

**I. The Identity of the Church (vv 4-5, 9)**

- A.** The Church is those who have been brought to Christ
  - 1) The Church as Visible (Mt 11:28)
  - 2) The Church as Invisible
- B.** Everything the Church is, is built upon Christ Jesus
  - 1) Christ rejected indeed by men, chosen by God (Isa 53:3a, 42:1a)
  - 2) Christ as precious to God (Jn 3:35)
  - 3) Christ as precious to the Church (Song of Songs 7:10-12)
- C.** The Church as a spiritual house
- D.** The Church as an holy nation
- E.** The Church as a holy and royal priesthood
- F.** The Vocation of the Church (Heb 13:15)
- G.** The Mediator of the Church (Lk 12:47)
- H.** Uses from the Text
  - 1) The Church is to be God-Centered, not man-centered.
  - 2) Remember the primacy of our identity in Christ (Psa 127:1)
  - 3) Delight in the simplicity of biblical worship (Mk 13:1-2)
  - 4) We are here reminded of the centrality of the Church in our life.

**II. The Church Contrasted with the World (vv 6-8)**

- A.** A different faith
  - 1) The Church believes upon Christ
  - 2) The world rejects Christ
- B.** A different foundation
  - 1) The Church is built upon Christ as revealed in the (Psa 118:22; Isa 8:14)
  - 2) The world stumbles over Christ (Mk 6:1-3)
- C.** A different fruit
  - 1) The Church is obedient to Christ (Jms 2:14, 18-20)
  - 2) The world is disobedient to Christ (1 Jn 2:16)
- D.** A different future
  - 1) The Church will never be put to shame (1 Jn 2:28; Psa 3:8)
  - 2) The world is appointed for salvation (Rom 9:22-23)
- E.** Uses from the Text
  - 1) We are not to be worldly (1 Jn 2:15, 17)

- 2) The Church is to beware worldliness (Mi 1:13; Gen 13:12b, Gen 14:12, Gen 19:1; Jer 23:12a)

**III. The Hope of the Church (v 10)**

- A.** We are the people of God (Hosea 1:10)
  - 1) What we were by nature
  - 2) What we are in Christ (Isa 62:2-5)
- B.** We have obtained mercy
  - 1) What we were by nature (Eph 2:1-3)
  - 2) What we are in Christ (Eph 2:4-6)
- C.** Uses from the Text
  - 1) Let us delight in the Lord, that we are His people (Rom 11:33)
  - 2) Let us delight in the Church, that He has shown us mercy (Song of Songs 4:10)
  - 3) Let us delight in our heavenly hope, that we shall have obtained it fully in glory (Titus 2:11-14)

*Westminster Confession of Faith xxv.1*, 'The catholic or universal church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.'

*Westminster Confession of Faith xxv.2*, 'The Visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.'

*Belgic Confession Article 28*, 'We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved and out of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be ought to withdraw himself to live in a separate state from it; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it, maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them.'