

## The CHURCH – Part 2 29-1-12

**TOGETHER (everyone in the church)** we want to discover what the church should be like and then aim to be that church

- I really want this to be a discovery *everyone* in the church is making over the next six months to a year
- May *we* end up being convinced by God's Word, as a result of our own study and discussion and reflection, what the church should be like

**SOAP** – At present it is appropriate that ACTS is our reading.

### JESUS – ON THE CHURCH

**Matt 16:18** "I will build my church..."

WHO will build it? He will do it

- A work of the Spirit
- Not a work of man - which will eventually will fall – like Babel

Are we supposed to do it how *WE* think or *OTHERS* think it should be done and pray for His blessing?

Should we discover how *HE* wants to do it and do it *HIS* way and believe that *HIS* way will be blessed?

**Matt 16:18** "...and gates of hell will not prevail against it."

- Hell=hades (the grave)

**Rev 1:18** I am He that lives and was dead and behold I am alive forever more and I hold the keys of death and hell (the grave)

## **THE CLEAR MESSAGE**

The foundational or central message of the early church:

- Jesus is Christ - the Lord
- We have crucified the Christ – but it was part of God’s plan – essential
- HE IS RISEN - death and the grave have been defeated
  - No longer need fear death if our faith is in Christ
  - If we place our faith in Him we will also rise.

## **ESSENTIAL PERSON IN CHURCH**

The church must be filled with the Holy Spirit and have His power to fulfil

- God's purposes on earth
- For us to be His witnesses on earth
- To enable us to rise from the dead

## **Luke 24:46–49**

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry (WAIT) in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

## **Acts 1:8**

<sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Holy Spirit to essential to lead, guide, teach, reveal, empower the church to be a witness

**WAIT**- don't do thing without Him

## **The Birth of the Church**

- Clearly supernatural
- The Holy Spirit the central and essential power
- Christ centred (not self-centred)
- Reveals a **dynamic living body of people** – powerful movement that could not be stopped

## **Whatever happened to the church?**

How did it end up like it is?

- Disjointed, divided
- So man-centred, man-led, man glorifying
- So powerless

## **The spirit of anti-Christ**

Man *instead* of the ANOINTING AND WORK of the Spirit

- Kingdom of darkness spirit

## **Blinded – in Need of Revelation**

Because we have been brought up to think of the church a certain way it can be difficult to see it differently

- NB: the church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22 “...blind, naked, poor)
- Thought it was OK

**Man decided he could build the church without God**

- Buildings - “To God’s Glory”
- Many years and much money to build

## **HISTORY**

**Greek Word** - ecclesia (an assembly or gathering of people)

- It was a movement - the church was everywhere - wherever its members were
- It became a LOCATION as early as 300AD
- German word - kirche - the Lord's house = Kirk
- Throw back to OT temple
- Literal stones, bricks and mortar took the place of "Living stones"

Those who controlled or owned the "church building" controlled the people.

- A special, separated hierarchical clergy were in power and had control of Bible, the buildings and the people
- Completely contrary to Scripture where all are ministers and some of them are called and gifted to lead; but never “lord it over others” but to serve them
- Ignored the Biblical approach to leadership

**Wrong Understanding of Church Leads to Wrong Concepts about Other Things!**

**Why do people act differently "in church"?**

- speak differently
- dress differently
- behave differently

Supposed to act differently because we "are" the church at all times

- **Hypocrisy** when we “put on an act” to make others think we are different than we really are
- Acting like “angels” when we come together
- Acting like “demons” away from the church

People "leave" the church

- But often they are speaking of leaving a certain location and its activities that take place on Sunday

People say, "I no longer go to church"

When we meet with other "living stones" we are the church

- Sometimes a rebellious, un-submitted part of the church

**One Church/Body in the City** (with many households where people gathered)

In the early church when people were put out of the church it often meant that they were sometimes excluded from fellowship (eating or drinking) with any other church members.

- They needed to know what it was like without fellowship - out in the devil's territory again.
- Always with the aim of repentance and restoration (love)

**Throughout the Body of Christ** – Many continue on with their un-repentant sin and with the support and friendship of many members of the church - frustrating God's desire to bring repentance and freedom from sin that corrupts them and others.

- They are welcomed in to another part of the church without any reference to the church's leaders.
- WHY?

- Church growth (numbers)
- Fear of being thought of as unloving

**Great Difference** – between those who are bound by sin and are struggling and want to be free; and those who are bound by sin and are unwilling to receive help to be free

**We have been so seduced by "tolerance"** (not grace or love) that we no longer do this.

- There is little accountability, thus little character growth and transformation

**Is there any place for correction or disagreement in the church?**

If there is need of correction or the leadership disagrees with a decision people often leave – and DON'T GROW

I want to commend those in this fellowship who have had been willing to be corrected or held an opinion different to ours and still remain.

**There is a correct way to deal with conflict, differences and sin in the church**

- Face to face
- Scriptural - “according to God’s word”
- Humility – on both sides
- Love
- Repentance and forgiveness