

# **Ecclesiology: Doctrine of the Church**

## ***The Church, and why it Matters***

Associate Minister's Class

5-30-15

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**INTRODUCTION:** The New Testament English word, “church,” is a translation of the Greek word, “ekklesia,” which means “a called out group or assembly.” Technically, the New Testament church is a group/assembly of called-out believers.

### **THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

The universal church consists of all believers saved in the church age – all on earth, and all who are in heaven. Every member of the universal church is a regenerated believer, saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the Agent, by which an individual is placed [baptized] into the universal church [Body of Christ] (I Corinthians 12:13).

#### **Features of the Universal Church**

- a. There is spiritual unity, regardless of physical location, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, etc. (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:4-5).
- b. The universal church is empowered, sustained, and enlarged by Christ (Colossians 2:19).
- c. The universal church is impregnable – it cannot be overcome or overthrown (Matthew 16:18)
- d. The universal church is destined for eternal communion with Christ (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

### **THE LOCAL CHURCH**

#### **Features of the Local Church**

- a. The local church can be defined as a local [physical] Christian assembly or congregation (i.e. the church in Jerusalem, the church in Rome, the church in Thessalonica, etc.).
- b. Unlike the universal church, the local church is a “mixed body” of the saved, and the unsaved - those that have made a profession of faith, and those that have not made a profession of faith.
- c. The local church has organizational structure, which may be very simple, or quite elaborate.
- d. The primary focus of the local church should be worship, fellowship, instruction/teaching, and ministry.

## FORMATION OF THE CHURCH

### When Did the Church Begin?

- a. The Church did not exist in the Old Testament (Matthew 16:18)
- b. Jesus Predicted the Holy Spirit's work in forming the church (Acts 1:5).
- c. The church began at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

## METAPHORS THAT MATTER

### Figures of Speech That Describe the Church

- a. The Body (Colossians 1:18)
- b. The Bride (Ephesians 5:23)
- c. Flock (I Peter 5:2)
- d. Branches (John 15:1-7)

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH

### Christ' Relationship to the Church

- a. Jesus died for the church (Ephesians 5:25)
- b. Jesus is sanctifying the church (Ephesians 5:26-27)
- c. Jesus loves the church (Ephesians 5:29)
- d. Jesus is coming back for the church (I Thessalonians 4:16-17)

## SUMMARY