

“Let’s Have Church!”

What is church to you? Is it the music, singing, shouting and praying? Is it the big beautiful sanctuary you meet in? Is it the rituals you go through, or the denominational identity above your door? Paul brings an understanding of the church right down to a very personal level in today’s Templates of Truth.

In addressing the saints at Ephesus, Paul said, *you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:22). Stated very simply, Paul declared that YOU are the church. Whenever we place our faith & trust in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior & Lord, the Holy Spirit of God moves into our life to indwell our heart (our inner man). Elsewhere, Paul clarified, *your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you* (I Corinthians 6:19). What we often fail to grasp and understand is that wherever we are that is where the church is. It is not in a building; it is in a heart. When believers gather in the church sanctuary to worship, God is there. Whenever they dismiss and leave the building, God is no longer there. That thought goes against the grain of many who highly esteem and take such pride in their church building, but to confine God to a physical structure is spiritual idolatry!

Let’s broaden our view. To do that, we might need to overcome some of the distorted perspectives our American government has instilled in the minds our citizens, namely “the separation of church and state.” Under this guise, we have been led to believe that there can be no mixture of any kind to religious and non-religious forums. That concept is foreign to the statements of Paul we have just quoted. If I am the church by virtue of the fact that the Spirit of God indwells my body, then you cannot separate the church from any place my physical existence occupies. When you realize that significant truth, the church takes on a whole new meaning.

That means that when I am in the public school classroom, we’re having church. When I am in the public courtroom, we are having church. When I am in the workplace, we are having church. When I am on the golf course, driving down the interstate, or having lunch with colleagues, we are having church! Whatever place I occupy and whatever role I am functioning in, because I am the church, we are having church. The presence & power of the Holy Spirit of God permeates all the places I dwell and all the activities in which I function, because my body is His temple and I take Him everywhere I go. His influence is therefore felt, His standard is rallied, His values are perpetuated and His glory is reflected in all the ways I exist. Liberal politicians would love to separate that influence, but God makes it impossible. Where I am, there He is also.

This truth places a sobering responsibility on our shoulders. We must always be aware that whatever we allow our eyes to see, we are showing God the view. Wherever we allow our legs & feet to carry us, we are taking God into those places as well. Whatever activities & behaviors we engage in, we are involving God in those things too. Would you show God a pornographic

website, tell Him a dirty joke, pour Him a shot of whisky or light Him a cigarette? If you do those things (and yes, some believers do indeed do those things), you are forcing God's participation because He indwells within you. He will not just go along for the ride, however. You will feel and experience His resistance to your unrighteousness and His eventual judgment & discipline to your rebellious disobedience. His reputation is more important to Him than the casual and reckless ways we often regard our faithfulness to Him.

Jesus commanded us, *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven* (Matthew 5:16). If I am the church and everywhere I go we are having church, what kind of church, then, are we having? I must make sure that I *walk in the light as He Himself is in the light* (I John 1:7). My faithful obedience can then properly reflect & represent His holiness which affects everything and everyone around me. Now THAT'S having church!

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.

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