



Defining the Church

The Key Words

- The English Word
 - English - *church* (cf. *Scottish - kirk; German - Kirche*)
 - From the Greek, *kuriakon*
 - From *kurios* = Lord
 - Means "belonging to the Lord"
 - Occurs 2x in the NT
 - 1 Cor. 11:20 - "the Lord's Supper"
 - Rev. 1:10 - "the Lord's Day"

The Key Words

- The Greek Word
 - *Ekklesia*
 - *Ek* - "out"; *kaleo* - "to call or summon"
 - Doesn't mean the called out or separated ones
 - Means: "an assembly summoned or called together"

Ekklesia in the OT

- Can refer to:
 - Angels
 - Ps. 89:5 - The heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.
 - A nation
 - Gen. 28:3 - "May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples."
 - Gen. 35:11 - God also said to him, "I am God Almighty: Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you."
 - The congregation of Israel
 - Num. 16:3 - They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"
 - Micah 2:5 - "Therefore you will have no one stretching a measuring line For you by lot in the assembly of the LORD."

Ekklesia in the NT

- Two primary meanings:
 - The local church
 - a local assembly (or assemblies) of all who profess faith in the Christ of Scripture
 - about 92x of the 109x references to the church in the NT
 - The universal church
 - all professing believers everywhere (about 17x in the NT)
 - the whole body of Christ's redeemed
 - further divided into:
 - *Visible*: the universal church as we see it; includes both true believers and false believers.
 - *Invisible*: the universal church as God sees it; includes only the true believers.

The Main Metaphors

- Body
- Bride
- Building
- Flock of sheep
- Household or family
- Royal priesthood
- Pillar and ground of the truth



Ground Rules

- God intends all these images to remind us that the church does not—cannot—exist separate from Christ.
- Don't choose one image as your primary way of thinking about the church.
- Remember that they are metaphors.
- Don't think of these images as only temporary and fading, but as forever accurate ways to understand the reality that is the church.

The Body of Christ



The Metaphor

- Used two different ways:
 - (1) A body in which Christ is the head and each individual Christian represents a different member of the body.
 - Christ as the Head:
 - Eph. 1:22-23 - He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body.
 - Eph. 4:15 - we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ
 - Col. 2:19 - not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.
 - Each Christian as a member:
 - 1 Cor. 12:27 - you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.
 - (2) The church as the whole body, with each Christian representing different members, including the head.
 - 1 Cor. 12:21 - the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

The Meaning

- The universal church can be compared to Christ's body in which each Christian serves as a part or a member.
 - 1 Cor. 12:12-13 - even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
 - Eph. 1:23 - He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
 - Col. 1:18 - He is also head of the body, the church.

The Message

- 1) As the head of the church, Christ provides the authority, leadership, and direction for His church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:12-13, 19-20).
- 2) Since we are fellow members of the body, we are united, so we must strive for unity (1 Cor. 10:16-17; 12:13; Eph. 2:16; 4:4, 16; Col. 2:19).
- 3) The spiritual growth of the church will resemble that of a body (Eph. 4:12, 16; Col. 2:19).

The Message

- 4) The image of a body portrays the importance of our depending on one another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25; 1 Cor. 12:25-27; Heb. 13:3).
- 5) The picture of the church as a body with a great variety of parts reminds us to appreciate the diversity of strengths and gifts in the church (Rom. 12:4-5).
- 6) The fact that each of us is part of the body and has been sovereignly placed in the body to fill a particular function should motivate us to fill our role (1 Cor. 12:14, 17-20).