

His Ministry is our ministry

**God meets our
peoples needs
by giving
us an
Abundance**

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The Church is made up of humble obedient believers infused by the Spirit of Christ Jesus. Therefore, the Church is in the world representing Christ. It works as a Church without walls to hold it back so it can be faithfully doing God's work?

We are Jesus' Church, His disciples who will become like Him. (Matt 10:24) He died for the world and He calls on us to die to self in order to follow Him as His witnesses in the world. (Luke 9:23) He is the Light of the world, (John 1:4, 8:12) and He sends us out as the light of the world. (Mat 5:14) He is the Son of God (John 3:16-17) and now we are sons of God.

Gal 3:26

We are also His Church to do His work

'He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.'

Col 1:18

'You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the Excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.'

1 Pet 2:5, 9

We are not just His body, His life is our life

Compete sanctification into the Body of Christ is a mystery. But this life changing transformation into His life is absolutely essential if God's plan is going to do its work in the world.

Mature people of faith know being born again is not the end of His work, but a means to an end, for through the work of purification God can empower and use those who have been delivered from the darkness to work in the Kingdom of His Son. *'For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When*

Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.'

Col 3:3-4

The real Church lives for His ministry

The Body of the Church does not exist for itself; it exists to serve our Lord in doing the will of God. *'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.'*

Eph 2:10

The Christian Church is supposed to be made up of those who will trust and obey Him for there is no other way to please God and share in His life.

This life of Christ which is to be lived in His body the Church is not a life you manufacture using your own human resources and ability, it's a life which is only possible in complete dependence on Him. As a result believers have received the Holy Spirit to enable them to walk as Jesus walked, because the Holy Spirit provides them with the power to overcome sin

in their own lives while showing forth His life and doing His work in the world of darkness.

God provides the ability to obey. The word of God says "*I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.*" (Ezek 36:27) '*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*' (Gal 5:16) '*For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*'

Phil 2:13

The body of believers with the indwelling Spirit is now the temple of God, (1 Cor 6:19) for God lives in them. He does not live in buildings made of bricks and stones. He lives in faithful believers so He can impart His life to them and through them by His Spirit, (Gal 5:22-23) so they can stand before Him as His obedient servants while working as His priest to the world.

1 Pet 2:9

As His obedient servants they have in Christ all the Church needs to function as the Life of Christ the Risen Lord.

Each member of His priesthood has been equipped by the Holy Spirit of God to function as He determines, (1 Cor 12:6, 11) so the body of Christ as His Church lacks nothing which is needed to serve our Master.

To ensure all the faithful are of one mind in with their Lord, the Holy Spirit will instruct those who follow Christ as His disciples, and call on them to be careful to obey all He has commanded.

Therefore believers are to be taught by the Spirit of God in harmony with God's word, so that they are all in step with Him and each other and not running off making their own way and interpreting scripture according to their own understanding.

It is His presence and therefore His fruit, the quality of His life that is needed if we are going to know what we need to know under

His guidance as we serve God with all our hearts and minds and love our neighbour as ourselves.

The Church is to be a holy priesthood designed and managed by Christ alone who is the one leader all obey.

In this Church there will be leaders to guide and teach the people under the support of the Holy Spirit; but those who are chosen to lead will be humble and able to set a good example of the sacrificial life.

Far from being masters of ceremony, they will not to take over Christ's control or stand in His place so that He is unable to fulfil the ministry of the whole priesthood of believers.

Where is this Church now?

Unfortunately at this time, the Church as described in the New Testament does not exist in many places. Instead, the old order of religious practice from the Old Testament which was done away with at the resurrection

of Christ by the giving of His Spirit has once again been re-implemented.

When Constantine installed Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire in 313 AD making himself its first Pope, he effectively dethroned the Holy Spirit, and along with Him God's plan for His people to walk with Him in the world as His priest. In effect he reinstated the priesthood of the old testament with its focus on the temple as the dwelling place of God, and therefore on its priest who would act as intermediaries between God and men.

In this way Christianity became conditioned into the social and theological life of the world so that the original way of Christ was distorted and hidden to most except for a small remnant who maintained what Christ had said and taught. It was only the faithful through history who were true to what is recorded in the New Testament, believing they should do as they were taught as lead by

the Spirit regardless of the cost they suffered from the world.

This new worldly culture of ‘the way’ of Christ has domesticated God making Him our servant who will do all we ask. It has also robbed the Church of its power through the reimposition of the old priesthood, where the priest takes centre stage in his temple made by human hands, so that the people who are supposed to serve God become spectators.

Therefore many people no longer experience the deep intimacy with God which was opened up to them by the Lord Jesus so they could live every day face to face with God. Now many don't understand the reality of the Spirit of God who actually lives within them for the very purpose of living face to face with God.

Consider the Churches resources

Another problem comes with ‘the building’ being central to all religious practice, is that ‘the building’ absorbs a huge proportion of

the money that can be raised from the congregation, and it does this in unequal comparison to the work of caring for the poor of the Church and reaching the lost.

In many ways the Church has returned to the idea of the God who lives up there somewhere, and a Spirit who must be called down here to do the miraculous work of God. As much as we continue to ignorantly follow this worldly culture of the Church, we have sold our people short of their spiritual power to please God, including their spiritual inheritance.

Because many want the church to grow in strength and influence, it includes all people, regardless of their devotion to Christ, but simply on basis of the idea that God loves everyone. So the basic necessities of a true faith are watered down in order not to offend the unbeliever who will not obey God. Believing in Christ as Lord and Master with a sincere and obedient repentance and the filling

of the Spirit are no longer to be the marks of Church membership in many places.

In many instances, non believers take their place alongside believers as if they share the same spiritual destiny. Because of this, disbelief and disobedience concerning the Gospel has become normal for too many, so now we see the Church is full of unbelievers who think because they have been told God loves them, they can still have their place in the world and at the same time be safe in the Church, forgetting or being ignorant of the fact that obedience to Christ is mandatory for all who desire eternal life. Matt 7:21-23

Because of this many churches have been run as a business, and we have in affect accepted the third temptation of Christ by Satan for a worldly kingdom instead of surrendering to the will of God. (Matt 4:8-10) Therefore we have a Church full of people who want to create their own kingdoms; people who are more interested in buildings and numbers than in obedience and sacrificial service in the

manner of Christ, who gave up all so we could be like Him and do as He did in overcoming the works of Satan.

Is it no wonder that people in many Churches seek material prosperity and lack the spiritual maturity needed for a life of self sacrifice?

Consequently the focus for many is now on bricks and mortar and not on seeking the Kingdom of God's rule to be the first thing in the hearts of all God's people through absolute obedience to the Gospel of Christ.

Therefore the resources of God are not used for the ministry of the needy but are diverted to the wants of comfortable people who already have more then they need. Jesus said *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."* Matt 6:24

Because of this wrong focus, the tithe of the Old Testament is used to feed the desires of those who have a worldly focus; while at the

same time it is used as a guilt offering for the misguided who think they have done all they need to do for God because they have given their hour and 10% of their money.

However, when Jesus Christ provided the perfect sacrifice on a cross once for all, the imperfect religious practice of the Old Testament, with its animal sacrifices, including its human priesthood, was done away with as no longer being required.

Therefore the tithe and the offerings designed to keep the priests as mediators between men and God also passed away. Jesus Christ is now the only mediator between man and God.

1 Tim 2:5

In the new spiritual covenant Christ founded with His death and resurrection, all we have and are belongs to God, for He keeps us and provides for us as His priesthood. He provides for our needs, not what we may want to possess. Also our free will offerings should

not be limited by idea that what we have is ours for our enjoyment.

Jesus teaches us that if we trust God He will provide for our legitimate needs. *"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

Matt 6:31-33

Since God our Father has provided all we have received, often above what we need; after we have taken responsibility for our legitimate necessities, what remains is for His disposal to the needy in the Church and its ministry.

Many who are well provided for by God are able to give much more than the so called 10%, therefore to be willing to give only what is mandated by an outdated law, they indeed

rob God; since all they have above what they legitimately need is His according to His purpose. Since God gives an abundance to many, wealth is having more than we legitimately need.

It is not grace that demands money from those who struggle to provide for their basic needs of life as God upholds them in poverty; instead, it is gracious for the Church to give to those who do not have the world's goods while they themselves have plenty. (1 John 3:17) It is also important to remember, that while those who are called to work in the Word will be provided for according to their legitimate necessities by the Church, they are not there to build an earthly paradise for their own comfort.

Is it legitimate use of God's money to pander to our desire for comfortable surroundings while our brothers and sisters in other places don't have enough to eat? It is legitimate we have a reliable car where need requires, but is it legitimate we have an expensive model to

satisfy our vanity or to gain the approval of men? If ordinary trousers will provide for my modesty and reliable service, is it legitimate for me to spend twice as much or even more because I prefer the finer cloth or the better cut? Is it legitimate my brothers and sisters living in poverty suffer illness and death because I use God's provision for my pride and vanity? Do I need a house at the upper limit of the market, or will something in the middle range adequately serve my purpose?

Our excess, which is found in God's provision beyond our legitimate requirements, is for His other children who live in poverty. God needs wealthy children to distribute His provision to His other children in need.

We are reminded repeatedly in God's word not to forget the poor. *'They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.'* (Gal 2:10) *And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.'* (Heb 13:16) *'For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to*

make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.' (Rom 15:26) *'But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?'* 1 John 3:17

Besides, the more we find our life in Christ the less we are attracted to the things of the world that eat away our God's resources.

Another problem we face is that many pastors are worried about how they will maintain the buildings and equipment the Church has accumulated if they don't insist on a tithe; simply because many in their congregations wouldn't give anything if there wasn't some sort of demand they do so.

What was once illegitimate having become redundant in the temple of God has now become legitimate because of our need to meet our financial responsibilities in the world; so in effect, we have compromised our mission as the body of Christ. The reluctance

of some to give freely has now become the demand to get what should be free.

In fact, many pastors wouldn't receive enough to live on if it wasn't for the so called tithe. This self interest on the part of those who occupy our Churches only reflects on the fact that we haven't stuck to the whole truth and only the truth of God. We have watered down God's word and now we wonder why we lack His provision. If we continue with 'business as usual' we no longer trust in God for our needs, but the unrepentant who fill our Churches.

What must we do to fulfil His ministry?

If we want to see the Church return to the vibrant life depicted in the early chapters of the Book of Acts, we need to return to the New Testament model revealed there. We need to put on Christ to obey all of God's word and live by the example revealed in Christ as Paul taught in Philippians. *'Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the*

form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. '

Phil 2:5-8

If the people of God would return to His way, they will find His enabling power to see and do what He has declared and called on them to do as they reflect the life of His Son through His body the Church. We are a royal priesthood committed to living in the way of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we have done as He commanded we will not be disappointed when we finally come to stand before Him.

'Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.'

2 Cor 9:7-8

Living Water Resources



Come to the river

'And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.'

2 Cor 9:8

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