

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH

*By Paul O. Nichols*

It is difficult for a person to understand the value of anything unless he knows the price paid for it, and the worth of it to those concerned. Of course, we are able to realize that when something cannot be replaced it is of even greater value.

If a person spent all he possessed to purchase a beautiful jewel, it would be considered priceless to him. However, you and I might be unable to appreciate the value of that stone just by looking at it. But if we were informed of the price, and told that the man gave everything he had for it, then we could better appreciate it's worth. The same applies to the church.

Anyone who says a person is just as well off outside the church as he is in it, certainly fails to understand its value or importance. What would one think if a person invited him to his house and then told him that he would be just as well off outside as inside? If it rains, snows, or hails one is just as well off outside. Naturally a person would get the idea that the house was not worth much. When it comes to salvation, if it is true that a person is just as well off outside the church as he is inside, then we have to admit that the church is really not very important. But does the word of God teach this?

In the first place, the church was important enough to God that He purposed it eternally (Eph. 3:10,11). Also, it was important enough to Christ that He promised, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). In fulfillment of that promise He brought the church into existence on the day of Pentecost, AD 33, and

began to add the saved to it (Acts 2:47). In the city of Jerusalem on the day of its birth about three thousand precious souls obeyed the gospel and became members of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Really, if the church is unimportant why would the Lord add the saved to it?

The price paid for the church certainly helps us to realize the value of it. You see, it cost God the sacrifice of his own Son, the brightest jewel heaven had to offer. By God's plan, in order for the church to come into existence it was necessary for Jesus to come into the world and shed His blood on the cross of Calvary. It cost Christ everything, including His life. "He gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). It was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). If the value of the church can be determined by the price paid for it, then we must admit it is very important and valuable. In fact, it is impossible to over estimate its worth in the sight of God.

The church of Christ is important enough that every saved person in

the world has been added to it (Acts 2:47). And when the church was established by Christ, it was made “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). It is important enough that God gave it the sole responsibility to support the gospel in order to have it preached to “every creature” in “every nation” (Mark 16:15:16; Matt. 28:19,20). This is a Herculean task given only to the church established by Christ.

Another thing that will help us to appreciate the importance of the church is the fact that it is the place where the saved glorify God the Father. The inspired writer says, “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Eph. 3:21). In the church we are to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our, lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13:15).

To God the church is important enough that He made it the “fullness of Christ” (Eph. 1:22,23). Anyone in Christ has been added to the church

(Gal. 1:22). To be in Christ means (1) he is a new creature (1 Cor. 5:17), (2) he has redemption, (Col. 1:14), (3) he has been forgiven of his sins (Eph. 1:7), (4) he is promised salvation (2 Tim. 2:10), (5) he has eternal life (1 John 5:11). None of these things is found outside of Christ and the church.

**IN CONCLUSION**, the Bible tells us the church is the spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23), and that He is “the saviour of the body.” The apostle Paul says in Eph. 5:25-27, that “Christ loved the church and gave himself for it” and that He is going to present it to Himself “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

**We can see that the church is very important to the Lord and should be to us.**

Paul O. Nichols has served the Church of Christ faithfully for over sixty years.

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