

What Is the Church?

When Jesus said, “*Upon this rock, I will build my church*” (Matthew 16:18), what was he talking about? What or who is the “church”?

Today, “church” means different things to different people. To some it means a building; to others, a religious denomination, an ecclesiastical government (clergy), or a place for marrying and burying.

What does “church” mean to you? More importantly, what does “church” mean in the New Testament where the word is used many times. “Church” is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia* (used 115 times), meaning “called out”. The Lord’s “church” is an assembly of people who have been called out.

WHO does the calling and who are called? God calls “*both Jews and Greeks*” - all mankind (1 Corinthians 1:24). **WHAT** are people called? “Children of God” (1 John 3:1). **HOW** does God do the calling? God calls “*through our gospel*” (2 Thessalonians 2:14). **WHEN** and **WHERE** does God call? God calls people “*into the fellowship of his Son*” (1 Corinthians 1:9) and “*out of darkness*” (1 Peter 2:9). **WHY** does God call? People are “*called to be saints*” (Romans 1:7) and “*called for freedom*” (Galatians 5:13).

God is calling you through his gospel to come out of this sinful world and live as a faithful Christian. Will you accept his call today? - *Chris Reeves*

Up-Coming Events

- We are studying 1 Corinthians in January. We have great Bible classes. Come check them out!
- Next Sunday’s Sermons: The Christian Assembly: Part I (AM) and The Quest for Happiness (PM).

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Website
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Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

Everyone Is Welcome!
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THE WARFIELD BULLETIN

January 8, 2017



For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Some Things You Cannot Choose

In last week's bulletin, we took a look at some things that everyone will do when Jesus returns. Everyone will hear the Lord when he returns (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Everyone will bow their knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11). Everyone will face the Lord in judgment (Matthew 25:30-31; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

In this week's article, I would like to examine some more things that apply to all mankind. There are some things you cannot choose in life.

We live in an era of choices. Americans have "the right to choose!" Many claim to be "pro-choice". The Bible even teaches about choices because God made us free-will beings with the power to choose. Adam and Eve, for example, had the ability to choose to obey or to disobey God (Genesis 2:16-17). They chose to disobey and they suffered the consequences (Genesis 3:1-24).

However, choice has its limitations. Just as the physical world has its limitations, so the moral world of man has its limitations. There are some things impossible for man to choose. Let's take a look at four things that you cannot choose.

First, you cannot choose **A COURSE OF NEUTRALITY**. You cannot choose to remain neutral about some things regarding your soul's salvation. Concerning Christ, you *will* make a choice to be for him or against him. There is no neutral or

middle ground. Jesus said, "*He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scatters*" (Matthew 12:30).

Concerning good and evil, you *will* make a choice to either love good and hate evil, or to love evil and hate good. It is best to: "*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good*" (Romans 12:9). Don't try to confuse good and evil. Isaiah said, "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*" (Isaiah 5:20).

Second, you cannot choose **THE CONSEQUENCES OF SOME OF YOUR ACTIONS**. It is true that you can choose an action, but you cannot choose the consequences of some actions. Consider, for example, the physical law of gravity. You can choose to jump off a bridge, but cannot choose what will happen after you jump. You *will* fall to the ground! There's no changing that.

Likewise, consider your influence. People *will* see how you live one way or the other (Matthew 5:14). Consider also the law of sowing and reaping. What you sow in life, good or bad, *will* produce fruit, good or bad (Matthew 7:18; Galatians 6:7-8). You just cannot sow bad seed and then produce good fruit.

Third, you cannot choose **TO KEEP EVERYTHING**. You *will* have to give up something in order to be right with God. It's impossible to choose not to give up something.

You cannot, for example, have *both* the world *and* Christ. Jesus said, "*If any man comes unto me, and hates not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever does not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple ... So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounces not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple* (Luke 14:26-27, 33).

You cannot have *both* God's grace *and* sin. Paul wrote: "*What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid*" (Romans 6:15).

Fourth, you cannot **CHANGE GOD OR HIS WORD**. You cannot change God because his character does not change (Malachi 3:6) and you cannot change God's word because his word cannot be broken (John 10:35).

You cannot change God's remedy for sin - Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). You cannot change God's terms of forgiveness - be born of water and Spirit (John 3:5). You cannot change God's terms of fellowship - abide in Jesus (Jn.15:4). You cannot change God's terms of worship - in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

So, friend, what will you do about those things you cannot choose? I would encourage you to accept your limitations and lack of choices and live within God's boundaries so that you can go to heaven. - Chris Reeves