

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

- I. The book of Ephesians is considered to be THE book of the New Testament ABOUT the church.
 - A. The word “church” is found 9 times IN the book of Ephesians.
 1. The church is **HEADED** by Christ, the builder OF the church. Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23
 2. The church is a **DEMONSTRATION** of the wisdom of God who planned it from eternity, and demonstrated it’s development through the centuries. Eph. 3:10
 3. The church is the means by which God is **GLORIFIED**. Eph. 3:21
 4. Christ is the **SAVIOR** of the church, which is called the **body** of Christ. Eph. 5:23
 - a. This does not mean the church is His “physical body”, but the “spiritual” body, with Him being the head, and every saved individual being a *member* of that body. 1 Cor. 12:27
 - b. Just as the physical body has many members, Christ’s spiritual body consists of many saved, baptized individuals, who became members of that body. 1 Cor. 12:13
 5. The church is in total **SUBJECTION** to Christ, just as the wife in the home is to be in subjection to the husband. Eph. 5:24
 6. Then, we have the divine statement that Christ **LOVED** the church, which is the title of our lesson at this hour. Eph. 5;25
 - a. This does not mean that Christ ONCE loved the church (past tense), and no longer does so.
 - b. It simply means that Christ loved the church **so much** that He was willing die to cause it to exist, and will continue to love it as His own body. Cf Matt.16:18
 7. Next we learn that the church is **GLORIOUS** with all of it’s members practicing holy and righteous conduct in view of being with Him in eternity. Eph. 5:27
 8. Again, we learn that Christ **NOURISHES and CHERISHES**, as it follows His word and grows into being the holy temple of God. Eph. 5:29
 - a. The word is the means of our spiritual growth and the means our lives being more and more like Christ every day. Acts 20:17, 32; 2 Pet. 3:18
 - b. Just as a physical body needs daily food, SO does each “member” of the church needs a daily intake of the word of God in our lives.
 9. Finally, the church is a result of the unfolding of the **MYSTERY** of God, from the union of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and it’s marvelous unfolding of the divine plan through the centuries. Eph.5:32
 - B. These 9 passages in the book of Ephesians 5 tell us about the great love Christ had and still has for the church.
 - II. Now, if Christ loved the church, EVERY member of the church should have love FOR Christ, and for every member of the church, for all have been saved by the blood of Christ and brought into fellowship with Christ.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, we love CHRIST BY KEEPING HIS WORD.

- A. Obedience to the word is our way of saying we love Christ. John 14:15; 12:48; 1 John 5:3
- B. This obedience is manifested in FAITH, REPENTANCE and IMMERSION in water, to enjoy salvation and being a PART of the body of Christ. John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38, 40, 41, 47

II. 2nd, we love CHRIST IN WORSHIP AND RIGHTEOUS LIVING.

- A. The first century church was steadfast in worship to God. Acts 2:42; 20:6-12
- B. Faithful Christians are **anxious** to be with Christ in praise and worship to God.
 - 1, If the church meets only 2 hours a week (for study and worship), those who love God should LONG to be there and learn about God's will, and how to be like Christ. Phil. 1:20-26
 - 2. Then, if the church meets 3 or 4 hours a week, faithful members should strive to be a part OF such gatherings.
 - 3. Many make excuses for NOT being present, such as having other things to do, or staying home with their families.
 - a. If you have children of ANY age, your responsibilities is to guide them from earth to heaven.
 - b. Children NEED a good example of loving the church and being taught the will of God. Prov. 22:6; Eph.6:1-4

III. 3Rd, we can be INSPIRED BY OTHERS WHO LOVE THE CHURCH.

- A. Some in the PAST are an inspiration to those in the PRESENT.
 - 1. Christ commends Antipas to us in this regard. Rev. 2:10-13
 - 2. In the early days of Christianity, a man named Polycarp was tied to the stake and told that if he wanted to live, he must renounce Christ, but he simply replied, *"Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never denied me, so why should I renounce Him now, my Lord and my king"*, and with that statement, the fire was set, and Polycarp was burned to death, with faith on his lips.
- B. Then, there are faithful and devoted Christians who encourage US by their steadfastness and devotion to Christ.

CONCLUSION

- I. What about you, my friend, brother or fellow Christian?
 - A. If you have never obeyed Christ, why not do so today?
 - B. If you need to renew you conviction to Christ, you can do so today.
- II. The invitation is yours, while together we stand and sing.

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