

The Glory of God in The Church

Part 13: Why The Church?

Ephesians 4:13 ...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Introduction

So what is the Church for? How do you see it? [Get current views]. To some it is a place where you go to worship God or to pray, sing, have fellowship. But what is the Church really for?

To me, one of the most beneficial aspects of the Church is the family one. Wherever I go in the world, I know that I belong with other brothers and sisters who worship the same God and believe in the same Lord Jesus Christ. We are made one because the Holy Spirit makes us one. The Glory of God is present because God the Holy Spirit is present and He causes all sorts of good things to happen.

My aim is to look at the Glory of God in the Biblical role of the Church and see how we are fitting into that.

Here is a story from the book of the Acts of the Apostles that will be a starting place for this message. The Church is defined by two overarching characteristics: Love of God and love of neighbour.

1. Love God Above All

Jesus said, *if you love Me you will obey what I command (Jn 14:15) and if anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching.*

Loving God is:

- Spending time with Him in appreciation and communion
- Speaking and listening to Him
- Involving Him in everything, especially our decision-making processes
- Giving Him first place, i.e. making Him the most important person in our lives, always seeking and deferring to His will
- Loving others
- Self sacrifice for a life that is full and holy.

2. Good Deeds

A recurring phrase in the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation is, "I know your deeds". What the church is doing is supposed to be honouring God the Father. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul observes that we are *created in Christ Jesus to do good works*. Jesus Himself said to His followers (John 14:12,13) *anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.*

The scope of good deeds is enormous. Where should we start?

The Church as a Force, in *Love Acceptance and Forgiveness*, is defined as *people redeemed, filled with the Holy Spirit, meeting needs everywhere in Jesus' name.*

Where are we doing this? Each of us has opportunities that come to us individually. Mine is that I teach CRE at school. The school acknowledges that so many children need to be taught moral values. They welcome Christian teaching as a means of instilling some positive sense of values into the school community.

Others are there for the disadvantaged and the poor. They give time to listen, do things for them that they cannot do for themselves, advocate for them, and teach them life skills.

Some are involved in educating people in God's word and providing a safe, structured environment for healthy activities.

People in this church do Prayer Ministry – that is an effective ministry to other Christians that releases them from bondages to do good deeds.

Most of us give away money to needy groups in other cultures and countries. Some even go and visit them and do work for them.

As I read the Scriptures on Spiritual gifts and on fellowship, we all need to know that we have an important role in supporting one another in these ministries of our church, from giving, whether it be to local or cross-cultural work, to prayer and encouragement.

Let the Spirit of God bring out generosity of heart in the things we do – that is the nature of Jesus at work in us.

Conclusion

The Church exists to love and obey God and to do good deeds in His name. That is not popular with all. Some will oppose that, as we see from history; not that they oppose good deeds as much as they oppose light being thrown on their self-interest.

There is a fragrance that comes from violets. You can smell it if you walk past a patch of them, but it is not so obvious if you pick a single flower and sniff it. It is a bit like that with the Glory of God in the Church. When there are a lot of us going about doing good things in our community, meeting needs, it leaves a fragrance behind. That is the fragrance of Jesus. Some will welcome the scent, some will ignore it and some will oppose it when it poses an inconvenient presence.

We are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life [2 Corinthians 2:15,16].