

Rediscovering God's Church

Message No:5 and Picture # 3

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Since 1st January, 2017 I have been talking about and looking into rediscovering God's Church in the present age. In our journey, we talked about God's Vision for the church and His concern for the restoration of Israel and the Church- the future bride of His beloved Son. Obviously, God's intension is to provide for His Son a perfect companion for all eternity. As such, Church is the object of God's affection and must have a direct, personal relationship with God. As redeemed people group- the church must become His own possession (Ex 19:3-5). For all this to happen, a process of transformation is required. To understand how the process of transformation works, we looked at the call of Jesus to His first disciples in Matthew 4:18-20. We learned that the 1st step in God's transforming-process within us is **total commitment** to God. Total commitment to God leads us to think in a higher way. When our minds become renewed, our values change and our priorities are adjusted, modified, reshaped and altered. Things take a different meaning. We are able to discern and approve God's will. We can find out what He really wants and what His wonderful plan for us is. The passage in Jeremiah 29:11-13 opens up for us and God unveils and uncovers the secrets to us about our lives. But it only happens to those, who are totally committed to God.

In the month of March and April, we looked at two pictures of the Church by digging into the Scriptures. The **first picture** is titled as THE ASSEMBLY. The Greek word translated "Church" in Eph 1:22 is ECCLESIA—*It referred to a group of people that is formed by being called out from a larger group of people. It is also a group called out for a special purpose.* In the secular Greek, the word Ecclesia had a very specific meaning. It meant a "Governmental Assembly". It is used in this way three times in the 19th chapter of Acts. This meaning has been eradicated/blotted out in many modern translations but the governmental assembly is the first picture of God's people in the mirror of God's Word.

The **second picture** of the church we looked at is that of His body—the body of Christ. We referred to passages like Romans 12:4-5, 1-Cor 12:12-13, Eph 4:16 and Col 2:19. The New Testament presents several pictures of believers as the body of Christ. In this life, we relate to the world through our bodies. Similarly, Christ relates to the world through us-His body. We are the instruments by which He works out His plans and redemptive purposes in the world. This body is not a group of separated, isolated individuals. As believers, we belong to one another. Apostle Paul amplified this picture in his first letter to the Corinthians church in chapter 12:12-13. It reads ***"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—we were all given the one Spirit to drink"***. The word emphasized in the above passage is **one**. The unity in the body of Christ.

So, according to the first two pictures, God intends His people to become: The assembly of God and the body of Christ. We have a serious role to play in the governmental assembly that exercises spiritual judgment & authority on this earth and that we flow together in unity—joined to our brothers and sisters as members of the same body. One function is governmental, the other is relational.

The third picture is the **workmanship**.

Ephesians 2:10 reads “ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them “.

The Greek word translated “workmanship” is *poiema*. The Latin version is *poema*, from where we get the English word poem. The Jerusalem Bible uses the phrase “work of art”. In other words, this word is taken from the field of Art & Creativity.

Therefore the best way we can translate is “we are God’s creative masterpiece”, which properly conveys Paul’s meaning.

When we ponder all that God has created in the universe, it is breath-taking and humbling that God would choose people like us, to be the material for His creative masterpiece. Think for a moment of what is involved in a creative work of art. For example, consider the art of sculpture (the art of making 3-dimensional figures and shapes, by carving stones or wood or casting metal). There are many examples of beautiful sculptures in Greek & Roman antiquity (great age).

When the right tools are used with great skills and patience, the practical outworking or the finished outcome, follows/shows the inner vision. The sculptor(an artist) creatively imagines/envisions something to be made, created and revealed. He arms himself with a chisel and his inner mental vision of what he wants to produce and begins to chip-away the stone or wood. Gradually, the result emerges—which is the expression of the artist’s inner vision.

Also consider the art of painting. The essence of painting includes the blending of form & color in the right proportions to produce a scene or an object. The painter’s blending of the shapes, colors and other things, help us to see aspects, we may otherwise don’t notice. SO it is with us as individuals and collectively as the church. God works on us, blending and shaping and positioning us and then He unveils us to the world—which is then able to see something in us it did not see before.

Likewise, another example of creative work is poetry. In essence, poetry is artistry with words. It is the blending together of words to evoke a picture, make an impression or create an impact. Each word must be the precise word set in just the right place and perfectly related to the words around it.

In the same way God wants to make us collectively into a poem, with each one of us being **carefully selected and placed** in the right position in relation to all the others around us.

We are God’s poem, God’s painting and God’s sculpture—His creative MASTERPIECE, so that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church (Eph 3:10). Paul’s statement is astonishing. It is amazing, awesome & inspiring to know and understand that God chose us, His redeemed people—to demonstrate His manifold wisdom to the entire universe in time/present age and eternity and to the unseen heavenly realms !

Can you imagine where did God go for the material to make this greatest creative masterpiece—His Church? He went to the scrap heap! To the broken pieces of lives that had been marred by sin. To the pile of broken families, sick bodies and corrupted minds { 1-Peter 2:9 being no people and in darkness }

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul told us that we were created to do good works that God prepared in advance for us to do. This verse tells us that we are not merely to be ornamental; we are to be useful, we are to fulfill a function. We are not just to stand around and appear to be spiritual. God has a good work for each believer to accomplish ! Our assignment is to find those good works and walk in them. We can

find our place in that creative masterpiece, when we yield to God and His Son Jesus Christ. With renewed mind, we discern God's will for us and we discover something ready for us to do that we might never have dreamed (my example).

The essential requirements to become that masterpiece are **Yieldedness** and **Merge-ability**. If we are a word in a poem, we just take our place. If we are a piece of clay in the potter's hand, we just let Him mold us. If we are a block of marble, we just let Him chip away at us. **THE KEY IS YIELDEDNESS**. As we willingly ourselves fully into His hands, He will shape us into His marvelous work.(Isaiah 64:8)

Once we put ourselves in God's hands, it is up to Him to make of us He wants.

Merge-ability is the ability to merge with others. It entails blending and cohesiveness. What we individually is not the most important thing; it is what we become **together** is the final goal. For that, we must demonstrate a willingness to lose our individual identities to attain a greater whole.

Let's continue to seek God's help in the following manner.

1. Attend church regularly(Heb 10:25)
2. Observe the Lord's Supper (1-cor 11:26)
3. Watch and Pray (Mark 13:32-37)
4. Live pure and holy lives (Col 3:4-5; 1-John 3:2-3)
5. Love one another (1-Thess3:12-13)
6. Be careful in judgment of each other (1-Thess3:12-13)
7. Not to be engrossed in the cares of this world (Luke 21:34)
8. Obey the Word of God (Rev 22:12)
9. Not to be ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 9:26)
10. Preach the Word on the basis of Christ's coming to judge (2-Tim4:1-2)
11. Make every effort to communicate the gospel to many people (Matt 24:14)
12. Know that any thing we do for the Lord does not go in-vain(1-Cor 15:58)
13. Not to give up hope & faith, while going through suffering/tough times(Rev 3:10-11)

May the good Lord help us to know our purpose on earth and make us His masterpiece in Christ Jesus.....Amen