

# Rediscovering God's Church

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On the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, as lead by the Holy Spirit, I started the series on the subject of **rediscovering God's Church** for the spiritual uplift of the congregation. We must never forget that one of the grandest and greatest themes of the Scripture is the Church—the object of God's affection, the future bride of His beloved Son. It is the intension of God as Father to provide for His Son a perfect companion for all eternity. Naturally in order for God to make us into the kind of people He intends us to become, there must be a process of transformation involved. When God first redeems us and we accept Jesus as our Lord & Savior—it is only the beginning of the journey of transformation towards all that we ought to be in God's sight. Down the track of this transforming process, we need quite a few things to know/learn/understand and act. The 1<sup>st</sup> step is the total commitment to God. Then this commitment to God leads us to think in a higher way. When our minds become renewed—our values are changed, our priorities are adjusted, reshaped and altered. Things take on a different meaning. This is something God does **only** for the committed. Why? Because we are taking steps to become His own possession, among all the people on earth(Ex 19:3-5). We have started having a direct, personal relationship with God and that is exactly what God wants, this is what His purpose is in redeeming people to Himself

So, in obedience to God, I started the series and by the grace of God, we looked at seven pictures of the true church in the letter to the Ephesians church by Apostle Paul. What an amazing revelation the Apostle Paul had of the church!

Eph3:10 tells us that CHURCH is the demonstration of God's manifold or many sided wisdom. Each of the 7 Aspects(pictures) that we have been studying, present a different aspect of God's wisdom. We must grow into a complete understanding and practice of all these aspects (pictures). Let's review the Seven Pictures/aspects of the church and their references from Ephesians:

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|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| 1. Eph 1:22    | The assembly    | 2. Eph 1:23    | The body   |
| 3. Eph 2:10    | The workmanship | 4. Eph 2:18-19 | The family |
| 5. Eph 2:20-22 | The temple      | 6. Eph 5:25-32 | The bride  |
| 7. Eph 6:10-13 | The army        |                |            |

Now let's go through each picture and underline two main lessons that we ought to learn from each—the essential, distinctive nature of the picture and the particular responsibility that is placed on us(you &me) as we represent each picture individually and corporately.

## **1. The Assembly**

The *essential feature* is being God's governmental authority. The church is God's representative body on earth, through which, by spiritual power and authority, He rules the nations and bring His purposes to pass.

*What is required of us?* On a personal level, respect for order. We are not fit to govern if we do not have respect for due order. We cannot govern the universe until we govern ourselves. This means order in our conduct and in our relationship to one another.(this is an area where lot of work is required by the church members).

Corporately, we must recognize the gifting each person holds in the assembly: We all have gifts—some can teach & preach, others can pray, sing, clap and support by their

presence. There may be others with special gifts of serving, hospitality, giving etc. We have to recognize that gift/skill with which each person functions in the assembly.

## **2. The Body**

The *essential feature* is being the agent of Christ's will. The function of the body is to do the will of the One for whom the body was prepared. As the body of Christ, our function is to do the will of Christ. He is the Head and we are the parts of the body to carry out His redemptive purposes in the earth. He is not going to preach the gospel anymore, we are going to preach the gospel. We are His hands and feet.

*What is required of us?* Individually, we have to recognize and appreciate our differences and corporately, we must acknowledge our interdependence as parts of His body. We are to be different & diverse **but** interdependent. The body becomes effective only when we recognize this truth.

## **3. The Workmanship**

The *essential feature* is that we are to be the revelation of God's creative genius in the universe! We are His creative masterpiece. To the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, the CHURCH is set as a picture of the manifold(many sided) wisdom of God. It represents God's creative genius at its highest point.

*What is required of us?* For each of us as individuals, this requires yieldedness or pliability. Corporately, it requires "merge-ability". If we are a word in a poem, we must be the right word in the right place and be rightly related to all the other words. We must fit in with God's design, allowing Him to make us and place us where He wants.

## **4. The Family**

The *essential feature* is that God the Father is the life-source of all of us. And that we are together, not in an institution or an organization **but** in a family. Jesus is our Elder brother and we are all members of the same family—showing the nature of God as Father.

*What is required of us?* Individually, it requires obedience to the commands of our Father. Jesus learned obedience through suffering and is the "pattern Son" for all Christians. Corporately, we are commanded to love one another. Jesus call us His brothers because God calls us His Sons; and if God calls our fellow believers His Sons, we have to call them our brothers. This is not always easy but remember the saying—you can choose your friends, but you cannot choose your family. As a family, we have to accept one another. Romans 15:7 says "Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God"(NASB). How can glorify God apart from being a true spiritual family?

## **5. The Temple**

The *essential feature* is being a dwelling place for God. In 2-Cor 6:16, Paul said "We are the temple of the living God" Rather than Moses' tabernacle or Solomon's temple, we have become God's dwelling place—both collectively, as a body of believers and individually. Each of us individually is a "living stone" in a living temple.

*What is required of us?* As living stones, we are to be shaped and fitted, submitting to the discipline of God and to the ministries that God has placed in the church. When we have allowed ourselves to be chiseled and hammered into shape, then, corporately, we must be willing to take our places in the temple where we belong. With one stone on either side, two stones beneath us and in most cases, two stones above us too!

This is required if we are going to be part of the temple.

## 6. The Bride

The *essential feature* is to show the glory of Christ. Human history begins and ends with a marriage. Jesus demonstrated His unreserved commitment to us by totally giving of Himself. The church is to be the bride of Christ, to whom He is going to be united eternally at the marriage supper of the Lamb. As Jesus gave Himself without reservation to the church, now He asks the church to give herself without reservation to Him.

*What is required of us?* Individually, as the bride, each of us must make careful preparation to put our wedding garments in order. “The righteous acts of the saints” (Rev 19:8) are the fine linen that we are going to appear in. Question arises—Do we want to have an incomplete wedding gown at the marriage supper? Corporately, we should exhort one another by example./ This is part of our responsibility to “hold fast” and to encourage one another to love & good works,

## 7. The Army

The *essential feature* is being a demonstration of God’s invincible power to manifest His victory! We are pitted in relentless warfare against the spiritual Kingdom of Satan and equipped with spiritual weapons that enable us to cast down Satan’s strongholds in the main battleground—the mind. We liberate the enemy’s captives and win this world for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*What is required of us?* First on the personal/individual level, military discipline is required. God is waiting for us to rule ourselves, particularly in our conduct and relationships. We can ask ourselves—how is it with me today? What is the state of my conduct, my family situation, financial situation and the state of my mind?

Corporately, we are to be loyal to one another, totally committed to one another. As soldiers in the battle, we are required to be ready to defend our fellow soldiers—regardless of the danger.

## CONCLUSION

All these applications in the seven pictures may seem overwhelming & burdensome, hard and impossible—just remember the key. God’s Word is a mirror that not only reveals our inward spiritual condition but also helps us to see as God sees us. What we should be and what we will be. So keep looking into the mirror and keep thinking of yourselves as the NEW CREATION in Christ. Let old things to pass away with the end of this year and let the new things be the part of your life in 2018.

Remember God’s final objective is not just redeemed people: His goal is the special people, chosen people, people belonging to Royal Priesthood & Holy Nation, People exclusively belonging to GOD & declaring praises of HIM who called you and me out of darkness into HIS wonderful light.

As we partake in the Holy Communion, let us seek His help and strength to have a newness of life now and in times to come.....Amen.