

One Body

We continue in our discussion of some of the doctrines that have been established. Things that are immutable, are absolute, not open for discussion. We have been using Eph 4:4-6 as our text in this discussion...

Eph 4:4-6

1

4 There is one body and **one Spirit**, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
5 **one Lord, one faith, one baptism,** 6 **one God and Father of all** who is over all and through all and in all.

2, 3, 4 We saw how that there is only one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We looked at how it is through the death, burial, and resurrection of the one Lord, Jesus the Christ, that God implemented His plan to bring about the Salvation of all men who choose to be faithful and obedient to Him. And we saw that God sent His Spirit to bring man all knowledge and power and revealed all things through the inspired Word.

We have been building a foundation throughout these lessons, a foundation upon which the very core of man's faith rests.

Heb 11:6

5

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

You cannot please God if you don't believe that He is and will reward those who seek Him. We looked at the statement made by Christ in...

Matt 28:18-19

6

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Jesus after affirming that all authority is His, sends His disciple out to convert all nations and tells them to...

7

"Baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit"

Baptize them in the name of God. Because God is ONE. We saw how that the Spirit of God is the agent by which God revealed His will and power to man.

John 16:13

8

13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Now, when that is combined with what is seen in...

Acts 1:8

9

8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you

The Holy Spirit brought the power of God and the Word of God to man through the inspired Apostles, prophets, and teachers. We can see the complete picture of God revealed to us, the over-

all purpose of God to save man because He loved His creation so much. The manifestation of that love to man in Jesus Christ, who says of Himself...

John 14:9 10

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

And the revealing of the power of God and that love, and all it encompasses, through the inspired Word...

2 Tim 3:16-17 11

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17** so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has established His doctrine so that man could know what is required of him in this process of Salvation. He has provided the way through His sacrifice that the penalty of sin, each of our sin, might be paid through the shedding of His blood, and He has revealed that way in the doctrine of His Word. And praise be to God that He loves us.

Therein is the foundation that is at the very core of man's faith. There is a purpose that our creator has for man, Christ is the manifestation of that purpose to man, and the Holy Spirit reveals that purpose in all its power and glory to man. Remember what we saw in...

Heb 11:6 12

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

When Jesus was talking with the disciples and had asked them who men thought that He was, they told Him John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He then asked them who they thought He was...

Matt 16:16 13

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

Peter puts into words the facts of what we have established; Jesus is God. Now note the response that Christ gives him after he has stated this fact...

Matt 16:18 14

18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Then our Lord goes on to tell Peter in His very next statement...

Matt 16:19 15

19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven;

What is the connection? Well, it seems pretty obvious, the Church and the kingdom of heaven are one and the same thing. Any effort to argue differently flies in the face of the logical connection that Jesus Himself makes. His Church is the kingdom of promise that Daniel prophesied about in Daniel 2. His Church is the kingdom that the hands of God would carve out and that would overcome the authorities of this world and grow into an everlasting kingdom. That is the foundation of the discussion that we want to look at this morning, the doctrine of the

According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Dictionary, the term here, Church, comes from the Greek...

Ekklesia (ek-klay-see'-ah); NT:1577

From a compound of NT:1537 and a derivative of NT:2564; a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both):

In the New Testament, this idea of a church is understood to be the whole number of converted or baptized persons, specifically, beginning at Pentecost in Acts 2 to the point when Christ comes to gather His faithful to their home in heaven.

1 Cor 15:23-24

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, **24** then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

The called out, the ecclesia, are those that we spoke about in our last lesson, those who have responded to the Faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ in faithful obedience and have been added to the Church.

Acts 2:46-47

46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The ecclesia, the Church, is used in this context primarily in the New Testament, but it is also used of other gatherings. The word ecclesia is used of any assembly, and the word in the Greek language implies nothing more; for example,

Acts 19:39

39 "But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly.

This lawful assembly, is the ecclesia. Israel is spoken of as the ecclesia in...

Acts 7:38

38 "This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai,

Here the word is translated as congregation. So the use of the word is not exclusive to the faithful called out of the Gospel. How the term is to be understood is defined by the context of the discussion. The real point is this; nowhere in the scriptures, absolutely nowhere, can we read about there being any other ecclesia, called out group of faithful followers that are not defined as such by their faithful obedience to the Word, the Gospel, that which is The Faith. We saw in Acts 2 that the Church is made up of those who respond in faith and obedience to the Gospel and are baptized, being saved from their sin. These are those that we saw in Acts 2:47 that the Lord adds to His Church, these are the called out, the ecclesia. Again please not the exclusiveness of that group, and

please don't take that statement out of context. In no way do I mean that that group excludes anyone, the group does not. It is the individual that excludes themselves. Think of it like this; if a memo were to out telling everyone that next Sunday they were to wear black, that qualifies as a calling out. Now if all of us but me wear black, it is not the group that has excluded me, I have by my choice to not heed the memo. That is the dynamic of the scriptures. God calls out to all men, through the Gospel, to come to Him in faith and obedience. Everyone who chooses to respond to that call in Faith become a part of that exclusive group, the ecclesia, Anyone who chooses not to, excludes themselves from it. The group is exclusive in that it only includes those who have responded to the Gospel in faith.

According to the New Testament definition, the church is the Body of Christ, over which He is the head...

Eph 1:22-23

22

22 And He put all things in subjection 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.

This Body is described as being a holy temple for the habitation of God through the Spirit

Eph 2:19-22

23

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, **20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, **21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, **22** in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

It is illustrated as being one flesh with Him...

Eph 5:29-30

24

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, **30** because we are members of His body.

The Church is the kingdom of promise, it is the Body of Christ, it is the bride of Christ that will be presented to God in its purity and glory. The Church is that exclusive group of all who have been saved in their faith and obedience.

That the true church as the Body of Christ began on the Day of Pentecost is demonstrated in various ways.

25

1) It is founded upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ

Gal 3:23-27

26

23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. **24** Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. **25** But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. **26** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

27

2) There could be no church until it was purchased with Christ's precious blood

Eph 5:25

28

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

29 3) Until He ascended to be head over all things to the church

Eph 1:20-23

30

20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection 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.

The Church is made up of those that have been saved, Acts 2:47, Baptism is what saves man, 1 Pet 3:21. Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but a faithful, obedient, believing good conscience towards God, the Gospel, and His love.

When we look around the world today and see the profligation of so-called religion, it begs the question...

31

Are they all doing what God wants?

If so, how can that be? They all believe and practice different things. Some have musical instruments, some don't take the Lord's supper every week, some pervert the taking of the supper into something the scriptures don't teach, how can so many different beliefs and practices all be right? The point is they can't be.

Remember what we have already seen, it is the faith that sets the parameters which define the Body, the Church...

John 12:47-48

32

47 If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

It is the Word of Christ that defines the Church. It is the Word of Christ that facilitates men being added to that Church through faithful obedience. It is the Word of Christ that will judge man in that day. Christ is that Word.

John 14:5-6

33

5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

There is only One Body and that is the Body of Christ, the New Testament Church that is defined by the doctrines established God in His Word. Any group that does not pattern itself after the proscriptions of God's doctrine is not nor can ever be the true Body of Christ, the Church. That is the goal of the Church here in Oakdale, to be a true Church of Christ in every way that we see described in the New Testament, because...

James 2:10

34

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.