**What is the Church?**

**February 1-2, 2017**

*When word church is used in the New Testament it is most nearly always translated from the Greek word Ekklesia.*

*Ekklesia: an assembly, congregation, church; the Church, the whole body of Christian believers. – Strongs Concordance*

*Ekkletoi- The called people, they constituted the Ekklesia.*

*Ekklesia: /ek, "out from and to" and 2564 /kaléō, "to call") – properly, people called out from the world and to God, the outcome being the Church (the mystical body of Christ) – i.e. the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls out from the world and into His eternal kingdom. – Helps Ministries.*

*When asking What is the Church, we need to be clear about what specifically we are asking about. There is The Church, which is Christ’s body, and there is the church (a local, specific entity)- a gathering of believers. Or put another way, when you or someone speaks about the church, are they speaking of Christ’s body, Christians worldwide, or their local church?*

How do you describe the church? Can you define it in your own way? Have you heard the church described as “to call out” or as “an assembly”? What do you think it means? Does this change at all how you view the church?

Read – scriptures below, pertain to Christ being the head of the body, the church.

Ephesians 1:22-23 – Christ is the head of the church, and we are his body

Colossians 1:18 – Christ is the head, we are the body

Matthew 16: 13-18 – Christ built his church on the fact that He is the Messiah- He built it on Himself.

Ephesians 5:22-33 discusses the church as Christ’s bride. Due to time, we will skip this passage in study but it is extremely helpful in understanding how the church relates to Christ.

What does this mean that Christ is the head of the body? How do we live out the part of being the body? How do you understand the Matthew 16 passage which discusses the Rock that Christ built his church? How can this change, or help you, in knowing that being part of the church is also being part of Christ’s body?

Read: 1 Corinthians 12: 20-31 – We are members of 1 body with many roles.

What do you see as your role in the church? Do you think this passage is only talking about individual people? Does this you give you greater or less confidence in being part of the church?

What is the church supposed to do? *There is much The Church is supposed to do, which can all be summed in the two greatest commands. We will look at just a few specific passages.*

Read the passages below *(note there are 9, you don’t need to read them all, use the time wisely).*
Partake in the Lord’s Supper: 1 Corinthians 11: 17-26

Make Disciples and Baptize: Matthew 28: 18-20

Church is supposed to minister to its members and to the world - Colossians 3:16-17

Church should minister to is members through nurturing and building up - Ephesians 4:12-16

Holy Spirit can empower and should lead: John 14:25-26

Minister to poor and oppressed (Galatians 2:10, James 1:27). Physically-, 1 John 3:16-17. Do good to all: Galatians 6:10

What commands stood out to you from those passages? How have you seen churches live out some of these commandments well? Have you seen places where the church has struggled in some of these commands? Where does the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit fall into all of this?

Conclusion

What stood out to you from this study, were there any views you had coming in that are now changed? How do you see your role in the church, and how does the church fit into your own life? Do you have a greater (or less) affection for the church? How can you better serve the church after reading the discussed passages?

**Scripture References (ESV) – What is the Church**

Ephesians 1:22-23

22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Colossians 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Matthew 16: 13-18

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say 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 replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered 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 tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock[b] I will build my church, and the gates of hell[c] shall not prevail against it.

1 Corinthians 12: 20-31

20 As it is, there are many parts,[e] yet one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 11:17-26

17 But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. 18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part,[e] 19 for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. 20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for[f] you. Do this in remembrance of me.”[g] 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Colossians 3:16-17

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Ephesians 4:12-16

to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,[e] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

John 14- 25-26

25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Galatians 2:9-10

and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

James 1:27

27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

1 John 3:16-17

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Galatians 6:10

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.