

What Kind of People Belong in Church?

**Round Up Sunday
September 29, 2013**

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Good morning and WELCOME to Round Up Sunday at Lighthouse Baptist Church!

It is good to see many old friends and lots of new friends as well.

On a special day like today as we look out over one of the larger crowds we have here at Lighthouse, there are a number of reasons why various individuals are here today.

Some of you are here because someone who loves you has been nagging you about it so long that you finally came just to shut them up.

Some of you have been meaning to come for a long time and this just happens to be the day you got it all to work and here you are.

There may be a few who just wanted to see if the roof really would fall in if you actually came to Church.

There might even be someone here just for the barbeque.

Some of you may have heard about the young, good looking, dynamic preacher we have here...ok, maybe not that.

Of course, there are many who are here to worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whatever the reason; we are glad you are here! We want you to enjoy this special day with us. We want you to stay for dinner and allow us the opportunity to begin a real friendship. You will never find a better place to make a new friend than in the House of God.

For those of you who don't already know, Lighthouse is what is known as a Bible preaching Church!

Today we are going to spend some time in the book of Ephesians. This book is a letter written by the great Apostle Paul to an Asian Church in what is now modern day Turkey.

Paul was a Jewish Christian. All of the first Christians were Jews; all of the Apostles were, of course, Jews and every member of the very first Church, from which all real Churches are descendants, were Jews as well.

Paul is writing to a primarily Gentile Church. This letter is written **to** the Ephesians, but it is written **for** us. It tells us all about the process in which the worst of the worst; those who really would expect the roof to fall in, would be, can

be and will be transformed by the power of God.

Today I am going to share with you our secrets; the real truth, the reality, of who we really are here at Lighthouse Baptist Church. What you learn about us today may cause some of you to never return; although I hope that will not be the case.

I know that in many, if not most Churches, people sometimes pretend to be something they are not. It's that hypocrite thing you have all heard about.

We are not going to pretend that we are something we are not.

So as not to run you off too quickly, I am going to start with the best part; the best part is:

I. Who we are.

A. Whatever else we may be; we are the Lord's Church; the Body of Christ.

1. By definition an *ekklēsia* or church is a 'called out assembly', a populated meeting.
2. When an *ekklēsia* is 'the Lord's' called out assembly', it takes on some very special characteristics.

B. There are nine specific statements in the book of Ephesians that reveal much to us about what a real Church or ekklēsia is.

1. Jesus is our Head and we are His Body.

Ephesians 1:19-23

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things to the church*,

23 **Which is his body**, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

2. We are those to whom God reveals His wisdom.

Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known **by the church** the manifold wisdom of God,

3. We are those whose purpose is to bring Jesus glory!

Ephesians 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

4. **Ephesians 5:23** Re-states that Christ is the Head of His Church:

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

5. We are subject unto our Lord.

Ephesians 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

6. Jesus loves us unconditionally!

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

7. Jesus is busy changing us into what we ought to be.

Ephesians 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

8. Jesus provides for us and cherishes us.

Ephesians 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

9. The relationship between Christ and His Church is primary above all else.

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

10. We are blood bought, believing, born again Children of God who are made the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ who died for us and bore our sins in His own body.

11. We furthermore are scripturally baptized in water and thus identified with and made part of this Body according to the scriptures.

12. Who we are is quite wonderful; I cannot say the same about who we were.

Next; here is an honest look at:

II. Who we were.

A. Before we look at the harsh truth of this; ask yourself these questions:

1. What really matters; what you used to be or what you are now?

2. What road you used to be on or what road you are on now?

3. One of the truths you are about to see is that no matter what you have been; no matter what you have done; you do not have to stay the way you are!

B. Here is who we were; or in the case of those who have not yet come to know the Lord Jesus; 'still are.'

1. We were spiritually dead!

Ephesians 2:1-3

1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Before I was saved, my spirit was dead in sins!

2. We were hopeless and without God.

Ephesians 2:11-12

11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, ...

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

3. We were vile in every way imaginable.

1Corinthians 6:11 And such **were** some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

4. What does it say we were? Back up to verse 9 and read it:

1Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? It says we were unrighteous.

5. Who was unrighteous?

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

6. How unrighteous were we? Read the rest of verse 9:

1Corinthians 6:9-11 9 ...Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you:...

7. You mean there are members of this Church who used to be fornicators and adulterers? Yes, there are.

8. You mean there are members of this Church who used to worship idols; other false gods besides the Lord? Yes, there are.

9. You mean there are members of this Church who used to be homosexuals? Yes, there are.

10. You mean there are members of this Church who used to be thieves and obsessed with greed and alcoholics and gossips and embezzlers and every kind of vile sinner you can name? Yes, there are.

11. And there are even a few seemingly good people by men's standards who still sinned and fell short of God's glory which makes us all the same; sinners who need Jesus!

C. Some of you have resisted going to Church because you say there are hypocrites there.

1. You will find plenty of former hypocrites in our ranks.

2. Every last member of this Church will, however, tell you the very same thing; we are nothing more than unworthy sinners who made a mess of our lives.

3. The only difference in us and all the rest is that Jesus found us, He loved us, He taught us from the Word of God to place our trust in him; and when we did, He saved us from our sins and changed us forever.

4. Besides; what better place would you want to send a hypocrite than to Church?

When all this happened to us; when Jesus found us and saved us; look next at:

III. What we became.

A. So when we placed our trust in Jesus and were saved, what actually happened to us?

1. Are we still sinners? Are we still the same people we were?

2. The answer to this question is 'yes' and 'no'.

3. Confusing, right? Kind of like your computer and your cell phone; very confusing until you learn how it works.

B. There are some basic things you need to know in order to understand how this works:

1. Most people think of themselves as being one person; I, me, myself; etc.

2. That is not, however, how we are made.

3. God is One, but he is three in one; we are made like Him; three in one...body, soul and spirit.

4. Your body is what you see in the mirror, your spirit is the real and eternal you that lives inside your flesh and your soul is that aspect of your being with which you think and choose.

C. Because of the sin nature we inherited from Adam through our fathers, several conditions exist:

1. Our bodies are hopelessly corrupted and thus are dying. Everybody over 40 understands this extremely well.

2. Our spirit; also corrupted, 'was' and in the case of the unsaved 'still is'; dead in sins as we read earlier.

Ephesians 2:1-3

1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

3. That means we had no spiritual compass; we walked with the rest of the world, doing what they did, trying to satisfy our corrupted flesh that can never get enough.

4. Jesus did not save our flesh and seems to have little interest in preserving it; our flesh is the same corrupted dying mess it was!

5. Jesus saved our spirit; that eternal you that is going to be somewhere forever.

C. Are we still sinners?

1. **Yes**, in that our flesh and our fleshly desires have not changed.

2. **No**, in that our spirit has been utterly and completely changed into something called the 'new man':

3. **Ephesians 4:21-24**

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on **the new man**, which after God **is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

4. **1John 3:9** Whosoever is born of God [the new man, the spirit] doth not commit sin; for his

seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin,
because he is born of God.

5. Perhaps now you understand; we are a righteous sinless spirit living inside a corrupted, sinful, dying body.

6. Our spirit and our flesh war constantly; it is a fight every day.

7. Some days we win our battle and some days we lose; but we fear not because Jesus has already won the war!

In Conclusion:

So what kind of people really do belong in Church?

**Are you a good person?
Do you have it all together; do you know
how to run your life?**

If so, I don't suppose you need to be in Church?

As for the rest of us; yeah...we need to be in Church; we belong in Church!

This is where we worship Jesus!

This is where we stand for truth!

This is where we serve to bring glory to our King whom we love because He first loved us!

This is where we get recharged to go out and fight tomorrow's battle!

So what do you think? Are you the kind of person who belongs in Church?