

I Love The Church Too

"... even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"

Ephesians 5:25

Introduction: If I said that the Church was perfect, I would either be lying or foolish! We are not perfect, thus the Church is not perfect either. I know full well that the Church has many faults. Just look around at the churches that dot our landscape to hear or read about scandal, hypocrisy, division and wickedness. But nevertheless, I love the Church.

Many people misunderstand the purpose and destiny of the Church. The census taker was asking all those questions that one normally asks in a church survey. Standing at the door of a home he came to a question which revealed that the lady of the house did not understand the purpose of the survey. "And now," he asked, "what's your church preference?" Without batting an eye, the lady replied, "Red brick."

We need to understand the nature and purpose of the Church. One preacher who was disturbed because some people were not attending Church as they should wrote the following little poem:

"I wish you folks would come to church, If only for a visit.

For someday they will carry you in, And the Lord will say, "Who is it?"

Whatever the color of the brick, wood, or block, I love the Church too.

Christ Loved The Church And I Love It Too.

Whatever He Loves I Should Love.

I read an interesting piece the other day: **A Redneck Church**

- If People ask when Jesus fed 5000, whether the two fish were bass or catfish, and what bait was used to catch 'em—your church might be a redneck church.
- If the pastor says, "I'd like to ask Bubba to help take up the offering," Then, five guys and two women stand up—your church might be a redneck church.
- If opening day of deer season is recognized as an official church holiday—your church might be a redneck church.
- -If a member of the church requests to be buried in his 4-wheel-drive truck because "It ain't never been in a hole it couldn't get out of"—your church might be a redneck church.
- If with a congregation of 500 members, there are only seven last names in the church directory—your church might be a redneck church.
- If baptism is referred to as "branding"—your church might be a redneck church.
- If people think "Rapture" is what you get when you lift something too heavy—your church might be a redneck church.

HERE ARE 3 REASONS I LOVE THE CHURCH TOO.

I. Because Of The Person Who Founded It

Matthew 16:15-18 *He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

A. The Blood He Shed

Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

B. The Blessing He Shared

Eph. 2:14-16 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

II. Because Of The People Who Form It

1 Timothy 3:15 *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

A. Vine And Branches

John 15:5-9 *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

B. Foundation And Stones

Ephesians 2:19-21 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

C. Head And Body **Ephesians 4:11-16**

D. Husband And Wife **Ephesians 5**

III. Because Of The Purpose Which Fills It

A. To Be A Glorious Church **Ephesians 5:27**

Steve Brown says, "When a group of thoroughbred horses face attack from an outside enemy, they stand in a circle facing each other, and with their back legs they kick out at the enemy. Donkeys, on the other hand, do just the opposite. They circle up, facing the enemy, and use

their hind legs to kick each other! How often does the church do the identical thing - ignore the real enemy while we are attacking fellow believers?" We act in love toward each other and we must abhor sin.

Spurgeon said, "An unholy church! It is of no use to the world and of no esteem among men - it is an abomination, hell's laughter, heaven's abhorrence. The worst evils which have ever come upon the world have been brought upon her by an unholy church."

B. To Be A Gathered Church

Hebrews 12:22-24 *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

C. To Be A Glistening Church

Ephesians 3:14-21 *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen..*

The following words were printed in a Unitarian Church newsletter, "In San Francisco, the Rev. Cecil Williams remembers the day he took down the cross from its place behind the pulpit as the day his church came alive. I don't think there ever was a cross behind the First Parish pulpit, but we are coming alive nonetheless."

Can you believe that? Here is a so-called church that states they came alive when they **removed** the cross of Christ.

I am sure that that statement today appalls every saved person here. But let me tell you something just as tragic. Many believers have taken down the cross from their lives. They have fallen out of love with Jesus and His Church. It is time we renewed our love to Him. It is time we held high the cross of Christ. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Surely He is asking that today of His blood-bought, heaven-bound Church. Let us respond, "Yes, Lord, you know that we love you. You need the church, the church needs you, and world needs both."

We must be united in our love for the Lord, love for each other, and love for His Church. Every human being should have three homes: a domestic home, a church home, and an eternal home. Have you accepted Christ as your Savior? If not, today is the day for you to turn from sin and accept Him as your Lord and Savior. If you are a Christian, you need a local church family in which to worship, work and wait for the return of the Lord. Why not come and join with us today, and become a part of this Bible-believing local church. And, some of us should recommitment ourselves to the Lord of the Church and the Church of the Lord.