

The Sacredness of The Church
Sunday, April 18, 2021

- * Does it bother you when you read about Uzzah being struck dead from merely reaching out to keep The Ark of the Covenant from falling off of the cart? (II Sam 6)
- * Is it strange to you that King Saul, who was not a priest, got tired of waiting on Samuel, and offered burnt offering to The Lord and it cost him his kingdom? (I Samuel 13)
- * What about Moses? He struck the rock rather than “speaking to it” as The Lord said and was not able to see the Promised Land! (Numbers 20)
- * Well, there was the Old Testament and Covenant! Then what about Ananias and Sapphira? They dropped dead out of deceptive irreverence. (Acts 5)
- * Paul even mentions sacredness and reverence in our approaching The Table of The Lord!

1 Corinthians 11:29-30 (TPT)

29 For continually eating and drinking with a wrong spirit will bring judgment upon yourself by not recognizing the body. 30 This insensitivity is why many of you are weak, chronically ill, and some even dying.

- I. The Church of Jesus Christ is “the assembly” of the saints that are literally the place of God’s presence in the earth!
 - A. We are not a fraternity, sorority or civic club. We are the Spirit filled people of God that make up His expression in the world!
 - 1. We and our gatherings belong to Him!
 - 2. They are therefore sacred and under His direction...or at least they should be!

- B. Remember, at the very center of our gathering in worship is The Table of The Lord! The Lord's Supper. Communion.
1. The place where Paul says many are adversely affected they irreverently approach this aspect of worship. Or in other words, we "flippantly" gather together in worship!
 2. This is NOT about some secret sin or short coming or unconfessed sin as some of us have been taught!
 3. It's not a need to make sure you have confessed everything you can think of just before you take communion!
 4. It is the attitude with which you approach this "sacred table" that represents the body and blood of our Savior!

Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 (AMP)

1 Guard your steps and focus on what you are doing as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the [careless or irreverent] sacrifice of fools; for they are too ignorant to know they are doing evil. 2 Do not be hasty with your mouth [speaking careless words or vows] or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter before God. For God is in heaven and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few.

II. May we all learn, accept and embrace the sacredness of The Church!

A. Let's realize what a great honor it is to be a part of The Church!

1. We should stand in amazement that we have been invited to be a part and baptized into His Church!
2. When is the last time you became awestruck and speechless just to be a part of The Body of Christ?
3. Even though we read this scripture at weddings Paul makes it clear he is communicating a truth about The Church!

Ephesians 5:21-33 (NLT)

21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 For

wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. 24 As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. 25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26 to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. 27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. 28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. 29 No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. 30 And we are members of his body. 31 As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." 32 This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. 33 So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

- B. This whole dissertation from Paul to the church in Ephesus is about this great mystery of how we, the church and The Lord interact!
1. We protect and guard our relationship between each other out of respect and commitment to The Lord!
 2. This assembly isn't The Shepherds, the minister or any of the members...it belongs exclusively to Jesus!
 3. We are to be totally submitted to Him and thankful the He allows us to be a part of this family!
 4. The value of this opportunity is THE LIFE OF CHRIST!
 5. This great mystery is that Christ and His Church are ONE!

1 Peter 1:8 (J.B. Phillips)

And though you have never seen him, yet I know that you love him. At present you trust him without being able to see him, and even now he brings you a joy that words cannot express and which has in it a hint of the glories of Heaven!

III. In order to fully understand and appreciate “who we are” as a church, we must have some understanding of the Old Covenant!

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 (NLT)

1 When Solomon finished praying, fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the glorious presence of the Lord filled the Temple. 2 The priests could not enter the Temple of the Lord because the glorious presence of the Lord filled it. 3 When all the people of Israel saw the fire coming down and the glorious presence of the Lord filling the Temple, they fell face down on the ground and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying, “He is good! His faithful love endures forever!”

A. When Solomon finished the Temple of The Lord, they prayed and dedicated it, prayed and asked God’s blessings and invited God to come and dwell among them in His Own house!

1. The presence of God came in a real and obvious way!
2. The Temple was a place where Heaven and Earth intersected!

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NLT)

19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. 22 Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

B. Why is it that we have such an irreverent and even disrespectful view of The Church of Jesus Christ!

1. Lest we let this pass by our understanding, notice Peter:

1 Peter 2:5 (NLT)

5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

2. Paul gets in on the action:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NLT)

16 Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? 17 God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

3. This is not about murder or suicide as many have made it!
4. This is about disrespecting, damaging or destroying
The Church of The Lord Jesus Christ!
5. Remember Paul's words to Ephesus, "Be submitted to each other out of reverence to Christ!"
6. Jesus takes personally how you treat each other!
It's His Church!

Ephesians 3:8-10 (NLT)

8 Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. 9 I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. 10 God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.