

The Church as God's Work

Ephesians 2:19-22

Ephesians 2:13-22

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace ...

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Today

- **Richtfest – Celebration of the “aufrichten” or putting up of the building frame.**
- **“Drying in” of the building, so that there is protection from rain, etc.**
- **Symbolic for us of the shelter we find in Christ.**
- **We are more concerned with the foundation than the roof.**

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Four Truths about the Local Church

- **The Local Church Is God's Household**
- **The Local Church Is God's History**
- **The Local Church Is God's Holy Temple**
- **The Local Church Is God's Home on Earth**

1. The Church Is God's Household

- “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19).
- All the parables of Jesus about the church assumed growth.
- The Church is always growing.

Types of Growth

- **Biological Growth**
- **Conversion Growth**
- **Bridging Growth – starting new churches**
- **Ethnic Growth – growing among new ethnic groups**
- **Growth brings in new people.**
- **Growth brings all people into an equal relationship with God and with one another.**

How do you act in someone else's house?

- The values of God should dominate the church.**
- Acceptance, consideration, respect for all**
- Love, compassion, service for others**
- Henry David Thoreau: "I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society."**

2. The Church Is God's History

- **“...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...” (Eph. 2:20)**
- **Apostles: the foundational teachings of the church. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42)**
- **Prophets: The teachings of the Old Testament prophets were laid at the foundation of the church.**

Christ the Cornerstone



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Christ the Cornerstone

- **The chief cornerstone was the most important foundational piece, allowing the walls that ran in different directions to stand. If there is any question about Jesus Christ, the church falls apart.**
- **Cultural Differences: Direct vs Indirect; Planning vs Risking; Context vs Content.**
- **Generational Differences**

Whose Story?

- Every church is a divine story, a single narrative of God's faithfulness.
- We must avoid making it "only my story" or "mostly my story" or "mostly one ethnic group's story."
- Every church is God's story.

3. The Church Is God's Holy Temple

- **“...in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord...” (Eph. 2:21)**
- **What was the purpose of the temple?**
- **A witness to Israel: “I ... will not abandon my people” (1 Kings 6:13)**
- **A witness to the world: “So that all the peoples of the earth will know that the LORD is God” (1 Kings 8:60).**

What is the purpose of the church?

- **“To know Christ and to make Him known”**
- **“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3)**
- **“If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit” (John 15:5):**
- **“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...teaching them to obey ...” (Matt. 28:19-20)**

4. The Church is God's Home on Earth

- “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).**
- They were not just added on, but were part of the building.**
- Do we recognize that we are God's home?**

This Building and Your Home

- **Do not think of the church building as an extension of your living room. Think, instead, of your living room as an extension of the church.**
- **The church building is not built for the community to use in whatever way they wish. It is sanctified, set apart for the purposes of God to impact the community.**