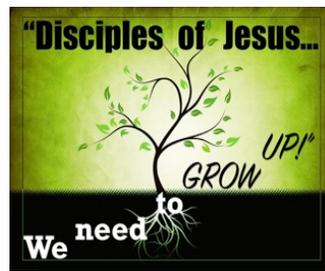


“Disciples of Jesus ... We need to GROW UP!”

Part 20: “The CHURCH ... Christ’s Body, existing for HIS purposes!”



**Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 12:12-27;
Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:18-22, 3:8-10, 20-21**

Introduction: You cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ without being a member of the Church!

I Corinthians 12:12-27: “Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it” (vs. 27).

The Church is local gatherings of disciples of Jesus Christ who live in oneness of mind and heart, recognizing Christ as Head.

Disciples of Jesus Christ serve Him by being actively engaged with other believers in order to declare the reign of Jesus Christ over all things, bringing glory to the Father in the name of our Lord!

Matthew 16:18: Jesus said, “I will build MY Church” (“ekklesia”).

I. The Church exists by God’s plan!

The Church is not now and never was man’s idea!

God planned to make Himself known first to Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and then to those whom He would call from the Gentiles, whom HE would call, “the Church.”

Ephesians 1:1-14: “... making know to US the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time ...” (vss. 9-10).

GOD’s existence does not depend on the Church, the Church’s existence depends on God’s plan!

Ephesians 1:15-23: “And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as Head over all things to the Church ...” (vs. 22).

Many who CLAIM to be disciples of Jesus Christ fail to acknowledge His authority as Head of the Church or the unique nature of the Church that God planned even before He created the earth itself.

II. The Church exists by God’s power!

Ephesians 2:4-10: “And you were dead ... BUT GOD ...!” (vss. 1,4).

The Church exists as a Body solely and absolutely by the power of Almighty God!!

Ephesians 2:18-22: “So then you are ... members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Cornerstone!” (vss. 19-20).

God’s power is at work in His true Church, transforming hearts and minds in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ!

I Samuel 17:26: “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?!?”

Ephesians 6:10: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of HIS might!”

III. The Church exists for GOD’s purpose!

Self - preservation is NOT our purpose!!

Through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God calls and empowers His Church.

Ephesians 3:7-13: “This was according to His eternal purpose ... in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him” (vss. 11-12).

Jesus came to call us and to empower us to accomplish GOD’s purpose!

Ephesians 3:14-21: “... to HIM be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus ...” (vs. 21).

The Church exists by God’s plan, by God’s power and for God’s purpose.

Serving Jesus begins by being a part of the true Church, the one Body of Christ!

Are YOU a member of Christ’s Body? Have you acknowledged the authority of the Head of the Church and submitted to those whom He has appointed? Are you serving Christ by serving His Body, the Church?