

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
PART 2-BECOMING A PART OF THE LOCAL CHURCH
MATTHEW 16:13-18; ACTS 1:4-15; 2:4-11; 22-47

We began this series looking at the importance of Church Membership last week and we started by looking at the Church that Jesus Christ began and said He would build in Matthew 16 and the additions to that Church as recorded in Acts 1 and 2. We saw how first...

THEY BECAME BELIEVERS...

THEY BECAME A PART OF THE LOCAL BODY OF BELIEVERS

The Bible says in *Acts 2:41*, "*Then they that gladly received word were baptized.*" They were baptized. Baptism identified them with the Lord Jesus Christ and with this particular Local Church established in Jerusalem!

If you have trusted the Lord as your Saviour, have you followed the Lord in believer's baptism since you have been saved?

There are three things that make baptism Biblically correct!

First, we must have the right candidate! That is a person who knows the Lord as Saviour.

Second, we must have the right mode or method of baptism, which is by immersion! To be baptized literally means *to be dipped or immersed* which is going in the water, going underneath the water, and coming up out of the water.

And third, we should have the right authority!

The right authority is the local Church, because baptism is one of two ordinances of the local Church. (They are ordinances, NOT Sacraments!) Baptism is one of the first things the Lord Jesus ordered that we do!

Baptism is a beautiful picture. It is a picture of how our Lord died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead! It is a picture of the fact that we died with Him, were buried with Him, and are risen with Him!
(Romans 6:3-5)

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(We'll say much more about the ordinance of baptism and the other ordinance, the Lord's Supper, in lessons later in this series!)

The Word of God also says these believers continued in the Apostles' doctrine! This was the same body of truth the Lord Jesus gave to His Disciples and told them to teach! *(Matthew 28:19-20)*

Their baptism identified them also with the body of doctrine adhered to by that local Church!

There are many groups of people who study the Bible that **are not** true local Churches! Many crowds or gatherings of "Christian" people who may sing and preach are **not** true local Churches!

Among the thousands of people who were in the city of Jerusalem, there was this first "*called-out*" assembly of Believers! Jesus had called them out! These Believers were people who identified with the Lord Jesus Christ and with this local assembly! They **held** or **adhered to** a certain body of doctrine! They were in no way confined to a building, but they did gather for worship!

This Church, this local assembly at Jerusalem, **was made up of people who had been born again!** They gladly received God's Word and were baptized! This means they had **publicly identified** with the Lord Jesus Christ and with this body of Believers!

"There were added unto them..." There existed a group to which these new converts were added! The Bible says they "*continued steadfastly*" in some things:

- **In the apostles' doctrine (God's Word)**
- **In fellowship (the common bond they had in Christ)**
- **In breaking of bread (observing the Lord's supper)**
- **In prayer**

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After Paul's conversion and baptism, he came to the assembly in Jerusalem. Look at **Acts 9:26-27!**

We can see here that an identifiable group of baptized believers definitely existed!

They held to a body of truth!

They were a "called-out" group or assembly. That is what the word "*Church*" literally means!

They were known for their faith in Christ, and they identified with Him!

To this assembly Paul came to "*join*" together with them. The Bible says, "*He assayed [to attempt or endeavor] to join himself to the disciples.*"

Listen to me, we are not only to "*believe*" on the Lord Jesus Christ; we are to "*belong*" to a body of local Believers, identifying ourselves with the Lord and with one of His local assemblies or Churches!

THEY BECAME BELIEVERS...

THEY BECAME A PART OF THE LOCAL BODY OF BELIEVERS...

THEY BEHAVED IN A CERTAIN WAY!

The members of this Church at Jerusalem behaved in a certain way and those who joined with them behaved in a certain way. (***Read Acts 2:41-42***)

Most people live as if this world is all there is! That philosophy of life says "*let's live it up and get all the gusto we can out of this life because when its over, its over!*"

That's what Satan wants folks to believe!

What's really sad is when a professing Believer says he believes in Heaven and Hell and then lives like the world does, as if this world is all there is!

If we truly believe the Bible that says there is a real Heaven and a real hell!
If we truly believe that people are either going to be in Heaven forever with

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God or be in hell forever in torment all depending on their relationship with Christ—And that is exactly what is going to happen! If we truly believe that, then it should change the way we live!

Our behavior should be affected by our belief!

One may call his belief "*Christian*," but if that belief **does not change his or her behavior**, then it is not Biblical Christianity.

The Christian life is the life of the Eternal One in us!

John 17:3 – "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

2 Corinthians 5:17 – "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"

As we allow the Lord Jesus to have His way in our life, He crowds out lesser things! The true Christian is not only born again, but is a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ! We know Him by faith, and we love Him because He first loved us! We are encouraged by others in the local assembly who know Him and love Him!

Because of our mutual affection for the Saviour, we are to love and pray for one another as we work together as a body of believers to bring others to Christ! That is not supposed to be unusual among Believers, but common!

When we get saved, we are to get baptized showing our identification with Christ and we are to become an **active part** of a local assembly of Believers who identify with the Lord and His Word! It is a wonderful thing to have believed on the Lord Jesus, but it is also a wonderful thing to belong to and actively be a part of a New Testament Church!