

1 Timothy 3:15-16 *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. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

I. Introduction

A. What is essential?

1. Essential means what is necessary
2. Worship to God is essential
3. Church made of Christians & not building(s)
4. Jesus will build His church, no matter what humans or governments do

B. Jesus owns the church

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.

1. Not owned by pastor(s)
2. Not owned by deacons
3. Not owned by church members

C. Jesus is the cornerstone

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

D. Jesus will protect the church

1. Jesus call the church “My church”

Matthew 16:18 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. Peter is “petros” in Greek & small stone or small rock in English (subject of sentence, masculine & singular noun)
- b. Church is “ekklesia” in Greek & called out ones (people) in English (direct object, feminine, & singular noun)

c. This rock is “petra” in Greek & large rock in English like El Capitan in Yosemite National Park (indirect object, feminine, & singular noun)

2. Peter calls the big rock the chief cornerstone

1 Peter 2:6, 8⁶ Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. ...⁸ And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

E. Three reasons why church is essential

II. For the Faith

A. Ministry of the church

1. Church is spiritual household

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:19–22¹⁹ Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;²⁰ And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;²¹ In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:²² In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

2. Church creates spiritual foundation for any nation

Titus 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

3. Church is spiritual pillar of truth

Philippians 2:15–16¹⁵ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;¹⁶ Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

4. God gave work to local church to uphold the truth – not parachurch organizations

B. Message of the church

1. Church must preach God's view of Jesus

1 Corinthians 1:23–24 ²³ *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;* ²⁴ *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

2. Great is the mystery of Godliness

a. God was manifest in the flesh (God revealed in human body)

John 1:1, 14 ¹ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ¹⁴ *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Colossians 2:9 *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

b. Jesus justified in the Spirit when He was baptized

2 Peter 1:17 ¹⁷ *For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

c. Jesus seen of angels at His birth & at His resurrections

Hebrews 1:6 *And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*

d. Gospel preached to the Gentiles (& also beyond Jewish people)

Romans 1:14–16 ¹⁴ *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.* ¹⁵ *So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.* ¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

e. Jesus believed on in the world (among all people)

[Act 2:22, 24, 32, 36 ²² *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: ...* ²⁴ *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. ...* ³² *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. ...* ³⁶ *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

f. Jesus received up into glory

Acts 1:10–11 ¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹ Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

C. Methods of the church

1. Christians assemble together to give love, for good works, & for encouragement

Hebrews 10:24–25 ²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

2. Christians worship God

Psalms 92:1–3 ¹ A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: ² To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, ³ Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

Nehemiah 8:2, 5, 7–8 ² And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. ... ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: ... ⁷ the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. ⁸ So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused [them] to understand the reading.

1 Corinthians 16:1–2 ¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. ² Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

III. For the Family

A. Many kinds of families in modern society

B. Place to learn

Ephesians 4:11–12 ¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

1. Christian learns privately at home
2. Christian learns corporately at church with other Christians

C. Place of growth inside the family

2 Timothy 1:5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

D. Place of help

1. Within church family

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

2. Serving each other & your neighbor

Galatians 5:13 ¹³ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. ¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

IV. For the Future

A. Future in His truth

1. Any nation can rise or fall over time
2. But God's church will continue

Philippians 2:16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

B. Future for His people

1. President Ronald Reagan took his oath of office on his mother's Bible
2. Scripture verse in his mother's Bible on display in Ronald Reagan Presidential Library display

2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

C. Future for our nation if following God's promise

Psalm 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

V. Conclusion

A. All Christians may have trials or tribulations

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

B. But the church gives glory to Christ Jesus through all time & in all places

Ephesians 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout

C. It is time for church to take up a California challenge – time for the church to be God's church & not man's church