

View

A Publication of the Folsom Point church of Christ, 900 E. Natoma, Folsom, CA

September 16, 2007

Is the Church Important?

Do we really have to belong to a church?

Imagine this conversation:

“I love God and honor Jesus...”

“Oh, great, so what church do you attend?”

“I don’t belong to any church. I serve God in my own way.”

Where would someone get that idea? I know they didn’t get it from the Bible because the teaching in the Bible is as lucid as can be: the church is an integral part of God’s plan. In Eph. 3:10, Paul says that in the church the “manifold wisdom of God” is made known. In the same chapter he writes that we glorify God in the church (3:21) and in chapter 4 he makes the point that God has given gifts to men for the express purpose of equipping the saints for ministry and for building up the body of Christ (4:10-12). We know the body is the church from Eph. 1:22-23.

In Eph. 2:19-20, he says we are members of the household of God (which is the church of the living God, according to I Tim. 3:15). This “household” has been built on

the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone. Sounds pretty significant to me.

Moreover, it is hard to see how one could serve God without membership

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in a local body. We are commanded to sing together (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and we are told to love one another in deed, not just in word (I Jn. 3:18). There are too many examples to cite in the New Testament of Christians meeting together for various reasons. The writer of Hebrews warned his readers about “neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some...” (10:25, ESV). In the next verse, not coincidentally, he outlines the consequences for “deliberate sin” (such as

neglecting to meet).

If we believe the Bible, then we understand the importance of the church. You can’t miss it, even if you don’t read the particular Scriptures that apply to the church. After all, most of the letters in the New Testament were addressed to local churches (e.g., Romans, I and II Corinthians, Philippians) or various churches in a particular region (e.g., Galatians). And Revelation 2-3 are addressed to “the seven churches of Asia.”

If the church is not important, that’s a lot of wasted ink.

More important than our duties in and to the church is that

this body, the church, is Christ’s body. Back to Eph. 1:22-23, Paul affirms that Christ is “head over all things to the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” Did you catch that? The church fills him (Christ) who fills all in all. In some profound way, the church completes Christ. Without that “preface,” one cannot understand the truly mysterious connection of Christ with the church as described in Eph.

5:23-33, where Paul likens the relationship to that of a husband and wife. He goes so far as to apply the "one flesh" relationship to Christ and the church.

There are some people who will ridicule the idea that one must be a member of the church to be pleasing to God. But those who do so only prove one of two things, because they can't make their case through Scripture. All they prove is either that they are not mature enough to understand the connection between Christ and the church, or that they don't truly believe that the Bible is God's word. If the former, then I'll just paraphrase C.S. Lewis who said that those who can't understand books written for grown-ups should not read them.

On the other hand, if they don't believe the church is important because they don't believe the Bible is God's word then, for the life of me, I don't know why they are reading this article in this paper. And why would they believe in God and Christ at all, if they don't believe the Bible?

But for those who hold the word of God dear, the church is precious, purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).

At judgment, I wouldn't want to be in the shoes of someone who treats the blood-bought body of Christ with disdain.

dp

On His Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent

Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent which is death to hide,
 Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest He, returning, chide;
 Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
 I fondly ask: but Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
 Either man's work, or His own gifts; who best
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best; His state
 Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait.

John Milton (1608–74)

Titles for Ed Harrell's Series

October 8-10, 2007

"The Principle of Apostolic Authority"

"Biblical Hermeneutics: Common Sense Interpretation"

"New Testament Congregations: What They Were and Why It Matters"

New Format for View

As you can see, we have changed the format for the View. Your feedback will be appreciated, but it will be "under construction" for a couple of weeks.

David Posey

Rosebud

A young, new preacher was walking with an older, more seasoned preacher in the garden one day. Feeling a bit insecure about what God had for him to do, he was asking the older preacher for some advice.

The older preacher walked up to a rose bush and handed the young preacher a rosebud and told him to open it without tearing any of the petals.

The young preacher looked in disbelief at the older preacher and was trying to figure out what a rosebud could possibly have to do with his wanting to know the will of God for his life and ministry. But, because of his great respect for the older preacher, he proceeded to try and unfold the rosebud while keeping every petal intact. It wasn't long before he realized how impossible this was to do.

Noticing the young preacher's inability to unfold the rosebud without tearing it, the older preacher began to recite the following poem:

*It is only a tiny rosebud
A flower of God's design;
But I cannot unfold the petals
With these clumsy hands of mine.*

*The secret of unfolding flowers
Is not known to such as I.
GOD opens this flower so sweetly,
Then, in my hands, they die.*

*If I cannot unfold a rosebud,
The flower of God's design,
Then how can I have the wisdom
To unfold this life of mine?*

*So, I'll trust in Him for leading
Each moment of my day.
I will look to Him for His guidance
Each step of the Pilgrim's way.*

*The pathway that lies before me
Only my Heavenly Father knows.
I'll trust him to unfold the moments,
Just as He unfolds the rose.*

Quotes

Beginning

"One of the best places to start to turn your life around is by doing whatever appears on your mental 'I should' list."

Jim Rohn

"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start."

Nido Qubein

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Theodore Roosevelt

"All glory comes from daring to begin."

Eugene F. Ware

The church of Christ

Meeting at 900 E. Natoma
PO Box 492
Folsom, CA 95630
916/608-4866

Elders

Forrest Brown: 530/295-9230
Randy Clark: 916/939-5066
Dan Hamilton: 916/933-3569
Rich Ladd: 916/774-9048
David Posey: 530/676-9514

Deacons

Brent Agee: 916/786-0436
Bryan Byrd: 916/351-9320
David Byrd: 916/985-6564
Michael Caisse: 530/672-2902
Jeff Clark: 916/985-8689
John Daniels: 916/985-3090
Jerry Deschler: 916/285-9115
Steve Dickey: 916/983-1071
Steven Doty: 916/933-5004
Eric Fields: 916/817-6495
David Main: 650/292-5417
Terry Raposa: 916/782-1140
Dane Scott: 916/631-7221
Russ Tarrant: 530/672-1748
Steve Thompson: 916/983-4170
Jeff Warshaw: 916/933-9399

Evangelist/Editor

David Posey: 530/676-9514
dpose@pacbell.net

Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30 AM
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.

Private classes arranged at your convenience.

For more information, visit our web site at:

www.folsomchurch.com