

The Church Is – Week 4

October 11, 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 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

The church is not about what we can accomplish, but what God has accomplished. Our lives are no longer our own and we are no longer alone (a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit). Baptism is a beautiful picture of what it means for God to get the glory in our lives and in this community. In baptism we show that we have died to our old selves, where death reigned, and now live by His power and grace and for His glory. Our new life is in Him just as He is in us.

Think

- In Ephesians 2:19-22, and in Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17, we see that the focus is ultimately not on the individual, nor is it on the community of believers (the Church), but rather that it is on God. In our world, it is often seen as respectable to share glory for something, but is distinctly weak to entirely give over glory to another.

Conversely, one who “hogs” all the glory is often viewed as narcissistic and greedy. How do those cultural realities affect our baseline, core agreement with the idea that our lives should be lived entirely for God’s glory?

- What specifics about God make him truly worthy of our glory?
- What about us makes us truly best when God gets all the glory?
- What are the main challenges (internally or externally) to God getting glory in and through our lives and community?

Discuss

- In both the Ephesians text and in John 17, we see that God’s glory seems to be amplified when ideal community is present. Do you agree with that belief?
- Would that be the case in our community?
- How can our community (church, Connect group, family) amplify God’s glory in how we live together?
- How can I specifically cultivate a value for God’s glory that overcomes the role of glory and right to glory that is present in the culture around me?
- If someone who was far from God were to do inventory on my life (or our community) what would they say are the top priorities for who or what gets the glory?
- Would doing such an inventory cause that person to better understand the character of God?
- Is there anything specific in my life that needs to change so that God can get all the glory?

Next Steps

We celebrated Beach Baptism this weekend as one way to give God the glory in our lives. There are many ways to do this. Try putting into practice some of the ideas you came up with from the questions above.