

The Church Is – Week 1

September 20, 2015

Learn

Ephesians 2:19-22 - New International Version (NIV)

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

See also: John 17:20-26

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — ²³ I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you[a] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Main Idea

We are all invited to be a vital part of God's family—we are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of His household—and it matters whether or not we live in that reality. Our devotion to God is what draws us into participation in His family. Citizenship or membership in God's family is because of what God has done for us, the result of which invites devotion to God and participation in his family.

- If you are not a part of the people of God, you are always invited in.
- If you are a part of His people, then you are always invited to participate, to live out that reality.

Think

- In Ephesians 2:19, Paul compares the status of Christians to that of citizens (rather than foreigners) and family (rather than strangers). Many of us have not experienced a change in citizenship (if you have and would be willing to share about it, please do so!), but in that time, people were acutely aware of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities that went with citizenship.
- What was Paul trying to communicate to his readers in using citizenship as an example?
- What rights, privileges, and responsibilities would have been implied in using this metaphor?
- How would you answer those same questions looking at Paul's use of family as a metaphor?
- In this series, as we explore the identity of the Church, how do we understand what devotion is in light of the roles of "citizenship" and "family member"? What are the spiritual correlations between the answers to that question and the ideal of our personal devotion to God?

Discuss

- When you think of devotion, what are the words or phrases that come to mind?
- Who is the person in your life that best characterizes what true devotion looks like?
- When we look at devotion in its best form, we see that it is expressed in the alignment between our thoughts, our emotions, and our actions (our heads, our hearts, and our hands). With that in mind, what are the rivals we face in being fully devoted to God?
- Which of those examples are rivals through our thoughts, our emotions, and/or our actions?
- When facing rivals for our devotion to God, how can we cultivate correctly placed devotion?
- What role could the Church play in helping me cultivate correctly placed devotion?
- How can I be the Church for others in the same way?

Next Steps

Regardless of whether or not you consider yourself part of God's family, you are always invited in: either to be a part of the family, or to participate in the work God is doing in and through the Church. If you have not accepted God's invitation to be part of his family, consider why not, and have the conversations you need to have, or ask the questions you need to have answered. If you are part of God's family, there are many steps you can take to participate in his work: come to Partnership class; attend a Summit University class; get baptized; or become more involved in community through Summit Connect or reGROUP.