The Importance Of The Church

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday February 11th, 2024

Text: Ephesians 1:22-23 Scripture Reading: Romans 8:14-17

### Intro

1. April, 2012 Newsweek cover said, “Forget the Church, Follow Jesus!”
2. April, 2012’s Newsweek article: “Christianity In Crisis” by Andrew Sullivan asserted:
   1. The church is corrupt and bogged down with unimportant things.
   2. Christianity is just about following Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount.
   3. Anything outside the Sermon on the Mount is (in the words of Thomas Jefferson), “Religious Manure.” (He made his own “cut and paste” Bible of what he thought was important).
   4. The church is unimportant to Christianity!
3. The Church and Christ cannot be separated – Christ is the Savior of the body *(Ephesians 5:23)*
   1. The church is the “Called Out” *(II Corinthians 6:14-18):* Called out of the world! *(Ephesians 2:1-3)*
   2. The church is bought by the blood of Christ! *(Acts 20:28; I Peter 1:18-19)*
   3. The church is made up of sanctified and cleansed members! *(Ephesians 5:23-27)*
4. God’s word-pictures paint a portrait of the importance of the church!

#### ***The Body of Christ***

* 1. Ephesians 1:22-23: To forget the church is to say, “I like You, but I can’t stand Your body.”
  2. The church is not:
     1. The physical body of Christ. *(Romans 12:4-5)*
     2. The glorified body in which He ascended to Heaven. *(Acts 1:9)*
  3. The church is the “body of Christ,” which is made of saints (I Corinthians 1:2).
     1. Romans 12:4-5: The body of Christ is made up of individual members with different functions (like the workings of the physical body) – I Corinthians 12:13-14
  4. Blessings in the body:
     1. Ephesians 1:23: The “fullness of God!” *(II Peter 1:2-3: Contains all we need for life!)*
     2. Ephesians 2:16: Reconciliation to God.
        1. Colossians 1:18-23: The reconciled ones are those who live “holy and blameless” and “continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast.”
     3. Ephesians 5:23: Salvation is in the body. “He Himself being the Savior of the body.”
  5. The church is the body of Christ; must be a member to be saved *(No other church can)!*

#### ***The Family of God***

* 1. Ephesians 2:19: To forget the church is to say, “I like You, but I want to remain an orphan.”
  2. I Timothy 3:15: God’s “house” identifies His family.
     1. Responsibility: The church is to be “the pillar and support of the truth.”
  3. Romans 8:14-17: God’s children are in His family. Characteristics of His children:
     1. Those led by the Spirit are sons of God.
     2. Children by adoption *(Can call God, “Abba! Father! – Mark 14:36; Galatians 4:6-7).*
     3. Heirs of God; fellow heirs with Christ.
     4. If suffer with Him, will also be glorified with Him.
  4. The family metaphor emphasizes:
     1. The closeness of God and His people.
     2. God’s love and concern for His children.
     3. The honor involved in church membership (Members are children of God).
     4. Ephesians 5:7-13: The responsibility to live as a *child* of God.
  5. Two figures are used to show the means of entrance into God’s family:
     1. I Peter 1:22-23: A new birth. (Baptism: John 3:3-5; I Corinthians 12:13-14; Galatians 3:27)
     2. Ephesians 1:5: *Adopted* by God as His children. *(Romans 8:15-16)*
  6. By obedience to the gospel we are all members of the family of God!

#### ***The Temple of God***

* 1. Ephesians 2:21-22: To forget the church is to say, “I like You, but I want to worship apart from You.”
  2. The description of the church as God’s Temple would impress both Jew and Gentile!
     1. Would impress the Ephesians because Diana’s temple was located in Ephesus. *(Acts 19: Paul upset the silversmiths who made images of her)*
     2. Would impress the Jews of the first century because the temple was the center of their law/worship.
  3. Ephesians 3:10-11: The temple reflects the wisdom of the Designer!
  4. I Peter 2:4-5, 9: Not only is it the Temple of God, its members are holy priests!
     1. Our Job: “offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
  5. The description of the church as the Temple of God gives a beautiful portrait of what church members are to be on the outside as well as the inside!
     1. I Corinthians 3:16-17: As the Temple was holy, so are we to be!
     2. I Corinthians 6:19-20: Being the Temple of God we are to glorify God in our bodies.
     3. The temple of God was beautiful inside and out. Saints are to be beautiful inside and out!
     4. *Can we do that in any practice that is ungodly or unholy?*
  6. The church is the Temple of God, therefore it must glorify God!

#### ***The Kingdom of Christ & God***

* 1. Ephesians 5:5: To forget the church is to say, “I like You, but I don’t want to be a citizen with You.”
  2. Matthew 16:18-19: The Lord identified the church as His kingdom!
     1. Mark 9:1: He predicted the coming of His church (kingdom) in power.
     2. Not a physical kingdom, but a spiritual one! *(John 18:36; Ephesians 2:19)*
  3. Colossians 1:13-14: Saints at Colossae had been translated “into the kingdom of God’s Son.”
     1. The kingdom was in place and is now open for all! *(Ephesians 2; 3:4-7)*
     2. Ephesians 2:19: Saints are citizens in the kingdom of God!
  4. There are three essentials for a kingdom:
     1. A king — Christ is the king. *(Matthew 27:11; John 18:37; I Timothy 6:15)*
     2. A law – His will, the New Testament is the law of the kingdom of Christ. *(II Peter 1:2-3; II John 9)*
     3. Subjects – The church is made up of people who recognize the Lordship of Christ. *(Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-24; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:18)*
  5. We are citizens of His eternal kingdom! *(Daniel 2:44; Philippians 3:20)*

#### ***The Bride of Christ***

* 1. *Ephesians 5:23-32:* To forget the church is to say, “I like You, but I hate Your wife.”
  2. Ephesians 5:22-23: The Lord is the Head and the Savior of the body!
  3. Ephesians 5:22, 24: But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. *(Understand through the marriage relationship – 5:32)*
  4. Ephesians 5:25: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her…
     1. Mark 10:6-9: From the beginning of creation husbands and wives become “one flesh.”
     2. You cannot separate Jesus from His bride, the church!
     3. “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mark 10:9; Ephesians 5:32)
  5. Ephesians 5:26-27: Christ died that the church might exist *(Bought it – Acts 20:28)*
     1. 5:28: So husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies.
     2. To love them as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.
  6. *James 4:4:* Unfaithfulness to Christ is spiritual adultery.
     1. This includes adding to or taking away from His word *(Revelation 22:18-19)!*
  7. *John 14:2-3:* One day the Groom will come for His bride! (Revelation 19:7-9)
  8. The church will one day be reunited with her Savior; must be found holy and blameless!

## Conclusion

1. *Ephesians 3:5-6:* The church breaks cultural & ethnic barriers to welcome ***all*** in!
2. *Ephesians 5:25:* The church was important enough to Jesus that He died for it.
3. God used word-pictures to paint a portrait of the church for man to see its importance:
   1. Body of Christ
   2. Household of God
   3. Temple of God
   4. Kingdom of Christ & God
   5. Bride of Christ
4. ***The church is important to God and to man!***
5. ***One cannot follow Jesus and forget the church – they are inseparable!***
6. It is important and essential to salvation to be a member of the church Jesus built and died to save!
7. If you are not a Christian, you are outside the family of God, and no heir to promise, but to wrath and condemnation! Repent and be baptized!
8. If a Christian in error, remember the honor you have been given as a member of God’s family and a citizen of His kingdom! Repent & be renewed!
9. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

Sources:

* Response to April, 2012 *Newsweek* article, “Christianity In Crisis” by Andrew Sullivan, 04//02/12
* [**https://www.newsweek.com/andrew-sullivan-christianity-crisis-64025**](https://www.newsweek.com/andrew-sullivan-christianity-crisis-64025)