

The Body of Christ, the Church # 7

1 Corinthians 1: 1-10

Tonight I want to examine the body of Christ, the church. The church is no ordinary group of people; she is special in the eyes of God. The word church comes from the Greek word *ecclesia* and means “*a called out assembly*”. We have been called out of the world, set apart unto the Lord. One day we’ll be called out eternally!

Sadly, many view their association with the church in a very casual way. Being a member of the body of Christ has far too much significance for that; the price that was paid cost far too much for a casual attitude. I trust as we look at the significance of the church, we will consider how blessed we are to be a part of the church, and our responsibilities and obligations to the church. We have a lot to consider this evening, so let’s get into the message. I want to examine the [details](#) Paul provides as we think on: [The Body of Christ, the Church](#).

I. The Origin of the Church (2) – [Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:](#) The church is divine in origin. It was instituted of God with Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. The church is not a man made institution. We are a product of God. [Mat.16:18 – And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.](#) We are part of something that is far greater than we can imagine. God ordained the church; He built it; He will sustain it!

- The church began over 2,000 years ago. Down through the ages evil men, led of Satan, have tried to destroy it, but the church remains. There is no force on earth or in hell itself that can destroy what God has built. We like to think that we are holding this thing together, but it is God and God alone. Those who have been called out have been placed in the most glorious institution known to man, the church. We will face opposition and likely persecution, but the church of the living God will remain!

II. The Ordination of the Church (2) – [Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:](#) The church is really not an organization. I like to think of her as a living organism that was created and ordained of the Lord. Let’s take a moment to consider this glorious ordination.

A. Her Significance – [Unto the church of God which is at Corinth...with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours](#): Paul reminds them that they are the church at Corinth. She had been placed of God within their own community. They were blessed to be part of the church and Corinth was blessed to have her within the city. He also reminds them that they alone do not constitute the church. She includes all of those who call upon the Lord and serve Him as their personal Savior!

- I don't know about you, but that brought joy to my heart. We are blessed to be part of this local body of believers. Mount Airy may not realize it, but the town is blessed by our presence here. We are a gospel witness to a lost world. I also rejoice that Fellowship alone does not make up the church. We have other local congregations in Mount Airy, Surry County, within our state, across America, and around the world. The church is of great significance to the world!

B. Her Sanctification (2) – [Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints](#). Here we discover a glorious truth regarding the church. She is not perfect, but she is forgiven, cleansed in the blood of Jesus and sanctified in Him. That means “*to make pure and holy; to render clean.*” There are a lot of organizations that do good works that benefit the community, but none of them can boast of obtaining sanctification. The church was bought with a price, redeemed of God, washed and made clean by the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary! We are blessed beyond measure to be sanctified in Christ!

I. The Origin of the Church (2)

II. The Ordination of the Church (2)

III. The Opportunity of the Church (4-6) – The church is unique; there is nothing else like it anywhere. She enjoys opportunities that others know nothing of. Notice:

A. Her Adoption (4) – [I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ](#); Paul reveals the gift of grace that the church has received. It is by the grace of God that we have the opportunity of salvation, being adopted into the family of God. We have spent much time considering the sinful state of man and the gracious gift of salvation. Apart from God providing a means of salvation for sinful humanity, none of us would have ever been afforded the opportunity of salvation! Were it not for the initial opportunity of salvation, we would have no way of gaining entrance to the body of Christ. We would never have experienced the joys and assurances associated with the being part of the church.

B. Her Abundance (5-6) – *That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;* [6] *Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:* Now we discover the abundance the church has in Christ our Lord. It seems that everybody wants to be involved with some organization that supports their cause. There is no shortage of these groups around the world. Some reach the far corners of the earth and others are only local. Often we see a spokesman soliciting financial support for various groups. Their work is limited by the resources they have available. We are part of an organization who's Founder and CEO owns it all! There is no shortage of resources available to the church, [V.5](#).

- Often we are of the mindset that we are limited to the ability and resources of our members. We belong to God; He has enriched us in **everything!** We can never bankrupt heaven. Do you realize that we have access to far more than we use? There is no limit to the opportunity of the church. [Eph.3:8](#) – *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.* God has an abundant supply for the church, but we must be willing to use what He has entrusted us with, [Mat.25:19-29](#). The church should seize every opportunity given for the Lord. He will never ask more than He can provide. We are not doing it anyway; He is working through us; it is up to Him.

I. The Origin of the Church (2)

II. The Ordination of the Church (2)

III. The Opportunity of the Church (4-6)

IV. The Obligation of the Church (7-9) – Paul reveals the obligation of the church. Consider:

A. Her Expectation (7a) – *So that ye come behind in no gift;* The Lord has given us His abundance. We have access to everything that heaven affords. There is no excuse for the church to fail in regard to her obligations. We are expected to live and serve the Lord according to His will for our lives!

- I fear that many never comprehend or embrace their obligations. We are not saved to sit on the pew of ease and comfort, never giving of ourselves in the work of the Lord. To whom much is given, much will be required. The Lord expects us to use what we have been given for His glory and the good of others. Where would we be if no one was willing to labor for Christ?

B. Her Anticipation (7b-8a) – [waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: \[8\] Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#) Paul urged them to live in anticipation of the Lord's coming. As I read of the lives of the early believers I am challenged in my walk with the Lord. They were only decades removed from the ascension of Christ and yet they lived in anticipation of His coming.

- We know that the Lord is coming again, and I think most of us are aware it could happen at any moment. However, most do not live their daily lives as if they really expect the Lord to come during that particular day. I can assure you if we lived as if Christ could come at any moment, our lives would be transformed. We would be a lot busier in the work of the Lord than we are right now. May we live as if we truly believed Christ could come today!

C. Her Purification (8b) – [Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#) Here we find an exhortation for righteous living. Keep in mind we are urged to live in anticipation of Christ's return. If we expected Him at any moment, our lives would be lived in light of His holiness. The church has an obligation for purity.

- Now I know that the believer's sin was judged on the cross. I have the righteousness of Christ imputed to my account. God sees me as He sees His Son. However, all the saved will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. We will give account of the lives we've lived. [2 Cor.5:10 – For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.](#) If Christ were to come right now, are you fully satisfied with your life as it is? If not, you need to seek the Lord in repentance for sin.

D. Her Continuation (9) – [God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.](#) The church has a close fellowship with the Savior. Because of that fellowship, we are obligated to the Lord's work. Christ came unto the world to save sinners! He provided healing to many with physical infirmities, met needs of the poor and hungry, but His reason for coming was man's spiritual condition. He came to feed and heal men's souls. The church has been called to carry on that work. There is no new agenda. We don't come together for a social gathering; we are to be workers in the harvest. Most churches have lost sight of the Great Commission.

[Mat.28:19-20 – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: \[20\] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.](#)

- Our text urges our diligence in that labor. Have we done all we can to fulfill our obligation? Are we meeting the spiritual needs of our community? What does Jesus see as He looks upon

Fellowship? We must continue in fellowship with the Lord, enduring the difficulties and finishing the journey that is set before us. There is no place to sit down or quit!

I. The Origin of the Church (2)

II. The Ordination of the Church (2)

III. The Opportunity of the Church (4-6)

IV. The Obligation of the Church (7-9)

V. The Organization of the Church (10) – Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Organization is key to any group's success. There must be one in charge with the authority to make decisions. Anything with two heads is a monster. Christ is the head of the church; He is Lord.

- A local church cannot function for God if Christ isn't the head. He must be consulted in every aspect of the church. The members as a whole must be in total submission. The church can't be run by the pastor, deacons, or certain "clicks." I believe God has ordained the pastor as shepherd and overseer, but it isn't the pastor's church. We must all understand our place, get in our place, and stand united in Christ.
- I intend to let Jesus be my guide. If you want God's blessing, you must let Him guide you as well. Serving God isn't about getting our way, but serving God His way. A church united in Christ can't fail, but a church divided can't stand. "*Get everybody to love Jesus, and you've got a wonderful church. They don't have to agree on anything else,*" Adrian Rogers.ⁱ

I trust you have been enlightened and challenged regarding the body of Christ, the church of the living God. We enjoy the many benefits associated with the church, but we cannot ignore our obligations. Christ loves the church; He died for the church. Surely if He loved her that much, you and I ought to as well.

If you have never been saved, you are not part of the church. Your name may be on the role of a local assembly, but only the saved make up the body of Christ. If you have never met the Lord in salvation, I urge you to seek Him today.

ⁱ Rogers, Adrian. *Adrianisms: The Wit and Wisdom of Adrian Rogers*. Tennessee: Love Worth Finding Ministries, 2006.