaws for the church together and in that process have been looking at other churches and in communication with them. Some have membership and some don't. The one thing we know that the church is going to go through some changes legally in our state and our country. We have had to make sure we have a sexuality clause in our bylaws and now one that pertains to life. Part of this includes you. We want

you to be part of this community and under its legal protections while we still have them. And what happens when it all changes? We get outlawed? We need to know who is part of this fellowship so we can connect with one another.

I know a lot of you have been part of Calvary Chapels all your life and are completely unfamiliar with idea of belonging to a church by membership and believe me I feel the same way. But in the past, we have had a church directory with everyone who attends contact information that we would pass out and now I am afraid to pass that out to just anybody. We live in a time of cancel culture and vitriol of anything to do with Christianity. This puts you in the crosshairs and as your leader want to and have to provide you with a protective covering. So, to do that we are going to be giving you the opportunity to be a “Member” of this church. It will be a simple process of just agreeing to the statement of faith and stating the fact that you are a member. Requirements will be that you profess to be a believer and have been attending for a length of time. No classes, no tests, no elders breathing down your neck. And, if you choose not to agree to it you are still part of this fellowship by the fact you are here, we are just not going to have you on the directory. Why? Because we believe some very hard times are coming and the church will be singled out and persecuted. We need to make sure we are standing together in one accord and have each other’s back.

So please, be in prayer for us. We want to make sure everything we do is of God and led by His Holy Spirit. We stand for liberty not legalism. If we even start to go down to road of legalism. If it even starts to appear that way, we will do away with it! It’s not about me or the name of the church. It’s not about running your lives. It’s about being a family that God has brought together to love one another and serve one another. Even in a time where we are outlawed!

Will you be part of it? I know most of your answers already. When we have it all together and the board has come to an agreement on them you will be able to review them. We will have a time of questions and answers and please know we are here to serve you.

But first you have to make sure you are a member of the body of Christ.

Share the gospel and close with prayer and a song