

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Sermon Series: Body Building
Title: A High View of the Church
Speaker: Matt Ewert
Text: Matthew 16:13-20; Exodus 35:20-36:7
Date: April 8, 2018



WARM-UP

"We are relentless consumers, like talking to fish about water."

You are planning to purchase a new dishwasher. What would you do **first**:

- Drive around town and look for the stores that stock dishwashers?
- Would you call a trusted friend to get her/his opinion on what brand to buy?
- Get online and research the consumer reports on various brands?

Imagine your family is relocating to a new city. You have three kids – ages 5, 9, 14. You do plan to find a church in your new location. As parents, what would be the determining factors in deciding on your new church? Which three factors would be **most important** for you and your family? Which two would be **least important** factors?

- Style of worship
- The theology of their church
- The children's program and leadership
- The vision and mission statement of their church
- The youth program and leadership
- The effectiveness of the preaching
- Small groups and leadership

DISCUSSION

REVIEW:

Text 1: Matthew 16:13-20

• Church as "ekklesia" – an assembly

⇒ In Old Testament – the assembly of the people of Israel (*qahal*)

⇒ In New Testament – an assembly, a community:

- * We are a covenant people – with Jesus as Lord
- * We are people in relationship with one another – we come together in Jesus' name
- * We are people in relationship with God – transformed by Jesus
- * We are people on mission in the name of Jesus – bringing transformation to our community and world

• Reconnecting Jesus to the Church:

⇒ Current thinking: "We like Jesus, but not the church." Where do you see this?

⇒ **Two New Testament pictures of the Church:**

1. A *Body*: Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:24
Jesus is the Head – so you can't divorce Jesus from his body
2. A *Bride*: 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 19:7
"To have a relationship with Jesus means saying "Yes" to becoming the Bride."

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DISCUSSION

⇒ **An Old Testament picture of God's Community:** Genesis 35:20 – 36:7

1. 35:29: "All men and women, the people of Israel whose heart had moved them to *bring anything* for the work..."
2. 36:2: "...everyone whose heart stirred him up to come and *do the work*..."
3. The whole assembly rallied around the project – hearts stirred, spirits moved, giving of resources, gifts and talents.
4. The construction of the tabernacle was a key part of renewing the relationship of between God and His covenant people.

Applications, Ponderings and Implications: What's a High View of the Church

- **What does it mean to be the "church?"** This is a HUGE topic! We could go in a number of different directions but let's make **some assumptions** coming out of Pastor Matt's message:
 - ⇒ We agree that we cannot make it alone as Christ-followers. We need each other.
 - ⇒ We agree that we are responsible for and accountable to each other.
 - ⇒ We mentally aspire to be a church that exercises "difference-making faith," "*radically transformed by Jesus...*" (*where we*) *create positive change wherever (we) go...who make God's kingdom visible in (our) homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, schools and places of recreation...*"
 - ⇒ If we are to be **on mission**, we need to wrestle with the elephant in the room – **consumerism**.
 - ⇒ **How do you respond to this supposed "elephant in the room?"**
 - "The people in our churches have been formed into spiritual consumers. This is who we are... Almost everything in our culture shapes us in this direction...*It is countercultural to consider making decisions on a basis other than how it benefits me...* But we must be convinced that this is contrary to the teaching of Jesus, the one who invited us to deny ourselves and lose our lives in order to find them."
(*Renovating the Church* – Carlson and Luekin)
 - * Do you agree that there is an elephant in the room?
 - * How does the Carlson statement challenge you?
 - * How does living in the Kingdom of God challenge our consumerist culture?
- **Moving from the Aspirational (a dream) to the Missional (reality) this week:**
 - ⇒ Cross your fence – Do something to bless or simply converse with one neighbour on your street.
 - ⇒ Cross your street – Connect with someone who is close to your home, but with whom you have not built a relationship.
 - ⇒ Other ideas from your group.