

## INTRODUCTION

1. Discover the church in Scripture & Christian's life. An institution organized, authorized, & given tasks by Jesus. "Church" can become an abstract idea. "Church" requires a 'gathering' of Christians [Mt 18:20] - just any gathering?
2. Bible is written to the *church*. What makes a gathering a "church"?

**1st: The Church Teaches the Bible Biblically**

1. 1T 3:15b-16a *truth confessed* re: person & work of Christ [v16-17].
2. Recipient of gifts - ministers of Word [Eph 4:11]; recognize & receive as ministers of Jesus' rule: monarchy - governs by Scripture. Congregation & leaders accountable to Scripture. Phil 1:1; Heb 13:7
3. Disciples gather & read, proclaim, sing, pray - believe & obey Scripture.

**2nd: The Church Observes Biblically Prescribed Sacraments Biblically**

1. RCC has 7 sacraments. Jesus institutes 2: baptism & LT. Not 'infusing' life/grace, but nurturing the life already given by HS & evidenced in faith in Christ.
2. Sacraments are not for individual Xn apart from Church - A 2:41-42.
  - i. In Acts, conversion, baptism & church membership transpire quickly: *that day* [a period of time - A8:1 time of persecution]
  - ii. *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire* - Alan Kreider, 2016. Pagan context: catechetical instruction, personal mentoring over period of time. 'Ferment' = gradual yeast-like permeation of gospel-defined life into pagan society.

**3rd: The Church Practices Biblical Discipline Biblically**

1. **Formative** - exercises of piety: Tit 2:11-15 - 2T3:16-17 [Hb 5:14; 10:23-25]
2. **Corrective** - a professing Xn is derelict - membs responsible to admonish & retrieve - Mt 18:15-17
3. 1C5:1-5 impenitent sin -> excommunication.
4. 2C2:6-8 Church's responsibility to forgive & restore repentant brother

**4th: The Church Cultivates Biblical Love Biblically**

1. Organization & organism: evidencing new life - Jn 13:34-35 love
  - i. Love fulfills the law [Rm 13:8-10]; love is patient & kind [1C 13:4-7].
  - ii. *even as I have loved you*: self-sac'ly, obed to Father, for eternal benefit.
2. Biblical love gives gospel-forgiveness to repentant sinners - Eph 4:32-5:2

**Applic #1: Relate to the Church as to Christ**

1. Jesus asked Peter *Do you love Me?* Then tend to My sheep. Your relationship to church is an indication of your love for Jesus - Mt 25:40.
2. If f we love Christ, we will love His Bride.

**Applic #2: Relate to the Church as Christ Relates to the Church**

1. *I will build My church* [Mt 16:18] body, Bride - [Eph 5:25-27,29,32]. If Jesus loves His Church & you love Jesus, don't you want to love what Jesus loves?
2. I commend you for your doctrine, observance of sacraments, discipline & continuing to learn to love with gospel-love. 1 Jn 4:10-11.