

WHO WE ARE AS CHRIST'S CHURCH

(Ephesians 2:19-22)

In this section of Paul's letter, the apostle elevates our understanding of what the church really is according to God's perspective. The church is indeed the dearest place on earth because it is the place where God's glory is most clearly manifest on earth. In particular, the glory of God's work of reconciliation through Christ Jesus is wondrously manifest in the church (Eph. 2:14-16). In verses 19-22, Paul goes on to explain what we have become as a result of having peace with God. He uses three metaphors to describe the beauty and glory of who we are as Christ's church. These three descriptions should produce in our hearts greater love for and deeper commitment to the church.

1. ***As His Church, we are secure in Christ as _____.***
Paul uses two words to describe our former spiritual condition: strangers and aliens (Eph. 2:19). We were separated from Christ, alienated from God's people, spiritually homeless and without any right whatsoever to claim a place in God's kingdom (Eph. 2:12). But as a result of Christ's reconciling work on the Cross, we who are in Christ are now citizens of God's kingdom (Eph. 2:19). As His church, we now enjoy the full rights and privileges of heavenly citizenship and the power and protection of Christ. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, Jesus as our King, subdues us to Himself, rules us, defends us and conquers His and all our enemies.

2. ***As His Church, we are dear to Christ as _____.***
God's kingdom is also a family. Paul also describes the church in terms of a far deeper intimacy of family relationship. In Paul's words, we are now members of God's household (Eph. 2:19; John 1:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:1-2). And once we become sons and daughters of God through Christ, we will remain dear and loved by God as His children. Regardless of our countless sins, God never gives up on us nor would He disown us. We may at times fail God. But God will never ever fail us (2 Tim. 2:13).

3. ***As His Church, we fit and grow together in Christ as _____.***
Paul further describes the church as the holy temple in the Lord, where God Himself dwells. Paul explains that we as the church, are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets who were the mouthpiece and writers of divine revelation (Eph. 2:20). Paul's point here is that the Lord has built His church upon the foundation of the Word of God. The church stands or falls based on its faithfulness to God's written Word (Acts 2:42). Paul also contends that as the chief cornerstone, the person and work of the Lord Jesus must be central and the focal point of the life of the church (Eph. 2:20; John 5:39; Luke 24:27). Finally, Paul reminds us that as members of Christ's church, it is God Himself who joins, fits, grows and builds us together to fulfill our purpose to be God's holy temple (Eph. 2:21-22).
