

The Blessing Of The Church  
Ephesians: Blessed Beyond Belief- Part 3  
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Andy Wirt ([andy@clearviewgrace.com](mailto:andy@clearviewgrace.com))

Introduction:

**Open: Video: *The Church***

*What is the Church?*

- We often think of it as a building... (The Church is not a building- but it is *like* a building- each piece fitted together perfectly- built on a foundation with Jesus as the Cornerstone)
- We often think of it as something we choose (choose to attend one...something happens...we choose to attend another...- *but it is really something we are **chosen for***)
- We often think of it as something we do (devote a portion of our time to)

### **1. The Church is led by Christ.**

**Ephesians 1:22-23**

*<sup>22</sup> God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. <sup>23</sup> And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.*

All things are under the authority of Christ...

- I am... *I must submit myself to Jesus*
- We are... *We must submit our ourselves to Jesus- For doctrine, for methodology, for direction- being prayerful...*

Jesus is the “head” of our church. He gives direction. He moves the pieces when and how He wants them to move.

This system is for the benefit of the Church. This tells me that we are also never without any resource we need to accomplish what God has for us. *All things are under His authority.* There is no power or obstacle that can dominate us—for our benefit- Jesus is in charge.

The Church is His body—you are the arms and feet of Jesus. You are to do His work under His direction. *We are the only way people can SEE Jesus—we make Him visible in the world today.*

His body is made full and complete by Him. Jesus is responsible for church growth and development—our role is to submit to Him!

**Illustration:**

## 2. The Church is comprised of those once far away from God.

### Ephesians 2:13, 17

*<sup>13</sup> But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.*

*<sup>17</sup> He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near.*

I really enjoyed studying this section from Ephesians this week. It shows us the Church from the perspective of *who is in the Church*. And, those that are in the Church- those that make up the Church- all have one thing in common—*each person that is now a part of the Church- was once not part of it. **Each person that is now part of the Church was once far from God.***

We can never forget that. *Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.* Each one of us was excluded...but now Jesus has brought peace to us—peace between us and God...peace between us and each other—and brought us into His family. *But it was not always that way.*

If you've been in church for a while... we begin to forget this. After a while—church becomes not about where I've come from and what I've been brought out of... it becomes about satisfying my wishes and likes and comforts. All of a sudden Church can move from a rescue agency—built on mission to reach those that are not yet part of it—to a country club—existing for the wishes of those that are already a part of it.

Paul was reminding the Gentiles: ***you were once far from God.***

**We must remember...we must never forget...we must structure ourselves so that we always practice—mission is to be at the very heart of the Church. The Church exists for those that are not yet part of it. Those that are TODAY- far from God must consume our mind.** This is one of the key reasons for our existence—to *love people to a clear view of Jesus and His mission*. You can't be a church if you aren't obsessed with reaching those that are *far from God*.

Mission is at the heart of the Church. The Church exists for mission. A church without mission is just posing as a church.

### Illustration:

- **Summer Blast...**
- ***Who do you know that is far from God?*** Are you praying for them? Inviting them to church? Caring for their needs? Sharing what God is doing in your life?
- Soon you will be hearing more about a leadership development initiative that will purpose to help train you to be comfortable and excited about mission...

**Video: [We Are The Church](#)**

### 3. The Church is comprised of those unified by Christ.

#### Ephesians 2:15b-16

**He made peace** between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. <sup>16</sup> Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and **our hostility toward each other was put to death.**

As an entity made up of people who were once far away from God—Jesus is bringing together a motley crew. Here Paul is highlighting the fact that Jesus has made peace between two ethnic groups- the Jews and the Gentiles. He was bringing together into one family two groups of people that hated each other- that were vastly different from one another. Jesus brought them into one body from two.

Many of us wouldn't characterize ourselves as "Jew" or "Gentile" today—but we are all different. We have different backgrounds. We have different likes. We have different opinions about how church should be done and what it should look like. We have different comfort zones. We like different types of music.. We have different experiences.

Yet, out of disunity—Jesus brings unity. Out of differences...Jesus makes us one. **It doesn't mean we are all alike or that He has made us the same...** it means He has given us peace and puts us into the same family.

To function as a healthy church, a group of people have to **live the peace that Jesus has given them.** They have to choose to not allow their own history or preferences to divide them. They have to purposefully not allow the stuff of life to bring in a false separation—a false one because in Jesus there should be no reason for separation.

All of you know that we've faced challenges with attendance over the last year or so. I've been amazed and disturbed by the reasons that people give for leaving ClearView...

- *I'm not satisfied with the music*
- *You don't have anything for my kid (of a certain age or category)*
- *There are not enough people in this certain age group*
- *I like this other church better because here at ClearView something is expected of me and over there I can just go and leave and no one asks anything of me.*
- Others have relational problems that they will not work out...

I wonder how Jesus feels about the state of the Church in America today? I'm guessing there are things that really please Him and I'm guessing that one thing that grieves Him is just how easily we take the unity that He has given us and set it aside for petty things.

The challenge with maintaining unity is that it takes work. Unity requires:

- a. A commitment to a family—*I obligate myself to others.*

**Ephesians 2:19**

*<sup>19</sup> So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.*

Maybe the most simple way we can say it is that **Church is not about me.** It is about the glory of God. It is about the advancement of God's Kingdom. It is about me connecting with others for my growth and the betterment of the people around me. I am part of a family. I am needed. I make a difference. I am to contribute. If I don't do my part- the family suffers. I commit to others and they commit to me.

- b. A commitment to another leader—*Jesus leads my heart.*

**Ephesians 2:20-21**

*<sup>20</sup> Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. <sup>21</sup> We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.*

Video: **Cruise Ship Vs. Battleship**

**4. The Church exists to bring glory to God by developing mature Christ-followers.**

**Ephesians 3:20-21**

*<sup>20</sup> Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. <sup>21</sup> Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.*

**The reason for the church is the glory of God.** Our activity, our lives, the collective sum of our gatherings and initiatives are to advance God's glory. To bring glory to Him in all places in all time... so that His fame might advance globally. This must be our focus.

**Ephesians 4:12-13**

*<sup>12</sup> Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup> This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

**Pastors and church leaders** equip. This is my job description. Equip God's people to *do His work...* When pastors are equipping and people are doing His work... the Church is built up. Our goal is God's glory and maturity...