

What God Thinks About the Church

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about Charles Grandmange of Epinal, France as the “Human Calculator,” Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #13235.
 - 1. The human mind can do absolutely amazing things.
 - 2. We have landed men on the moon and returned them safely to earth, we have eradicated diseases, we know what’s going on on the other side of the world in a matter of seconds.
- B. If the mind of man is amazing, how much more the mind of God!
 - 1. God has an absolutely amazing mind.
 - a. “O LORD, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep” (Ps. 92:5).
 - b. Is. 55:8-9.
 - 2. God’s thoughts are so far above ours — he knows more about this universe, diseases, psychology, and the like than man will ever know.
 - 3. We need to be concerned about what God thinks.
 - a. “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!” (Ps. 139:17).
 - b. David valued God’s thoughts, and we, also, ought to value them.
 - c. This morning, we want to examine what God thinks of the church.

THE CHURCH WAS PLANNED

- A. Some want us to believe that Jesus came to establish an earthly kingdom.
 - 1. He was going to be a political ruler who would reign in Jerusalem.
 - 2. However, the Jews rejected him as their Messiah; therefore, he established the church instead.
 - 3. Jesus never had the desire to establish an earthly kingdom.
 - a. Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18:36).
 - b. Jesus came to establish the church, his spiritual kingdom, not a physical, political kingdom.
- B. God prophesied that the church would be established.
 - 1. Is. 2:2-4.
 - a. Mountains symbolize a kingdom — the church is God’s kingdom on earth.
 - b. Isaiah said that the mountain of the Lord’s house would be established -- the church is the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - c. Here, Isaiah saw the establishment of the church.
 - 2. Dan. 2:44.
 - a. The expression “in the days of those kings” meant that in the days of the Roman emperors God would set up his kingdom.
 - b. We are currently a part of this kingdom, for Paul and the Colossian Christians were members of it (Col. 1:13).
 - 3. The church is part of the “eternal purpose” of God in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:10-11).
 - 4. These passages show that God planned to build his church.
- C. Jesus also intended to build the church (Mt. 16:18).
- D. The church is no after-thought — God knew that his people would need each other for encouragement, fellowship, and that they could pull their resources together to do much more than they could by themselves.

THE CHURCH IS IMPORTANT

- A. Jesus loves the church.
 - 1. Jesus said that he would make those of the synagogue of Satan come and bow before the church in Philadelphia so that they would know that he had loved them (Rev. 3:9).
 - 2. Husbands should love their wives the way Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25).
 - 3. Jesus values the church or else he would not value it- we value those things that are precious, important to us.
- B. Jesus died for the church.
 - 1. Jesus purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
 - a. We were redeemed, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
 - b. A great number of wealthy individuals can purchase nearly anything their heart desires — business, stocks, airplanes, houses, vacations, etc. Money can buy so much.
 - c. Yet, money could not buy the church — it took the blood of Jesus himself
 - d. Illustration about Mrs. Samuel Untermeyer buying a Gobelin tapestry, Encyclopedia of 15, 000 Illustrations, #10902.
 - 2. Eph. 5:25-27.
 - a. Jesus gave himself for the church.
 - 1) The church cost Jesus something, himself.
 - 2) So many do not value those things they have not purchased.
 - a) Someone borrows that new riding lawn mower you've saved for years to purchase, but he doesn't worry about making sure it has enough oil, so the engine burns up; he leaves it out in the rain, so it rusts.
 - b) Since he didn't buy it and it doesn't belong to him, he's not that concerned about it.
 - 3) But, since Jesus gave himself for the church, he values it.
 - b. He wanted to sanctify (i.e., set her apart) and cleanse her — he wanted the church to be free from sin.
 - c. He wanted the church to be glorious, without any blemish.
 - d. The love husbands should have for their wives is based upon the love Jesus has for the church.
 - 3. Some want to act as though the church isn't that important.
 - a. They don't give any money to make sure that the church succeeds, they aren't willing to put forth any effort to help the church succeed, they aren't willing to pray for the church to see that she succeeds, etc.
 - b. But, my Lord died for the church, and the church is important!
 - 4. "From heav'n He came and sought her! To be His holy bride; / With His own blood he bought her, / And for her life He died."

THE CHURCH IS UNITED

- A. The Lord wants his church to be united.
 - 1. The very night he was betrayed, Jesus prayed for the unity of the church (Jn. 17:20-21).
 - 2. The disunity in the church causes many to believe that Jesus is not the Son of God (Jn. 17:21) — A chief reason atheists give for their lack of faith is the division in the religious world.
- B. The apostles wrote about one church.
 - 1. Although we have many members, we are one body (Rom. 12:4-5).
 - 2. There is one body (Eph. 4:4).
 - 3. We should work for unity (Eph. 4:3).
- C. So many of our brethren want to have unity at the expense of doctrine — the idea is that we ought not to worry about what a group teaches just so long as we fellowship with them.
 - 1. These brethren forget that doctrine is an extremely serious matter.

- a. "Even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).
- b. "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:16).
2. We cannot have unity at the expense of doctrine.
3. Illustration about Sir David James attempting to get the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches to merge, Encyclopedia of 15, 000 Illustrations, #2934.

THE CHURCH IS UNIVERSAL

- A. The term "Catholic" simply means "universal."
 1. The Catholic church emphasizes the universal nature of the church.
 2. We don't need to emphasize just one part of the church, but we do need to emphasize the universal nature of the church.
- B. Jesus told his disciples to go to all the nations.
 1. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Mt. 28:19).
 2. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).
 3. Jesus said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations (Lk. 24:47).
 4. "You shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
 5. Jesus wanted to make sure his disciples knew the Gospel was for every person.
- C. National origin does not matter in the church.
 1. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).
 2. In Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free" (Col. 3:11).
 3. People of all nationalities are able to be members of God's church.
- D. Illustration about President and Mrs. Monroe inviting everyone to the White House after it was restored, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #11028.
 1. Everyone who wants can become a Christian, because the church is universal, it spans the globe.
 2. We, therefore, cannot look upon a group of individuals as unworthy of the gospel.
 3. Because the gospel is for all people, you can be saved.
 - a. It doesn't matter what you've done in the past, God will save you, if you turn to him.
 - b. Have you turned to him?