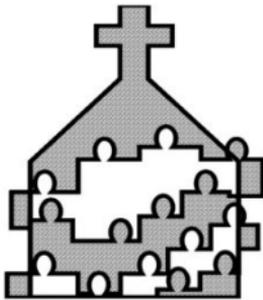




**To which  
Church  
Do you  
belong?**



JOURNEY  
OF  
*Faith*



*Welcome  
to our Church*



## *To which Church do you belong?*

There are many ideas as to what the church is supposed to be in the minds of many people who would prefer to go to heaven when they die. While they may not say it outright, their ideas reveal what their heart intends. Many of these thoughts are the result of the reasoning of men who cannot accept that God has only one Church and He has determined how it will be in the world.

Some prefer the church to be a kind of Kindergarten. They delight in the words of Jesus who said "*Suffer not the children to come unto Me.*" Only baby food needed here please. Here there is a fear of growing up.

Some desire a Convalescent home. This is the choice of those who don't want to face struggling for righteousness anymore, all they hear is "*Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden.*" For them sympathy abounds.

Or a general School for beginners! *Come and learn of Me.* Beginning with the elementary things of God. Those in elementary school are

mostly interested in playing at recess and lunch time.

Some look for a graduation school. The ongoing task of learning the doctrine of God, this can be always learning and never knowing. The information minded have substituted gaining knowledge for the discipline of putting what is learnt into practice.

Many want prosperity on earth. *"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."* You can have abundance of life now and enjoy a comfortable lifestyle. This paradise on earth with a comfortable life is chosen by those who want to keep the good things of life and have the promise of heaven as well.

Some prefer religious institutions. This is learning the secret of the forms of worship, and putting on the outer garments. It can include devotion to forbidden idols and images, instead of praying to the Father, it invites us to pray to those who have died.

Some look for a Sanctuary. *"find rest for our souls"* This is a safe place to be sheltered

from the chaos of the world. Here it is supposed we can be hidden from the world in Christ.

The Convalescent home is chosen to avoid the daily discipline needed for facing the enemy as a soldier of salvation, but convalescence is not supposed to be terminal, it is to restore.

Some want a wayside inn. This is being obsessed with hearing "*Wait for the Lord.*" Now there is no need to worry because God will do everything that needs to be done, I have no responsibility to do anything.

While some of these way stations may have a little element of truth, by themselves they avoid the truth, they replace the truth with a lie. By themselves they are false teachings. By themselves they refuse to take up our cross and "*put on Jesus Christ*". Rom 13:14

There is no way of avoiding the fact that Jesus calls all who want eternal life to come to Him and take up their cross to live the crucified life He lived. (Luke9:23) He wants us to be like Him so one day we may rule with Him.

The Lord Jesus only calls followers who will lay down their lives to live His life. He wants disciples, and disciples are in training to become just like their Master. This is life under Christ as the head is the real Church which is His body. With the head of the body being Jesus Christ, the body can and should only function as the head determines He wants things to be. The head tells the body how to live.

This means there is the need for abiding in the teaching of John 15 where Jesus says we must abide in Him if we are to produce fruit for the kingdom of God. Abiding in Him means we are so well attached to Him we gain all we need for life from His life so we can fulfil His mission on earth.

We do not come with our own agenda, we do not come with our own plans or ability to serve God, we come as dead branches, and He gives us life when we obey Him. A failure to attach ourselves to Christ means we will have an unfruitful life with the result the Father will prune the useless branch to improve the life of the vine.

If we have accepted a deceiving substitute in place of our cross, which means we need to live as He lived, we have a ticket to heaven made by men, and there is no heavenly bus coming that will accept that ticket. If we have taken a short cut, we have not joined the way of fellowship of those who have entered by the narrow gate.

Most of the religious accepting world believes in the ticket factory made by men so what man wants is close enough. Very few people in the world want to identify with Christ and carry a cross to the point of living His life under the control of the Spirit of God.

Therefore most of the people we know may believe something about God but have a ticket, and we are more than likely to be in the same boat if we haven't surrendered all to live for God in Christ.

But if we are with Christ, we have taken up our cross, we should sound a warning to everyone who will listen; realising as we do we will probably be treated the same as He

was when He warned the world of religious people of His day.

### **The real Church**

The Church is supposed to be the living body of Christ, doing the work of Christ, speaking His words as He spoke the words of the Father. As His body the church is to do as He did, just as He only did what He saw the Father doing. The church is to live as He lived amongst men.

The church is to obey Christ just as He complied with the will of God. The church is to represent Christ on earth so that His will is done and the Father is glorified. The church is to reveal the glory of Christ in God to a world living in darkness. The church is to take His message of salvation to all so that He might be the first born of many brethren.

The church is not to attempt to live as Christ under its own strength, but endeavouring always to be led and directed by the Spirit of God as the members of Christ's body who live in obedience to the whole truth which the

Spirit has been given to impart and compel as a way of life.

However, the Spirit of God is only effective in transforming the lives of those who obey Him. The evidence of the work of the Spirit is a life growing in Christ like conformity; with His passion and desire for the world lost in the darkness of the will of men who want to make their own tickets to heaven. The only way to heaven is to have a cross; our cross is our key to heaven's door. No tickets please.

The church is Christ and Christ is the church. If Christ is not all for us and in us to fulfil His plan to lead men out of the darkness into the kingdom of God, then we have a soft pacifier from Satan to keep us from Christ. Members of the real Church put on Christ.      Rom 13:14

The church is to exist as the life of Christ in the context of the world. They are in the world but not belonging to the world.      John 17:16

The church is made up of those who Christ has called to come and die with Him so they can live with God.      Luke 9:23

The church is the light of God in a world of darkness. The church provides the answer for all who live in suffering in the darkness of the world. John 8:12

The church is the body of Christ to minister healing to the broken hearted. 1 Cor 12:27

In order for the church to be the healing of God it needs to live the life of Christ. Attachment to the true vine means gaining life from the vine in order to produce fruit that will last. John 15:5

Membership of the body of Christ requires the life of Christ to be living in the members. If we don't have Christ we are still dead people living in the world. 1 John 5:12

The life of Christ presumes we will be arriving at maturity, as a grown man is able to fully represent his father. Col 1:28

The body of Christ includes all who have given their own life up to receive Christ's life. Gal 2:20

The Lord Jesus has decreed that all believers would be one as He so the Father are one.

John 17:21

This oneness was not just some mystical union but a living reality. The body is to live the Christ life on earth even while Christ is maintaining the Church in heaven as its authoritative head.

Col 1:18

The real Church speaks the words of Christ in their proper context and order. To divide His word up to be taken out of His given context is to misrepresent God.

The body without the head is a dead carcass. The dissected part does not represent the body, but is just some polluted offal.

### **The Holy Spirit Governs the Church**

The Holy Spirit is the giver of life to the body as the representative of Christ. Therefore the Holy Spirit governs the growth and development of the whole body so it can successfully represent Christ to the world. The Holy Spirit is the presence of Christ in His Church. The Holy Spirit is here to accomplish

the work of Christ through His church in the world. He does this by indwelling each member.

The Holy Spirit is the only life that should be evident in the body of Christ, because He brings the life of Christ to live in those who are surrendered unto Him.

Because the Spirit of God is to be our life He is concerned with the sanctification or the transformation of the believer so they grow up into Christ.

The Holy Spirit empowers every believer with a spiritual ability so they can contribute to the life of the body according to His desire.

The Holy Spirit places each member in the body where He determines is best.

The Holy Spirit allocates to each member the ministry He requires them to perform.

Since the Holy Spirit governs every aspect of the life of the body of Christ, no member can claim superiority over another. Members have one head, and that is the Spirit of the living Christ.

*‘Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.’*

1 Cor 12:4-7

*‘But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.’*

2 Cor 12:11

*‘For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.’*

1 Cor 12:13

*‘But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body.’*

1 Cor 12:18-20

*‘God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honour to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice*

*with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.'* 1 Cor 12:24-27

As there are many parts of the body of Christ, there are also a number of aspects to how it functions according to the growth of the whole.

The different aspects of the growing body only exist to fulfil the requirements of Christ as He works for the kingdom of God in the lives of all men, the living, and the dead. Each member of the Church is as important as any other member.

Since the body includes all its individual parts, there are no lone strangers acting individually as if they represent someone they are not part of. The individual part cannot be useful to God because it is severed from the head of the body and therefore has no life of its own.

Those who belong to the real church are to be led by the Spirit of Christ and fulfil the plans of Christ. If we are not giving ourselves over to be led by the Spirit to obey Him, we don't belong to Christ and His Church.

## **The Church is also the Army of Christ**

The Christian life is spiritual warfare. The substitute church and the easy going life don't require everyone to be putting on the full armour of God. *'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.'*

Eph 6:10-11

When a soldier goes on furlough he indulges himself in worldly things, but then he must go back to his Unit or he will be charged with being absent without leave. *'No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.'* 2 Tim 2:4

Show me a man who isn't suffering opposition from the enemy of God and I will show you a man that hasn't joined the battle and isn't declaring the cross of Christ. Show me a man whose Christian life is a walk in the park, and I will show you a man who is AWOL, absent without leave, and hasn't taken up his cross daily to follow his heavenly Master.

## **The world has its own false church**

The world is the incubator for all that would prevent men looking to live under the authority of God. In the world, and everything that falls short of the Christ life is substituted for living in Christ.

While the world was intended to display the glory of God, it is now used to glorify men. Where the health of the world was dependent on the life of the Spirit, it has now been subjected to the flesh and darkness.

The world takes individual aspects of the truth of God's will for the church to be the life of Christ, and substitutes them for the whole and makes the truth of God's will a deception. The world insists it is only needed to believe God exists, it is not necessary to obey because God can do it all by himself. The world offers a multitude of counterfeit alternative religious ways of worship to deceive the gullible that prefer the easiest option. Following the easiest spiritual way that suits fallible man means keeping our options open so we can please ourselves about what we believe.

The obstinate way of men doesn't allow for the exclusive right of God to demand all our allegiance and obedience to live according to His will as seen in Christ.

The world religions insist man can pray to those who have died, or to mythical beings, or to idols and look to mere men who present themselves as the head of the church.

The world is clever at manufacturing slight variations to the plan of God in Christ, with the result that Christ is no longer the exclusive only Son of God who came to live in the flesh and die as God's perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Therefore because of the total corruption of the souls of men regarding the truth of God, it is necessary for men to die to themselves in order to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour.

### **Seeing through the deception**

Yes, it could be said the body of Christ includes a kindergarten for the nurture of babies who have had a difficult birth. Kindergarten is like a nursery for infants who

require mother's milk. Kindergarten is the experience of preschool, including colouring books and children picture stories. Those who are interested in kindergarten don't want to be burdened with growing up.

Yes joining the Church and beginning discipleship does include being taught the basic things of faith. The training of disciples also means going on to learn the greater truths of the doctrine of God.

The Church can also be a place of convalescence for those who have endured to the point of exhaustion, but it is a place of preparation to return to the fight.

Jesus has called us to abundant life, but when Jesus said we can have abundant life He was speaking of His life in abundance, He wasn't talking of having what the world offers in abundance.

The religious minded think that learning the secret and forms of worship is the same as walking with God, but it is only the outer garments used to prepare the mind for the real thing. Those who prefer a sanctuary are

looking for a safe place to be sheltered from the troubles of the world. They hope to remain hidden from the troubles of the world by claiming Christ. However Jesus intended we live in the world and find all we need in Him as we battle with the darkness of men who refuse to repent and obey God.

Then there are many who just want a wayside inn where they can rest and wait on God to finalise their journey. They are tired of having to persevere and don't want to worry anymore, hoping God will do everything. Most if not all the above want to find their security in some misguided idea of belonging to Christ.

### **Which church do you belong too?**

For a great many who claim to be part of the Church, belonging to Christ is the end of their longing. Belonging to the Church is seen as their guarantee that God will fulfil all His promises for them.

The wrong church is the one people think they have because they believe in God. But God calls those who would be saved to repent, and repenting means giving over our lives in an

act of absolute surrender to obey God in changing our minds about who will rule in us.

Belonging to the real church means we are no longer our own to decide how we live. Belonging to Christ means there has been a change of ownership. God now decides how we should live and what we are to be doing.

How is it possible to belong to another and still live as if we are free to please ourselves?

All ideas about the church that short cut the teaching of Christ to deny ourselves and take up our cross, deny we belong to the kingdom of God. Instead this way of thinking indicates we have built our religious castle in the sand.

Evidence of belonging to the real church is demonstrated by the way we seek to please God in all things as made clear in the Bible. This is far from pleasing ourselves.

The wrong church allows for self determination in deciding many things. Unless there is a clear call for self denial in order to walk as Jesus walked and therefore to suffer

with Him, the claim of belonging has little or no support.

The body of Christ cannot live the Christ life if the focus is only on the gift of belonging, for if that is the end of it, the body might as well be dead. For life to exist belonging must result in reproducing the life of the host.

If belonging is the only goal, it can and often means living in the world according to its purposes, while at the same time feeling you are safe in the Church because you think you belong to God.

This was the case in Sardis. *“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.’”*

Rev 3:1

However Jesus always taught that belonging to Him had another more important meaning. He said, *“Who is My mother and who are My brothers?”* And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, *“Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does*

*the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”’*

Matt 12:48-50

And if this is not enough to convince you, He went on to say. *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’*

Matt 7:21-23

What’s more, we can only be alive in Christ if we have died to ourselves first with Him. And if we have died to our old life we need a new life to live if indeed we have been raised up with Him. What’s more, this new life which God has called us to express can only be the life of Christ and no other.

Church is the living body of Christ made up of all those who have given their life to His in order to live His life and do His will. But

many don't want to grow, but growth is the normal out working of the inner life of the Spirit of Christ.

### **The Church is seeking mature believers who live for Christ**

*'Concerning Him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.'*

Heb 5:11-12

No one who belongs to Christ can live in isolation to His body and live. *'Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.'*

1 Cor 12:27

No one who belongs to Christ can be excluded from being a holy temple where God lives. *'Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?'*

I Cor 3:16

No one who belongs to Christ's body can claim to still be their own master and do their

own thing. *'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?'*

1 Cor 6:19

If there is no more to our understanding than we belong to the body of Christ, we will not grasp the fact that God intends to live His life through us as we follow the example of the Lord in living as His disciple.

The Body exists for the sole purpose that Christ's life can be manifest to the world. All those who are in Christ, in His Body, are to represent His life by the power of the Holy Spirit who equips all for this very purpose.

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

Compete redemption and sanctification into the Body of Christ is indeed a mystery to many who look only to what they can see with their eyes. But this Holy work of a life changing transformation into His life is absolutely essential if God's plan is going to be put into motion by people of faith who have spiritual eyes that see the way God sees.

Mature people of faith know that these early beginnings are not the end of His work but a means to an end, for through this work of purification God can use those who have been delivered from the darkness to work in the Kingdom of His Son.

*'That is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.'*

Col 1:26-28

No one who belongs to Christ can entertain the idea there is any other way to glory but by the means of grace Christ has provided through the Church as His living body to be sacrificed for the good of the world. *'Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."*

John 14:6

No one who belongs to Christ should be in doubt of seeing His glory. *'When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.'* Col 3:4

To see the glory of God and know we have been transformed into the image of Christ by being included in His body the Church means we are under the leading of the Holy Spirit?

*'See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.'* 1 John 3:1-3

We only glorify Christ in the world as His body when we faithfully teach only what He taught, and we live as He lived; then He will glorify us who represent His life. Jesus isn't representing in heaven those who want to

belong on their own terms. He only supports those who accept all His commands with joy.

The unity Jesus prayed for His church in John 17 is the unity we have in Him and the Father when we abide in His word and share in abiding in His life as one body in Him.

### **Refuse the false church**

The real church doesn't hid from the fact that to receive eternal life we have to relinquish our hold on the natural life of the flesh which lives by the principles of pride and values of self centred man. The wrong church, whether of our own creation, or something that has been offered to us, offers heaven without the need to deny ourselves and the ways of the world in order to take up our cross to follow Christ and share in His suffering. Our cross is the only key we can use to get into heaven. *'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.'*

Rom 13:14

## **The affirmation of the real church**

**Our charge:** *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rom 13:14

**Our commission:** *Make disciples.* Matt 28:29

**Our comfort:** *His banner over me is love.*

Song of Solomon 2:4

**Our consolation:** *He will keep in perfect peace those whose mind is fixed on Him.*

Isaiah 26:3

**Our consummation:** *“The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven.” and my own new name.”*

Rev 3:12

*'Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.'*

Joshua 24:15

**Choose wisely.** *'Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.'*

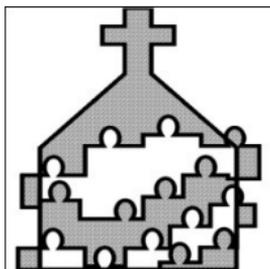
Heb 12:28-29



# Living Water Resources



## Come to the River



JOURNEY  
OF  
*Faith*



*Welcome  
to our Church*



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