

Sermon Study Guide

Pastor: Dr. Henry Schorr

Date: Feb 27/28'16

THE MAIN THING: The Church matters to Christ; He established it as His Body and He is the Head. Christ chose the Church and His followers to do His work and ministry in the world.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. Tell the group what clubs/associations/groups you belong to. How long have you been involved with them? What is the purpose of the group?
2. As you were growing up, did you/your parents/your family 'belong' to a church? How did you become a member?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. What does it mean to you that the Church is important to Jesus? (Matt 16:18)
2. Review what happens in the spiritual realm when you become a follower of Christ: 1 Cor 12:13, 27; 2 Cor 5:17; 13:5; Eph 2:1, 19
3. What metaphor does Paul use to describe the Church? (1 Cor 12:14-18; Colossians 1:18) Based on this metaphor, what are the expectations of each Christ-follower? Give some examples.
4. Pastor Henry said there are many New Testament instructions given to believers within the Body. Look for ten of these (e.g. Romans 12:9 – 21).
5. What is the difference between the Universal church and the Local church? How are they interconnected? Name some of the New Testament local churches.
6. Pastor Henry referenced Dr. William Gairdner to suggest what it means to be a member of a voluntary grouping: sacrifice, subordination, commitment, privilege. Explore what these mean for church membership.

PURSUE MISSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community as you live out your calling.*

1. Read James 2:14-17. What is God saying to you about your personal ministry? Has God given you a 'holy discontent' in your faith walk? What step(s) can you take this week to respond?
2. How can you encourage others within the Body to recognize and use their gifts and abilities?

To find out more about becoming a member of Centre Street Church, go to <http://www.cschurch.ca/nextstep/membership/>

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 16:18

¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

1 Corinthians 12:13 – 18, 27

¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. . . . ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. . . . ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

2 Corinthians 5:17; 13:5

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! . . . ^{13:5} Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

James 2:14-17

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Sermon Study Summary

"My faith is a private matter between me and God. I see no need to be part of a church" is a view shared by many today. Why should the church matter? Why should I need to be part of a church?

Because the church really matters to Jesus. It is His church; He established it and loves it. (Mt 16:18) The Bible uses the 'human body' as a metaphor for the Church with Christ as the Head. (Col 1:18) When you become a Christ-follower, changes happen in the spiritual realm: Christ comes to live *in you* (1 Cor 13:5) so you become spiritually alive; you come to live *in Christ* becoming one with Him in Spirit. (2 Cor 5:17) In the earthly realm you become part of His BODY—the Church. (1 Cor 12:27) Without Christ we are spiritually dead. (Eph 2:1) Spiritual life is found in Christ and in being connected to His Body.

What is the church? The church is PEOPLE who follow Jesus, not a building. The church, made up of fallible people, can make mistakes and be a poor reflection of Christ's ideals for His church. Yet it is Christ's chosen vehicle to reflect His love and fulfill His mission. As members of Christ's Body, we are also members of Christ's UNIVERSAL church like Christ-followers anywhere in the world. (1 Cor 12:13) We are called to be involved in a LOCAL fellowship of His church, listening to God and faithfully carrying out His assignments, personally and together. Paul wrote to many local churches (Ephesus, Colossae) which as they grew had to organize (Acts 6). God expects us to be part of a local church—our spiritual family. (Eph 2:19) The New Testament gives 50+ instructions which can be obeyed only in a local church: love one another, encourage..., pray for..., admonish..., honour..., forgive..., submit to..... etc.

This has two applications for us:

1. Membership in a local church fellowship really matters.

This is a family you belong to. People may feel disconnected in a large church and blame it on the size. If all you do is attend a worship service and make small talk afterward but have not further interaction with people from your church, you will feel disconnected. The issue is connecting with people at a deeper level, opening up to one another, praying and caring for one another—which will be messy and may make you uncomfortable. Following Christ includes BELONGING as well as BELIEVING. As members of His body, we are to be active members of the local church body.

The concept of 'church membership' is implicit in the New Testament. Paul teaches that we differentiate between those INSIDE the church and those OUTSIDE. (1 Cor 5:9-12) This does not mean it is unloving, unaccepting or discriminatory.

Dr W. Gairdner says society consists of voluntary groupings with steps for membership: a) sacrifice—give up selfish behaviours for the group's sake; b) subordination—submit to the moral authority of the group, its beliefs and rules; c) commitment—vow allegiance to the group's vision, mission and values; d) privilege—after doing that, you get benefits.

This means defining who is WITHIN the local church: an individual makes a public declaration to the local church giving his testimony, being baptized, embracing the core beliefs, values, vision, morals and mission of the local church, committing to serve and give to help accomplish its God-given mission. Church membership means being in relationship with a few others—to know and be known, to serve them and with them, to love and be loved and to spur one another on to love and good deeds. It means committing to submit to the authority of the Bible, to protect the unity of my church, to share the responsibility of my church.

2. Your ministry matters.

People may feel they have nothing to offer. Paul teaches that we all are important in God's kingdom work. (1 Cor 12:14) Jesus created a way for His will to be done on earth—He chose us, His church, to do His work. On the Day of Pentecost the Church was born. Jesus' disciples received NEW LIFE and Jesus received a NEW BODY—the CHURCH. We are His hands, feet, lips and everyone has a specific gifting to fulfill a specific purpose. Every gift is needed or others get cheated. God may give you a 'holy discontent'. You say "I can't stand it anymore and have to do something about this need." Then step out in obedience and faith, do what God called you to do and make a real difference in our world. This is a challenge to have a living, active faith. (Jas 2:14:17)

We are the CHURCH, a community of Christ-followers that is life-transforming in a world that so desperately needs Jesus. We are the CHURCH that makes the invisible Christ VISIBLE and has stood 2000+ years and will never die.