

## *You Need the Church*

Ephesians 1:22,23

Thesis:

**God uses Christ's body, the Church, to be the primary instrument for your sanctification. Through the relationships of this body primarily, Christ desires to shape you.**

### INTRODUCTION TO SERMON AND TEXT

Cyprian and Luther, "He who has God for his Father, has the Church for his mother."

To the Church is given the keys of the kingdom.. Not to a certain form of civil government. Not to the head of household, and certainly not to the socialist village idea.

"I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

### EXPOSITION

A brief summary of Ephesians to reveal the centrality of the church:

Vv.9,10

Not only is the Bible cross/Christ centered it is Holy Spirit centered in the Church.  
3:8-10 The centrality of the Church is given at the end of chap's 1, 2, 3, and 5.

### APPLICATION

We are shaped fundamentally by relationships, like it or not.  
Church life's hard.

But, *you* are your brother and sister's keepers.

Children and young people—You need the church.

Often, the formation of a Christian school is a magnificent way to build the community of the church, both for the individual congregation and other Christians and denominations. It protects us from becoming a bit too ingrown.

To be fully human, we are made for others.

### GIFTS

Each one of us is given a spiritual gift. But an incredible amount of dysfunction happens when church don't use their gifts.

Do you want the most meaningful life that could be had? Then, be wise, think on your future death-bed. *Carpe diem!* Seize the day!

The lesson of Ephesians is to avoid the modern trap that to have a fulfilling relationship you must have some kind of existential soul mate, who is *exactly* like you. But God reflects himself in saving a truly diverse group of people, like He is diverse, Father, Son, Spirit.

#### PUT AWAY FALSE DISTINCTIONS

Hispanic, white, black, or indian, there's no castes in heaven.

The Church is not an aristocratic country club that strokes your and my ego. It's a place of self-denial and service. Through that, we know meaning and fulfillment.

#### THE CHURCH IS A SHIP-ALL HANDS NEEDED

Ephesians 4:11-16 The teachers are to direct and equip *the saints* for the work of service.

Fundamentals for Relationships from *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*

- 1) You were made for relationships
- 2) In some way, all relationships are difficult
- 3) Each of us is tempted to make relationships the end rather than the means

People fall into one of two tangles here. For some, the temptation is to run and hide from others. "I don't need relationships." But that is just another form of relational insecurity actually. For others, the temptation is "I *have to have* a constant stream of people meeting my needs." That is a clue they aren't finding their rest in Christ. Where are you on this continuum?

- 4) There are no secrets that guarantee problem-free relationships
- 5) At some point you will wonder whether relationships are worth it
- 6) **(BUT!) God keeps us in messy relationships for his redemptive purpose...And it will be worth it!**

The fundamental flaw that we could make in our view of the church is the view that we could change our relationships without needing to change ourselves.. *If we want to grow, spiritually or numerically, we have to be willing to change.*

Please! Don't wait until God brings really hard things into your life to depend on people.

Ed Welch in, *When People are Big and God is Small* said, "God must be bigger to you than people are...Our problem is that we *need* them for our (selfish insecurity) more than we *love* them, for the glory of God. The task God sets for us is to need them *less* and love them *more*. Instead of looking for ways to manipulate others, we will ask God what our duty out of unselfish love is toward them."

