

Paul's Bible Notes

The Church & The Kingdom

Outline

When COVID hit people started to question everything. One of those things was the nature of church. What's the point of church? Is it still relevant? Do we still need to meet in person? And a whole bunch of other questions. Asking these questions isn't a bad thing, as long as we return to scripture in order to find the answers. We need to anchor ourselves and build our theology of church on what scripture says and not on the latest fad or trend.

Let's look at what scripture has to say about the church and also, how the church fits into the Kingdom. Let's look at some statements that start with "The church is..."

Key Points & Scriptures

Matt 16: 13-20

Definition - The church is the assembly or communion of true believers.

- The Greek for church is "ekklesia" which means assembly. so it's clear that when we talk about church, we're talking about a people rather than a place.
- We tend to think of the word as purely used in the new testament however it is also used in the greek version of the old testament. For example:

Deuteronomy 4: 10

- The word "Assemble" is the word "ekklesiazo". So there is a sense in which the assembly of believers also includes true believers from before the time of Christ.

The church is...Invisible

- Looking back to our original scripture we can see that Jesus declaration was linked to the revelation that Peter had.. “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”
- Church membership isn’t about filling in an application form, it’s about a persons response to Jesus question: “Who do YOU say that I am?”. If our response is the same as Peter’s: “You are the Messiah” and we truly mean it. Then we’re born again and admitted into the church.

The church is...Visible

- Every day millions of people world wide gather for public acts of worship. This has always been part of church life
- The Holy Spirit was given when all the believers were meeting together in one place.
- **Acts 2: 1 & 44-46**
- Being a visible church is critical to fulfilling the great commission. We’re supposed to be a light on a hill, blessing our communities and preaching the Gospel. You can’t preach the gospel without some level of visibility.
- However, the visible must be matched with the invisible. A visible church that lacks the invisible revelation is no good to anyone. Thats when you end up with dead religion.

The church is...Local and global

- The word church in the new testament can be applied to a small group of people meeting for worship, or, to the worldwide family of believers throughout the ages.
- Local church = **Romans 16:15**
- Universal church = **Ephesians 5:25**

- We need to be connected to church at a local level but also understand that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves.

The church is...The bride of Christ

- In several places the relationship between Jesus and the church is likened to that of a husband and wife. **Eph 5: 30 32**
- That demonstrates the connection there is between Jesus and the church. Between Jesus and you!
- In the final order of things, the church will live in victory and eternal fellowship with Christ

Revelation 19: 6-8

The church is...Central to God's plan - Ephesians 1: 20-23

- Everything has been placed under his feet for the church
- The church is his body and as such he will look after it, care for it and bless it.

Further 'The church is...'

The church is...a place of worship

The church is...a place of love - **John 13: 34-35**

The church is.... a place of healing

The church is...YOU & ME.

The church is...a place of power

The church is...essential to our spiritual wellbeing

The church is...a place of forgiveness

The church is...a place of vision

The church is...a place of care

The church is...a place of growth

The church is...relevant

The church is...a place of challenge

The church is...called to be outward looking

The church is...called to fulfil the great commission

The church is...a place of equipping

The church is...a place of release

The church is...a family

The church is...a body

The church is...God's building

What about the Kingdom of God?

- The kingdom is the domain or the dominion of the King. The Kingdom exists wherever the King rules.
- So, the church is part of the Kingdom but it isn't the Kingdom. Because God's kingly rule isn't limited to the church. Eventually we will see the Kingdom encompassing everything at the renewal of all things.
- Jesus went about preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, not the good news of the church. He said the kingdom of God is at hand, not the church of God is at hand.
- The church is called to declare the Good News of the Kingdom
- We're members of the church and citizens of the Kingdom
- We're called to participate in the Kingdom not build empires. The Kingdom is about God's rule, empires are about our own advancement.

- We need a Kingdom mindset not just a church mentality. If we have a Kingdom mindset, we'll have room for a church mentality.

Conclusion

Although the word for church means the assembly of God's people, it doesn't mean that the actions and activity of the church are limited to Sunday mornings and house groups during the week. Each of us can be the church in our work place, our school or any where else we find ourselves. We assemble so that we can then go out and share the good news of the Kingdom and be the church.

Life application questions

- 1) Where does my thinking on the church not line up with Scripture?
- 2) How can I contribute further to my local church?
- 3) Do I have a Kingdom mindset or a church mentality?