



We are the Church
Feb 18: What is the Church

Series Summary: It is commonly said that students (teenagers) are the future of the church. This is wrong. Students are the current church. They are a part of the body of Christ (the Ekklesia). In this series, we are going to discuss what it means to be a part of the local church.

Big Idea/Question: For students to understand that they are a part of the current church they first have to understand what the church is and is not.

GET THEM TALKING

Have you ever heard the phrase, “I love Jesus but I don't like the Church”? It is a common phrase among those who are skeptical about the need for the Church. How would you respond to someone saying this? Do you agree or disagree?

Why do you think some people ignore or downplay the importance of the Church?

How does God feel about the Church?

VIDEO TEACHING

THE CHURCH- WHAT IT IS AND ISN'T

Before we get too far into our discussion on why the Church matters and how we fit into the Church. We have to establish what the Church is and is not.

- **The church is not a service to us** - The Church does not exist to meet our needs and serve us. We have to be careful because it is easy to get into this mindset when church becomes about our preferences.
- **The church is not a club we pay our dues to** - Instead the Church is a group of people sent out on a mission to reach those who do not know Christ and are not part of the body of Christ (the Church).
- **The church is not a building**

God's Opinion - The way that people feel about the local church may differ. But God has made it abundantly clear how he feels about the Church. In Revelation 19:6-9 The Church (All believers) is referred to as the bride of Christ. We see a celebration in the Book of Revelation when the bride is finally united with the bridegroom (Jesus).

Revelation 19:6-9 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. **7** Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. **8** Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) **9** Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."¹

A question and a truth

The Question: Do you love the local church the same way that Jesus does? "But no one can love like Jesus." True. But if we are called to follow Jesus, and become more and more like Him each day. We need to understand why he loved the local church and do likewise.

The Truth: I hear all the time that students (teenagers) are the future of the church. I could not disagree more. I get what people are saying and what they mean well. But the reality is that you are the Church. You are not the future Church. You are the current Church. You are part of the body of Christ.

Transition - The question is 'what does it mean to be a part of the Church'?

GROUP DISCUSSION

¹ **For Further Study:** Jesus taught on this very topic in the Gospels. (Matt 9:15, Mark 2:19).

(What is the Church to be about)

Read Acts 2:46-47 as a small group

Based on this passage, what is the church to be about? What should we be doing regularly?

How can we model that in our small group?

Vs 47 - Why do you think people believed in Jesus and joined the Church daily?

Leader Note: First and foremost the Lord was at work. As Luke (the author of Acts) states, the Lord added to their numbers. This means that the Holy Spirit was at work convicting the lost of their sin (John 16:8). But we also should notice that the Church was “enjoying the favor of all the people”. This means that those outside of the Church noticed how those in the Church treated one another and lived their lives. They believed in the Gospel because they saw the Gospel being lived out.

For Further Study: Jesus commanded his disciples and us (the Church today) to do likewise in John 13:34-35

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 as a small group

Based on this passage, what is the Church to be about? What should we be doing regularly?

How can we model this in our small group?

How have these two passages changed how you view the Church?