

Part 4. Jesus our Redeemer

Lesson 3: Ecclesiology – The Church, The Body of Christ

Lesson Summary

Ecclesiology is the study of the Church, God's masterpiece in the age of grace (Matt. 16:18). The Church is not man's invention but God's redeemed people—born of the Spirit, purchased by the Son, and established for the Father's glory. Scripture describes the Church as both **universal**—all believers baptized into Christ (1 Cor. 12:13)—and **local**, visible gatherings for worship, fellowship, and mission (Acts 2:42–47). Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18), believers are His Body (Rom. 12:4–5), and the Church is also His Bride, being sanctified and awaiting union with Him (Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:7–9). The Church's mission is the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 1:8), its foundation is God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16–17), and its power comes from the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 12:4–11). Leadership includes elders/pastors who shepherd (1 Tim. 3:1–7) and deacons who serve (1 Tim. 3:8–13). All believers are priests (1 Pet. 2:9), called to serve, guard the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), exercise discipline when needed (Matt. 18:15–17), and remain faithful until Christ returns (1 Thess. 4:16–17). The Church is Christ's chosen instrument to display His wisdom, declare His truth, and disciple His people.

Key Takeaways

- **Definition:** The Church = God's called-out people, universal and local (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:13).
- **Identity:** Christ is Head, believers are His Body (Col. 1:18; Rom. 12:4–5), and the Church is His Bride (Eph. 5:25–27).
- **Mission:** Make disciples through evangelism, baptism, and teaching (Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 1:8).
- **Worship & Fellowship:** Gather for teaching, prayer, fellowship, and ordinances (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23–26).
- **Leadership:** Elders shepherd; deacons serve; all believers are priests before God (1 Pet. 2:9).
- **Authority:** Scripture is final; false teaching must be resisted (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Acts 20:29–30).
- **Spiritual Gifts:** The Spirit empowers believers for service and unity (1 Cor. 12:4–11; Eph. 4:11–12).
- **End Times:** The Church must remain faithful, pure, and mission-focused until Christ returns (1 Thess. 4:16–17; Jude 24–25).

Questions & Answers

1. **Q:** What is the difference between the universal and local church?
A: The universal Church is all believers across time (1 Cor. 12:13); the local church is a gathered body in a specific place (Acts 2:42).
2. **Q:** Who is the true Head of the Church?
A: Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18).
3. **Q:** How is the Church described in Scripture?
A: As Christ's Body (Rom. 12:4–5) and His Bride (Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:7–9).
4. **Q:** What is the mission of the Church?
A: To make disciples, baptize, teach, and bear witness to Christ (Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 1:8).

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5. **Q:** What are the biblical offices of leadership in the Church?
A: Elders/pastors who shepherd (1 Tim. 3:1–7) and deacons who serve (1 Tim. 3:8–13).
6. **Q:** What is the “priesthood of all believers”?
A: Every believer has direct access to God and is called to serve in His kingdom (1 Pet. 2:9).
7. **Q:** Why is church discipline necessary?
A: To restore the sinner, protect the body, and maintain purity (Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5:6–7).
8. **Q:** How does the Spirit equip the Church?
A: Through diverse gifts for edification, unity, and service (1 Cor. 12:4–11; Eph. 4:11–12).

“The Church is Christ’s Body and Bride—built by Him, empowered by the Spirit, anchored in His Word, and sent into the world until He returns.”