

WHY WE LOVE.. THE CHURCH

INTRO

- BO: Has someone ever loved you or had your back even when you didn't deserve it?
- Qu: Our time today is going to be why we love the church... just really quick why do you come on Wednesdays?
- Qu: **What do you see as being pros and cons with churches today?**
- Pros: Discipleship, keep Bible in front of me, worship together, be with people I'm similar to
- Cons: Inward focused, money to buy big buildings, surface relationships like a country club, all about morals, good for families but harder for single adults, knowledge without heart change,
- Qu: Is the church broken? It sometimes feels like the church is like a group of friends keeping up appearances more than a meeting of sinners saved by grace. It feels like the church is only concerned about if people come to programs more than actually being a spiritual aid to you.
- Trans: **If this really is the church then why do we even bother?** Pastor Brad told me he thinks one of the big reasons that he loves the church is that as a kid the church loved him so much and treated him so well. I hope that's been your experience. The church is really easy to love because they love you. But what if that's not the case?
- THT: The Christian life of following Jesus demands that you love the body of Christ (the church!). If you say you have faith and love Jesus but don't love your brother and sister in Christ then something's off!
- 1jn4: **19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.**
Following Jesus means loving the church and you're lying to yourself if it's not the case.
- Trans: Ephesians 5:22-32... And as its read think about the reality of Christ and the church. Marriage is only a shadow.

Eph. 5

- Read: **22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.**
- Verse 22-24 – Christ is head of the church and the church submits
25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,
- Verse 25 – Christ loved and gave himself up for the church
26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.
- Verse 26-27 – In order to sanctify. Christ didn't die only for individuals, Christ gave himself up for the church. Why did he cleanse the church? So that he can present the church to himself in splendor.
28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
- Verse 28-32 – Christ love's the church as if it were his own body. In fact, the church is his body as he is head over it.
- Qt: So how does Ephesians 5 help me love the church? Because Jesus loves the church. I asked why we love the church to our worship Pastor and he simple said, "Jesus says, 'follow me'". I was like... ok I guess it's that simple. Christ loves the church and calls us to lose our life so that we might find it. The problem is that Jesus loves the church as his bride. Even with all of the church's faults, Christ loves the church.
- Ex: While on the subject of Christ and the church being like marriage I want to inform this a bit. I read a blog, by Matt Walsh that I think is helpful. In the blog he talked about a meeting with a man at a grocery store whose stated reason for his 2 divorces is that one day his first and second wife changed. In Walsh's blog he responds this way: Life is change. People are change. I'm seeing this play out all around me. As I get older I drift further apart from some of the people I used to consider my closest confidants. But I let myself drift, and so do they,

because circumstances also change, and what I'm realizing is that so many of my relationships were only ever circumstantial. My relationship with my wife, however, transcends the circumstance. If we feel ourselves drift, we reach out our hands and grasp tightly, because I choose to remain at her side, and she at mine.

Prin: Jesus' love for the church isn't circumstantial. And Jesus says follow me! In fact, earlier in Ephesians 5:1-2 it says, **"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."**

Ex: There is visible and invisible body of Christ. Christ loves the true and invisible body (genuine Christians) but we don't have that option since we don't know who those are. Therefore I urge you to love the visible body of Christ! Local churches like Grace Church!

Pastor Jonathan – The Christian life is not monasticism. The perfect Christian life is not meant to be done alone.

Tran: While we might know now following Jesus means we love the church, what does it look like for me to love it?

I BELONG TO CHURCH BC I'M A BODY MEMBER

We are body members...

We're a part of ONE BODY

Rom 12 ⁴ **For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Romans 12:4-5**

Christ is the HEAD of that ONE BODY

Eph 1:22-23- **22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**

We have a role...

1Cor12: ¹⁴ **For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts,^[e] yet one body.**

We build up...

Eph 4: Ephesians 4 says in verse 12 that God gave us gifts **to equip** the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ. It goes on to say in verses 15-16, **"¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."**

We Proclaim the Gospel...

Phil 1: **27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,**

1 Jn 4: **11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.**

Promise: If Christ is my head then, I belong to the CHURCH because I'm a BODY MEMBER. God has a unique role for you as a part of his body of believers.

Practice: What about you? Belonging to the BODY of Christ means commitment! What would it look like to imitate Christ by loving the Church? I think a loving commitment to a church body would be huge.

Commitment- means that you'll stick it out in hard times or even if you don't get your own way.

Loving- means that you do what you believe is good for the church as a whole and not personal preference.

We BELONG- MEET... commitment to the church means attendance. Hebrews 10:25 says we're to not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. Are you committed in your attendance? Are you physically there but not willing to be spiritually in community?

We have a ROLE- Serve... As in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 the body does not consist of one member but of many. I have a countercultural idea when looking to commit to your role in a church: Serve where the body needs you! The point of service is not our interests but other's needs. Service doesn't ignore serving within our strengths but it prioritizes serving where you can be helpful. I like to just listen to others during bible study but you could help by sharing.

We BUILD others up- Encourage... Just like Ephesians 4 says to build up in love, you will need to build up the body. Timothy Keller has said, **“Churches should feel more like the waiting room for a doctor and less like a waiting room for a job interview. In the latter we all try to look as competent and impressive as we can. Weaknesses are buried and hidden. But in a doctor’s waiting room we assume that everyone there is sick and needs help. And this is much closer to the reality of what is going on in the church.”**

We PROCLAIM the Gospel: As we love our brothers and sisters in Christ we get to be able to share how Christ has loved us so we might love others in the same way! 1 John 4:19... We love because He first loved us!

Proclamation: Let’s say that you desire for this to be a true thing in your life. That you want to love the church by committing yourself to the church. I’d suggest becoming a member of Grace Church. Membership is public demonstration of your already commitment. Baptism publically is identifying yourself with Jesus but membership is publically identifying yourself with a specific church. It’s puts a stake in the sand saying we’re in this together!

Point: Give yourself an honest look. Do you see Jesus in how you view and treat the local church? Are you imitating Christ? Following Jesus means loving the church and you’re lying to yourself if it’s not the case.