

The Church

Lesson 1
What Is The Church?

The Church

1. What Is The Church?
2. Nature of The Universal Church
3. Organization and Work of The Universal Church
4. The Only Source of Divine Authority Today
5. Establishing Divine Authority

2

The Church

6. Nature of A Local Church
7. Organization and Work of A Local Church
8. Independence Autonomy and Cooperation of Local Churches
9. Institutionalism and The Social Gospel

3

Introduction

- We might wrongly conclude studying in detail the meaning of the word church is a waste of our time
- But, when we observe many types of organizations claiming to be Jesus' church, teaching and practicing conflicting things, we should conclude there is confusion about the meaning of church
- Many also emphasize following Christ but that His church is of little importance

4

Introduction

- Even among many local churches of Christ who claim to be Jesus' one church, there are teachings and practices about the church, its organization and work, that cannot be confirmed by the New Testament
- Root of all confusion and resulting errors is a misunderstanding of the meaning of Jesus' church

5

Introduction

- Misunderstanding of words lead to wrong thinking, teaching and practices
- Example – Calvin's misunderstanding of God's sovereignty and man's free will led him to promote God must save us against our will and keep us saved so we can never be lost
- Example – believing baptism is sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion has resulted in false modes of baptism

6

Jesus Promised To Build His One Church

Mat 16:13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

Mat 16:14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

Mat 16:15 He *said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

7

Jesus Promised To Build His One Church

Mat 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Mat 16:17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

8

Jesus Promised To Build His One Church

Mat 16:18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Mat 16:19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

9

Jesus Has Built and Is Now Head of His One Church

Col 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Eph 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

10

Jesus Has Built and Is Now Head of His One Church

Eph 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

11

What Does Church Mean?

ekklēsia

Thayer Definition:

1) a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly

1a) an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating

12

What Does Church Mean?

- 1b) the assembly of the Israelites
- 1c) any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance, tumultuously
- 1d) in a Christian sense
- 1d1) an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting

13

What Does Church Mean?

- 1d2) a company of Christian, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs, according to regulations prescribed for the body for order's sake

14

What Does Church Mean?

- 1d3) those who anywhere, in a city, village, constitute such a company and are united into one body
 - 1d4) the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth
 - 1d5) the assembly of faithful Christians already dead and received into heaven
- From Thayer's Greek Definitions

15

What Is Jesus' Church?

Jesus' church is the assembly of people that He saves

When we think of Jesus' church, we must always think of people, not buildings or institutions

Jesus' church is His body of saved individuals

16

Jesus' Church Is The Assembly of People That He Saves

Eph 5:22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Eph 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

17

Jesus' Church Is The Assembly of People That He Saves

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

Eph 5:26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Eph 5:27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

18

How Is Church Used In The New Testament?

- 1 time refers to the nation of Israel
- 3 times refers to secular or worldly assemblies
- 111 times refers to Jesus' church, assembly of people He saves

19

How Is Church Used In The New Testament?

- Refers to the universal church, the assembly of people in the world that Jesus saves both living and dead
- Refers to a local church, an assembly of Christians who agree to worship and work together in a specific location
- Refers to neither the universal or local church but groups saints together in some way to show distributive influence or effect

20

Church = Nation of Israel

ACT 7:38 "This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

21

Church = Worldly Assembly

ACT 19:32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together.

ACT 19:39 "But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly.

ACT 19:41 After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

22

Universal Church

EPH 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

EPH 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Heb 12:23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

23

A Local Church

1CO 1:1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

1CO 1:2 ¶ To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

24

The Church Distributive Not Universal or Local

ACT 8:3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

ACT 9:31 ¶ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

25

Why Not Let Jesus Save You Today and Add You To His One Church?

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Act 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

26

Why Not Let Jesus Save You Today and Add You To His One Church?

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

27

Why Not Let Jesus Save You Today and Add You To His One Church?

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

28

What Is The Church?

1. Jesus promised to build His one church
2. What does church mean?
3. How is church used in the New Testament?

29

What Is Jesus' Church?

Jesus' church is the assembly of people that He saves

When we think of Jesus' church, we must always think of people, not buildings or institutions

Jesus' church is His body of saved individuals

30

Some Figures That Describe Jesus' Church

- The New Testament uses many different figures to show various characteristics of Jesus' church
- Almost always, these figures describe His universal church, one assembly of people that He saves
- Again, as we look at a few of these figures, we must think people when we think church

31

The Church Is Christ's Body

EPH 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

EPH 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

32

The Church Is Christ's Body

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Eph 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

33

The Church Is Christ's Body

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Rom 12:4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

34

The Church Is Christ's Body

Rom 12:6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

Rom 12:7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

35

The Church Is Christ's Body

Rom 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

36

The Church Is God's Family

Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

37

The Church Is God's Family

1Ti 3:14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;

1Ti 3:15 but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

38

The Church Is The Temple of God

Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

Eph 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

39

The Church Is The Temple of God

Eph 2:21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

Eph 2:22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

40

The Church Is The Temple of God

1Pe 2:4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

1Pe 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

41

The Church Is The Kingdom of Christ

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Mat 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

42

The Church Is The Kingdom of Christ

Col 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

Col 1:14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Rev 1:6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father--to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

43

Rejecting Misconceptions About The Church

1. Church is a building
2. Roman Catholic
3. Protestant or denominational
4. Institutional churches of Christ

44

Common Idea The Church Is a Building

- Common for people to falsely identify Jesus' church as a physical building
- This idea is materialistic and has no Scriptural basis
- Jesus' church is a spiritual temple, people in whom God dwells through His Word

45

Jesus' Church Is A Spiritual Temple

1Co 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1Co 3:17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

46

Roman Catholic View Jesus' Church Is A Worldwide Earthly Institution

- The church is a universal organization with a centralized earthly headquarters and an earthly head, the Pope
- The organization is composed of many local churches
- The organization dispenses all truth and blessings on the people through the 7 sacraments
- The Scriptures reveal none of this idea

47

Jesus' Church Has Only One Head Jesus

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

48

Jesus' Church Is Composed of Individuals Not Local Churches

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

49

Elders' Oversight Limited To A Local Church

Act 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

50

Protestant View Jesus' Church Is a Body of Bodies of Local Churches

- Universal church viewed as a body of bodies, differing groups of local churches acting as one teaching and practicing conflicting things
- Examples include Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and so on
- Therefore, the universal church can be divided into many bodies of churches

51

Jesus' Church Is Composed of Individuals Not Local Churches

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

52

All Local Churches Are To Follow Only The Apostles' Teaching

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

53

Jesus' Church Should Not Be Divided Into Bodies of Churches

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1Co 1:11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

54

Jesus' Church Should Not Be Divided Into Bodies of Churches

1Co 1:12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

1Co 1:13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

55

Institutional Churches of Christ View Jesus' Church Is A Working Universal Organization Composed of Local Churches

- Similar to Catholic view
- Universal church is a working organization composed of local churches that must act together as one
- Work of this universal church can be overseen by either sponsoring local churches or created institutions

56

Jesus' Church Is Composed of Individuals Not Local Churches

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

57

Elders' Oversight Limited To A Local Church

Act 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

58

Why Not Let Jesus Save You Today and Add You To His One Church?

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

59

What Is The Church?

1. Jesus promised to build His one church
2. What does church mean?
3. How is church used in the New Testament?
4. Some figures that describe the church
5. Rejecting misconceptions about the church

60