

The Glorious Church

“The church is irrelevant”

Many Americans see no need for “church”

“May explain number of churches offering contemporary “worship”

- England: most have abandoned religion
- U.S.: many churches changed to fit peoples' desires

Contrast Scriptures

- Ep.1:22-23, 'filled'
- Ep.2:19-21, temple
- Ep.3:21, glory
- Ep.5:23-27, bride of Christ

Conclusion

- Ep.5:27, glorious – honored, distinguished, splendid, wonderful...

I. Divine Characteristics Make the Church Glorious

Ephesians 5

- Glorious Person, 23
- Glorious precepts, 24
- Glorious purpose, 24, 27 [= 1:6-12,14,17-18]
- Glorious purchase price, 25
 - 25: Christ loved...gave Himself. Ac.20:28
 - 26: 'that' ...sanctify and cleanse it...
[*having cleansed...*] 1 Co.6:11
 - 27: 'that' ...might present...glorious church

When?

- Some say at future date through unexplained process, Christ will cleanse the sinful church.
 - Evil reason for this position: **we may overlook current imperfections**
- In the future, He will receive His church (bride) – Mt.1:18-20 . . .
 - betrothal...interval...procession (to receive the bride)
- 2 Co.11:2

Sanctifying and cleansing are simultaneous – in progress since Ac.2

- Sanctify (26): set apart. Jn.17:17, **positive** side of process.
- Washing of water (26): **negative** side of process [removing sin and guilt] – obvious reference to water baptism.

Sanctifying and cleansing are simultaneous – in progress since Ac.2

- “When Paul says that we are washed by baptism, his meaning is, that God employs it for declaring to us that we are washed and at the same time performs what it represents”
– John Calvin, Commentary on Eph., v.26

Sanctifying and cleansing are simultaneous – in progress since Ac.2

- “Baptism is a washing with water. It was the washing with water with which Paul’s readers as Christians were familiar, and which could not fail to occur to them as the washing intended. Besides, nothing more is here attributed to baptism than is attributed to it in many other passages of the word of God. Cf. particularly Ac.22:16... There can be little doubt, therefore, that by ‘the washing with water,’ the apostle meant baptism”
– Chas. Hodge, Commentary on Eph., 319.

Objection:

“But the church is cleansed, not sinners”

- Truth: He cleanses the church by cleansing the material.
- Amazing that anyone sees a conflict between salvation by grace and necessity of baptism.
 - Romans and Galatians give the most attention to grace, yet contain two of the strongest passages on baptism (Ro.6:3-4; Gal.3:27). Paul saw no conflict...
 - Ep.2:8-9, grace; 5:26, washing of water.

- “Sanctifying and cleansing are synonymous. One is positive, the other is negative. Both take place in baptism – the only bath of which we know in which water and the spoken word are combined” – Lenski.
- “Take away the word, and what is the water but water” – Augustine.
 - Ac.19:1-5, Ephesus
- What kind of cleansing (Ep.5:26)? Ac.22:16.
- Christ cleanses the church one person at a time with the washing – obvious reference to baptism: Tit.3:5 . . . [‘a bath, a *laver*’ – Vine]

What makes water effective?

“By the word”

- “Without the Word of God the water is simply water and no baptism. But with the Word of God it is a baptism, that is a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the H.S.” (Tit.3:5) – Luther, quoted in Le., 634.
- Naaman, 2 Kings 5

I. Divine Characteristics Make the Church Glorious

II. Human Characteristics That
Make the Church Glorious

There is a difference between glorious and popular

- Something can be glorious in God's sight and hated by men –

BIBLE

CHURCH

APOSTLES

JESUS

- Rv.3:1-5

If you smell coffee and doughnuts,
hear a juke box, see ping-pong tables...
why call it a church?

There is a difference between glorious and popular

- Be clean in life (27)
 - Without spot [stain, moral blemish] – Ja.1:27
 - Without wrinkle [as a bride...]

There is a difference between glorious and popular

- Be clean in life, 27
- Be sound in teaching, 27
 - “You might be a Pharisee...”

“Do all in the name of the church
so that it will receive the glory”

- The church gives the glory (Ep.3:21)
- How does the church glorify God?

By being faithful to Him

- A glorious church is a group of people who have learned to think and act as God intended from the beginning.