



What's The Church All About

Introduction:

We all have a view on what the church is and what it should be. Much of our opinion is birthed out of our past experiences, whether positive or negative, regardless of whether or not those experiences were Biblical or not. In today's passage we discover one thing, which is that the church is all about Jesus Christ.

Today's Scripture Text

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Sermon Points

#1. Jesus sends messengers to establish the church

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:1

Jesus sent Paul, as an Apostle (i.e. a "sent one") to establish the church to the gentiles. The gifting of the first apostles was unique in that they were given the task and authority by Christ. The original 12 Apostles had:

- been eye-witnesses to the risen Christ.
- been given the authority to establish and govern the early church that was infiltrating the earth for the first time in history, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- been given the authority and power by God to speak and write the words of God (which now makes up a large part of the New Testament, and is as authoritative as the Old Testament Scriptures).

Therefore, as God's Apostle to the gentiles, Paul went to Corinth on Christ's agenda, which was to preach the gospel and thereby establish the church.

Though the church was birthed and launched through the work of the Apostles in the first century, Christ continues to send ordinary Christians to preach the gospel and build the church all over the world, both internationally, and locally. In that way, we are all "sent-ones".

We are all recipients of the gospel because God sent someone to make that possible. This church was birthed at some point, because people faithfully preached the gospel.

- ♣ What is the difference between the 12 Apostles, and the rest of us who are also "sent" to preach the gospel, whether to crowds, or just our neighbours, colleagues and friends?
- ♣ Think back to the people that God sent into your life in order to bring you to Christ – who were they?
- ♣ In what ways has God sent you to others, so that they may hear the gospel and be saved?



#2. Jesus makes sinners saints

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:2

In gifting sinners his own righteousness, in exchange for our sin, Jesus redefines our identity. Instead of being trapped in eternal sin, Jesus frees us from it, and now calls us “saints”. Paul’s letter was to the “saints” in Corinth (i.e. those with a new identity as sons and daughter of God, in Christ), and his instruction for corrective behavior, was based on this new identity alone. They needed to be rebuked and corrected, so that they would align with their new identity, as saints, rather than living out the behavior of their old identity, as sinners. This is helpful for us too. We often feel that we need to behave better in order to be more “Christian”, but this is not the gospel. The gospel says that in accepting Christ’s righteousness, you are a new creation, and therefore you are called and empowered to start living like one. The motivation for change is always to align with our new spirit, empowered identity.

- ♣ Why is it important to live out of our new identity, rather than trying to live in a way that gives us a new identity? What is the difference and why does it matter?
- ♣ Why is rebellion an ill-fitting attitude for a saint?

#3. Jesus unites his church

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:2

As human beings, we are pretty hopeless at unity. Our sin causes us to rise up in pride against anything and everything that is different from us. This was an issue raising its head in the church in Corinth, and Paul was quick to address it. But it was not just a rebuke, with the hoped outcome of behavior modification, but Paul reminded them that the church was in fact already united in Christ. The unity already existed, and therefore he urged them to once again, behave according to the truth, rather than from their past sinful natures.

- ♣ Why is unity such an issue for us as human beings?
- ♣ Why should we at BBC and MBC be unified in thought and deed with the other members of our church community?
- ♣ Stop for a minute and consider your own thoughts and behaviour: do you contribute towards unity or do you use your words and influence to bring disunity?

#4. Jesus gives grace and peace

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:3-4

When we receive God’s grace, through faith alone, we are reconciled to God. This brings our soul rest and peace, because it is how we were originally designed before the fall. This congruency with our creator does not shift and change with our circumstances, but instead serves as an anchor for our souls.

- ♣ Why is our peace from God not circumstantial?
- ♣ Why do you think that we can have peace while life’s storms are ranging all around us? Share an experience when this was true for you.



#5. Jesus equips his church

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:5-7

The church in Corinth had been greatly gifted in the gifts of speech and knowledge, but they tended to use it for personal gain, which entirely missed the point. The spiritual gifts were given to the church in order to build up and encourage the saints in the faith. As a local church, our challenge is quite different to the church in Corinth, in that we have many different gifts among us, but many of us are not using them in order to build up and encourage one another in the faith. This may be because we do not know what our gifts are, but for others it may be that we have chosen not to use our gifts because it is not a priority in our lives. *(A note for the leaders: As this passage does not cover more information on the gifts, please do not spend time on it now. The letter will cover this in much detail later).*

- ♣ Do you know what your primary spiritual gift is? (Some of you have multiple gifts, but there is usually something that you just thrive in, for example serving others, administration, counselling people with the gospel, showing hospitality to strangers etc.)
- ♣ If you know what your gift is, are you faithfully and consistently using it in order to build up our church?
- ♣ If you do not know what your gifts are, take some time to think about what you love doing and what you are good at, and ask the group if they identify any of those as spiritual gifts.

#7. Jesus dwells with his church

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:9

We are called into a relationship with Christ, as members of his body, which is the church. As such, we are all members of the same family. This means that we should strive to reach across all ethnic and social divides, within our local church, in order to be family to one another. We cannot be united in Christ and not with one another. It is just not possible. It is important to recognize this truth and to align ourselves with it in every way: not just in our behavior, but in our thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and actions. It is not enough to just agree with the truth, we must live it out with intention.

- ♣ Why is it critical to treat one another as family, within the local church?
- ♣ Why is it important for us to align our hearts and minds with this truth and not just attempt new behavior?

#7. Jesus will continue to sustain his church until his return

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:8

One of the most significant truths for us as believers to hold on to, is that Jesus will hold on to us until the end. It is by his grace that we are saved, and it is by his grace that we will continue to be saved each day until we meet him. He tells us that it is his job to sustain us. By nature, we know that we cannot sustain ourselves, but that we are entirely reliant on him to do that work. He will sustain our church as well as the global church, even in these crazy times.

- ♣ Why is it so incredible to know that Christ is the one who sustains his church and not us?
- ♣ How do you think our response of gratitude should be lived out in our lives?