

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. In light of our churches anniversary next week, I want to address this morning and next Sunday morning two issues pertaining to the church.
2. The first has to do with who is the church for and the second what is the church to do.
3. A few years ago I did something that I had never done before—I attended a church growth conference.
4. It was the first one I ever attended and frankly has been the last.
5. While I was at this conference, I ran into a pastor that I hadn't seen in a while.
6. As we had some time together, he asked me a question that I have never forgotten.
7. He asked, "Who is your target?"
8. Now you have to understand that is a loaded question and it has to do with a movement that has swept through the church in the last ten years.  
My immediate answer to his question was "Everyone."
- 8.
9. But his question did not include everyone only the lost.

10. When I am sharing Christ then, yes, I want to reach the unchurched.
11. But when you address that question as the church, I believe there is a different answer.
12. Here's the question that I asked him, "Who is the church for?"
13. I knew the answer to that question but I was wanting to engage him further in his dialogue.  
As we talked, I left that conversation and that particular
14. conference even more convinced that the church is not for the unchurched or lost or carnal or disobedient, it is for the saved, the regenerate, the redeemed, and the obedient in Jesus Christ.
15. What we do is not understandable by the unchurched.
16. They cannot understand the Bible therefore preaching is not only foolishness but so is the church.
17. In the words of the apostle John, 1 John 3:1 says, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him" (1 John 3:1).  
That is a monumental statement — "the world does not know
18. us, because it did not know Him."

19. Since the world does not know us why then do we cater to what they want in the church?  
Why are we tailoring the church for them?
- 20.
21. Why are we focusing all our energy as a church on the unchurched?
22. Don't misunderstand me. I am for evangelizing the unchurched but what I am talking about here has nothing to do with evangelism or the unchurched. It has to do with the people who make up the church—the redeemed—the saints of God. To borrow John's terms, "The children of God."  
The only One we should be concerned about when it comes to
23.  
the church is God.  
The unchurched do not understand spiritual truth nor can they.
- 24.
25. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that the "natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."
26. The NKJV says he does not "receive the things of the Spirit of God."
27. The word "receive" or "accept" is the Greek word dechomai which means "to receive, accept, welcome, believe" (Friberg) or "take hold of" (LN). It carries the idea of receiving "by

deliberate and ready reception of what is offered.”

28. The unchurched does not receive “the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”
29. It’s on a different level.
30. Since the unchurched are dead in trespasses and sins, they “cannot understand” the “things of the Spirit of God.”  
So then, the only contact that we need to have with the
31. unchurched is not to find out what will get them to church and keep them coming, but to show them that they need to surrender their life to the Lord Jesus Christ.  
The church belongs to Jesus Christ.
32. Colossians 1:18 says “He is also head of the body, the
33. church.”  
And since that is the case, we must understand what He says
34. about His church.
35. John MacArthur, in an article called *The Seeker-Sensitive Movement*, asks “What exactly is the seeker-sensitive movement?” Some of you might be asking the same question. He says, “In a nutshell, it’s the push within churches across the country to make worship services more 'relevant' and therefore

more attractive to the world. It's the driving force behind the marketing ploys and high-tech entertainment gimmicks churches use to promote growth.”

36. John Armstrong, who is the founder and director of Reformation and Revival Ministries in Carol Stream, IL, states that the movement is "fast-paced, light on doctrine, and very heavy on music and drama" (*The Mad Rush to Seeker Sensitive Worship*, Modem Reformation.org).
37. In a book review of *The Purpose Driven Church* written by Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, California, Jim Delany writes:

“In January of 1998, Dr. Dennis Costella attended a "Building a Purpose Driven Church" seminar where Warren taught that the following must occur to transform a traditional church into a dramatic growing church (March-April 1998, *Foundation* magazine): (1) A contemporary-styled, non-threatening "Seeker Service" must replace the traditional Sunday worship service; (2) The dress must be casual; (3) The music must be contemporary; (4) The message must be only positive so that saved and unsaved alike can feel better about themselves after a message that often mixes psychology and an uplifting Scripture text; (5) Church ministries must be geared to meeting needs, with support groups for depression, eating disorders, infertility, homosexuals' family/friends, post-abortion, and marital separation. Warren scoffed at the idea of passing out gospel tracts or going door-to-door since the

typical "Saddleback Sam" is offended by such old-fashioned evangelism; (6) Doctrinal instruction is not given to the church as a whole on Sundays, but is available in sub-groups apart from formal church services; and (7) A spirit of pragmatic compromise must prevail. Warren was trained as a Southern Baptist (he frequently speaks at SBC events), but said, "It really doesn't matter your denomination, folks. We're all on the same team if you love Jesus." (Source: 6/98, Calvary Contender.)"

In the book *Ashamed of the Gospel*, John MacArthur writes:

38.

"Scripture says the early Christians 'turned the world upside down' (Acts 17:6). In our generation the world is turning the church upside down. Biblically, God is sovereign, not 'unchurched Harry.' The Bible, not the marketing plan, is supposed to be the sole blueprint and final authority for all church ministry. Ministry should meet people's real needs, not salve their selfishness. And the Lord of the church is Christ, not some couch potato with the remote control in his head. I never hear the term 'user-friendly church' without thinking of Acts 5 and Ananias and Sapphira. What happened there flies in the face of almost all contemporary church-growth theory. The Jerusalem church certainly wasn't very user-friendly. In fact, it was exactly the opposite; Luke tells us this episode inspired great fear...upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things' (v.11). The church service that day was so disturbing that none of the unchurched people 'dared to associate with them.' The thought of attending such a church struck terror in their hearts, even though 'the people held them in high esteem' (Acts 5:13). The church was definitely not a

place for sinners to be comfortable — it was a frightening place!” (p.51).

What does the Bible say about the *church*?

39.

*Who* is the church?

40.

*How* is it to function?

41.

Is it for the *unchurched* or the *churched*?

42.

Let's begin with *Who is the Church*?

43.

## I. Who is the Church?

### A. The Church is Made Up of Believers Only

1. Yes According to Matthew 13:29 there are "tares among the wheat" but the church is believers only
2. Notice how the church began in Acts 2:38-41:

“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. 39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”

- a) It began with the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- b) It began with the conversion of the unchurched
- c) This was a fulfillment of Matthew 16:18 where Jesus said He would build His church
- d) The difference between the church and the



unchurched or the saved and unsaved is one  
heard the message and repented of their sin and  
has fully surrendered their life to Jesus Christ and  
the other has not

- e) Another significance difference between the  
saved and the lost is the saved has the Holy Spirit  
and the lost does not

(1) Acts 2:1-4

(2) Ephesians 1:13 says, “In Him, you also,  
after listening to the message of truth, the  
gospel of your salvation—having also  
believed, you were sealed in Him with the  
Holy Spirit of promise.”

(3) 2 Timothy 1:14 says, “Guard, through the  
Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure  
which has been entrusted to you.”

(4) Jesus said in John 14:23, “If anyone loves  
Me, he will keep My word; and My Father  
will love him, and We will come to him  
and make Our abode with him.”

(5) In Romans 8:9 says, “However, you are not  
in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the  
Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone

does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

- (6) When Jude was describing false teachers he said in verse 19 that they were “devoid of the Spirit” or as the NKJV says, “not having the Spirit.”

## B. The Church is a Called-Out Assembly of People

The word “church” comes from a compound Greek word ekklesia. It comes from ek, “out of,” and klesis, “a calling,” and kaleo, “to call.”

### 1. An assembly of people

“The word” itself “does not indicate the nature of the called out group; it can be used in a technical sense of the NT church, or it can be used in a nontechnical sense of any kind of group” (Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 347).

Acts 7:38 translates it “congregation” and Acts 19:32, 39 “assembly.”

In secular Greek literature it was used of town meetings, local gatherings of citizens called together by their rulers to hear official announcements or witness government ceremonies” (John MacArthur,

Matthew 16-23, 133).

In the LXX “it was used of Israelites assembled for religious purposes. For them it meant the assembled people of God” (D. Edmond Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles, 38).

2. An assembly of believers

“In its every other occurrence, it is translated ‘church,’ the church being looked upon as a called out body of people, called out of the world of unsaved humanity to become the people of God” (Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek NT, 35).

a) We are the called of Jesus Christ

(1) Called to be saints - Romans 1:7

“To all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints.”

(2) Called according to His purpose - Romans 8:28

(3) Called into the fellowship of His Son - 1 Corinthians 1:9

“God is faithful, through whom you were

called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

b) We also have been called:

(1) Out of the world - Gal.1:3-4

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father.”

(2) Out of Satan - Ephesians 2:1-3

(3) Out of sin - Romans 6:17-18

“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

C. The Church is the Body of Christ

Ephesians 1:22-23 says, “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all

things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Ephesians 5:30 says, “we are members of His body.”

## **II. How is the Church Identified in the New Testament?**

### **A. As Beloved of God**

1. Romans 1:7 - “To all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints.”
2. James 1:2 says, “My brethren.”

### **B. As Saints**

1. 1 Corinthians 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.”
2. 2 Corinthians 1:1 - “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia.”
3. Ephesians 1:1 - “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and

who are faithful in Christ Jesus.”

4. Philippians 1:1 - “Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.”
5. Colossians 1:2 - “To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.”

C. As Those Who Are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

1. 1 Thessalonians 1:1 - “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”
2. 2 Thessalonians 1:1 - “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

D. Elect

1 Peter 1:1-2 - “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be

yours in the fullest measure.”

E. The Called

Jude 1:1 - “Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and

brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.”

**III. How Does the Bible Distinguish Between the Church and the Unchurched?**

A. The Believer Obey’s God’s Word

1. The apostle John says that those who are truly the church are those who "keep His word" (1 Jn.2:5), they confess their sin (1 Jn.1:9), they love their brother (1 Jn.2:10), they hate the world and the things in the world (1 Jn.2:15-17), they practice righteousness (1 Jn.3:7), and they "believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn.3:23).
2. John summarizes it in 1 John 3:10, “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.”
3. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:19, “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord

knows those who are His,' and, 'Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.'"

#### B. The Unbeliever Does Not Obey God's Word

1. Titus 1:16 says, "They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed."
2. Paul said in Philippians 3:18-19, "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things."

Joseph Caryl said of the unchurched that "They have the earth in their hands (Job 9:24), who have nothing of heaven in their hearts; they bear sway in the world who are slaves to the world; they govern and order others at their will who are led captive by Satan at his will. Be not offended and troubled to see the reins of government in their hands who know not how to govern themselves, or to see them rule the world who are unworthy to live in the world" (The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations).

#### IV. How Do You Become a Member of Christ's Church?

To Become a Member of the Church You Must Surrender Your



Life to Jesus Christ

A. You Must Understand Who Jesus Is

1. Thomas said when he saw the resurrected Jesus in John 20:28, "My Lord and my God!"
2. In Matthew 16:13-17 Jesus asked His disciples, "'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?'" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 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."
3. According to Scripture Jesus is God, the second Person of the Trinity, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. In order to enter into God's family, you must affirm this in your heart.

Romans 10:9-10 says, "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

B. You Must Understand Who You Are (sinner)

1. In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus told a parable “to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt.”

He said beginning at verse 10: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

2. Do you stop being a sinner after you're saved? No, After David committed murder and adultery, he prayed in Psalm 51:1-4, “Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.”

C. You Must Repent and Turn to Jesus

Acts 17:30-31 says, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

D. When You Come to Jesus You Become a Member of His Church

1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "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."

**CONCLUSION**

Are you a member of Christ's church?

- 1.
2. The only seeker in the seeker-sensitive church is Jesus. He came to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10).
3. Let's pray.