

The Greatness Of The Church

Introduction. If you talk to people about religion, there is a good chance that they will describe themselves as "spiritual." There are a lot of people who define themselves as "spiritual but not religious" and generally believe in the existence of many different "spiritual paths." These different paths usually revolve around a rejection of doctrine and organized religion.

But the Bible says that the path to God and heaven involves the church, and this church is great. The question immediately arises, "Which church are you talking about?" I am talking about the one Jesus promised to build -- the one you can read about in the New Testament. What makes the church of Christ great? I do not mean any disrespect to anyone, but it is certainly not the superiority of those who make it up. God's word can answer the question.

I. ***It Is The Only Body Which Has Christ As Its Foundation***

- A. The foundation is laid by preaching Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20). If the Bible does not authorize a religious body, then Christ cannot possibly be its foundation.
- B. The church is purchased by His blood, and Jesus never promised to purchase any others (Acts 20:28). Catholicism or denominationalism did not exist when the original purchase was made, so in a sense, we do not support "organized religion" either!
- C. Men are the head of every body on earth except the church of Christ. Christ is not one head over many bodies, but one head over one body (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18).

II. ***It Is The Only Body With Perfect And Everlasting Laws***

- A. The laws that govern true churches of Christ will never change (Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35).
- B. James calls the Bible the "perfect law of liberty" which means that it lacks nothing necessary to completeness (James 1:25).
- C. The laws of other religious bodies are constantly changing. If you find people in churches changing the word, you have not found the true church. We have only one lawgiver and He has said all that will be said (James 4:12; Jude 3).

III. ***Its Members Wear The Greatest Name Ever Worn By Men***

- A. What makes the name "Christian" so great? Because it came from heaven (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26).
- B. Human names came from men and they create division, but Christians glorify God in this name (1 Peter 4:16).

- C. The name "church of Christ" is an important term, but people ridicule it and brethren want to take it off their buildings (Romans 16:16). We should proudly wear it!

IV. ***It Is The Only Benevolent Institution Known To The Bible***

- A. God intended His church to work in a certain way. Being dissatisfied with God, men have set up other organizations through which the church can function, but they function without divine authority. It must always be "God's work in God's way."
- B. The new church eventually ran across its first benevolent need and the church, under divine supervision, took care of it (Acts 6:1-6). My treasury and God's treasury are not the same, and the church as a collective body only helped saints (Acts 2:44-45; Romans 15:25-26).
- C. This is not to say that individual Christians may not support worthwhile benevolent organizations, but there is no other found in the Bible except the church (Galatians 6:10).

V. ***It Is The Only Body In Which God Has Promised Salvation***

- A. Denominational bodies may promise salvation, but it is not possible because it is not God's promise (Colossians 2:18-19).
- B. Men and their institutions do not have salvation to offer because they do not have the truth. It must come from God, and the Holy Spirit said that Jesus will save His body (Ephesians 5:23). If He is the Savior of the body, then you have to let Him tell you what to do to be saved.

VI. ***It Is The Only Body In Which People Can Glorify God***

- A. We can glorify God in His collectivity, the local church, by doing everything according to the divine pattern (Romans 15:5-6; Ephesians 3:21; Hebrews 10:7).
- B. The final glorification will occur when time is removed and death is destroyed. The kingdom will then be turned back to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).

Conclusion. Looking back on all these, being spiritual in the sense of concentrating on heavenly realities beyond this world is good, but ignoring what God has said about the way to get back to Him is the wrong decision and will produce tragic results at the end of time.

You can belong to this great body of Christ, the church of Christ. To do so you must get rid of your sins through the blood of Jesus. All you have to do is see what lost believers were instructed to do on the day of Pentecost and follow their honorable example (Acts 2:37-38, 47).