



Series:

WELCOME TO "CHURCH"

Title:

Understanding Church as the Ekklesia

Preacher:

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Notes

Scriptures to reflect on:

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, (ekklesia) and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." **(Matthew 16:13-18 - NIV)**

¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! ¹⁸ And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹ For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." **(II Corinthians 5:17-21 - NLT)**

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." **(Philippians 3:20-21 - NIV)**

Sermon review:

In ancient times the Ekklesia was the gathering or assembling of people who were given the task of carrying out the will of the King. They were Kingdom Outposts. They were Embassies. The members of the Ekklesia were ambassadors- ones who lived in a "foreign land" as representatives of their own King.

As followers of the One True King, we can be assured that every Empire will ultimately fade and the Kingdom of Heaven will prevail. In every place where Hell on Earth is present, the Ekklesia of Christ, is meant to represent and reflect the Kingdom of Heaven. We are citizens of Heaven living in Las Cruces chosen to represent Jesus as His ambassadors.

Personal Daily Prayer Time:

- Pray that God would remind you that you are a Citizen of Heaven and an Ambassador of the King.
- Take time to confess those things in your life where you need His help to be a better representative of the One True King.
 - (Example: Does your social media posts reflect allegiance to Him? The way you talk about politics? Your language at home and work? Does your life reflect your ultimate hope in Jesus as King? Does your life give people a taste of "Heaven" in the way you express love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness?)
- Pray that God would give you the eyes to see the needs of those in our community and that He would break your heart for the things that break His.
- Pray that God would show you one thing in your life that you can intentionally do to better represent Him in your daily life?



Reflection Questions:

- 1) In what ways do you feel pulled to “belong to the world” so that your allegiance to Jesus is compromised and you fail to represent Him as His ambassador?

- 2) In what ways are you intentionally representing Jesus as His ambassador in your daily and weekly life?

- 3) Think about your neighborhood, your work-place, the city of Las Cruces... what needs do you see that most resonate with your heart? Where do you see Hell on Earth in those places? What creates the greatest ache in your soul? (This question will become important later in the series.)

- 4) Now think of our church. If you had all the resources in the world available and all the time you needed, what ministry would you want to be involved in or lead that would give those in our community a taste of Heaven?

- 5) Who do you have that can help to encourage and support you? Who is relying on you? Please pray about who at SVCC can be part of your “team” that will regularly pray for one another.