

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Church as City”

Ephesians 2:19, Hebrews 13:14, Revelation 21:2

Sermon Series Title: “The Church of God”

Sermon Series Summary: The Church of God is the people of God throughout the ages, redeemed by Jesus Christ. We’re going to take a look at who we are and who we are called to be as the church of God. More specifically, we see that who we are is directly connected to whose we are in Christ.

Passage Setting: The theology of the city has been discussed and debated throughout the ages. However, we see that there is dignity and worth in the city, especially because the church is and will be a city in our eternal future. Our citizenship defines our identity, our hope, and our mission today.

Summary: As we go back to “The Church of God” sermon series, we see the church as city today. The biblical story starts in a Garden and ends with a city, the New Jerusalem. Scripture shapes how we view ourselves, the city, and our calling. This is all made possible through the person and work of Christ.

Central Truth: “May we live as the city of God on earth through Christ.”

Sermon Points:

1. The Survey of the City
2. The Significance of the City
3. The Savior of the City

Opening Question

1. What has stuck out to you so far in our “The Church of God” sermon series?

(Our sermons so far:

The Center of the Church: Christ’s person and work; The Beauty of the Church: God sees us as saints; The Treasure of the Church: the gospel; The Victory of the Church: Jesus has won and the gates of hell will not prevail against the church; The Pathway of the Church: self-denial & the cross; The Unity of the Church: one Lord, one faith, one baptism; The Diversity of the Church: many members, various gifts; The Sufficiency of the Church: being equipped for the ministry; The Identity of the Church: salt and light; The Humility of the Church: trust and self-forgetfulness; The Aroma of the Church: we are the aroma of Christ; The Alienness of the Church: we are exiles; The Attraction of the Church: we are a royal priesthood and God’s treasured possession; Church as

Community Group Discussion Questions

Building: we are held/built up together as the temple of God)

We are back in our “The Church of God” sermon series. Through this series, we have seen that we are defined not by WHO we are in ourselves but by WHOSE we are in Christ. Our last sermon in this series was to look at the church as building. This week, we are looking at the church as city.

1. What is the bible’s perspective on the city? How does this shape your perspective on the city?

(Anti-urban theology- Cain creating the first city, Sodom and Gomorrah, Babel- city for man’s glory; Babylon

Biblical Survey: Garden, Cultural mandate (procreation, culture, ideas, structures, systems, law/order, politics), Ir- Hebrew word for city (population density with wall) Psalm 107, cities of refuge, Jerusalem- city of peace and of God w/temple, NT- Jesus’/Apostles’/Paul’s ministries revolved around cities, citizenship in the kingdom of heaven w/ privileges/rights in Ephesians 2, new Jerusalem on the last day- Revelation 21

The goal of the cultural mandate was the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem is the ultimate fulfillment of the Cultural Mandate.)

2. Knowing that we are citizens in the city of God, how are we called to live? Which aspects stick out to you in particular?

(We live upwardly, inwardly, sidewardly, outwardly, and inwardly.

Upwardly- we worship God alone. And we are His temple. He dwells in us, and we can worship Him, both corporately and privately.

Inwardly- We are citizens, meaning we have rights and privileges. They are endless! But some of our privileges include freedom from sin/shame/death, justification before the courts of God, Savior King who died for us in love and rules over us for our good, free access to God, acceptance by His people, perseverance of the saints, and heaven-bound destination.

Sidewardly- God brings us into His people. We are citizens together of the same city, nation, and kingdom. We have one King, one goal, and one destination.

Community Group Discussion Questions

Outwardly- We are a city within a city. We do not dominate, assimilate, or separate. We are an exiled community, living as the city of God in the city of man. We are lights within the city, doing good works and pursuing justice and peace. We pray for the city. We draw people in (centripetal), while sending people out (centrifugal).

Onwardly- we know that this city is not our final destination. Our true home is in heaven. We will experience hardship and brokenness in this life. We may experience persecution for our faith. But we press on with hope, knowing that God will make all things right and we will be home in the New Jerusalem.)

3. How does Christ's person and work empower us to be the city of God?

(Jesus was the ultimate citizen of heaven. He worshiped God to the point of death. He had every privilege and right as a citizen, moreso a king. He lived as the ultimate exile, doing good works and pursuing justice and peace. He lived onward, with the hope of the Father's vindication.

And yet, He took on the form of the opposite of a citizen. He was cast out of the city to die. He was cast out of the old Jerusalem to Calvary, to bring us into the New Jerusalem. He was the king and yet crucified as a criminal, to make us into citizens. He lost all privileges and rights, so we can receive all rights and privileges of the kingdom of heaven. He had no refuge to be our refuge. He had no city for him, dying alone, so that we would never be alone. He became the ultimate exile, losing his home to bring us to our home in heaven and for Him to make His home in us. He pursued justice/peace for us, at the cost of justice/peace for Himself on the cross. He counted all this as joy, to receive us.)

Final Thoughts: *I heard a pastor say that when we change the city, we change the world. We do this by being the city of God in the city of man. And as we live out God's kingdom, God will be glorified and His church will advance. We do this, looking forward to our heavenly destination/identity as the new Jerusalem, secured by the blood of Christ.*