

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.

“We are in our “The Church of God” sermon series, and we see that we are defined not by who we are but whose we are as the Church.”

Call: Revelation 5:9-10

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

Title: “Church as City”

Next Week’s Call: Revelation 5:11-12

Next Week’s Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Next Week’s Title: “Church as Body”

Future Calls: Revelation 5:13-14; Revelation 15:3, 4; Revelation 21:1-4, 5-7, 22-23

Future Titles: “Church as Family” (John 1:12-13), “Church as Bride” (Ephesians 5:22-33), “The Eternality of the Church” (Revelation 21:1-7)

Fallen Condition Focus: We live as citizens of the city of man, rather than citizens of the city of God.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ bought our citizenship in heaven with His blood.

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

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.

Reflective Questions:

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

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

I. Introduction

- A. Hook- The Church of God sermon series
- B. Transition
- C. Proposition
- D. Points

II. The Survey of the City (through Scripture)

- A. Tensions in Scripture regarding cities
 1. Amazing Grace the movie; retreats; nature walks
- B. Anti-urban theology
 1. Cain- first murderer who went eastward (exile) and created the first city
 2. Sodom and Gomorrah- city full of sin, rebellion, and debauchery
 3. Babel- city created for the glory of man; later turns into Babylon whose conquer of Israel led to the destruction of the temple; and in Revelation, Babylon is seen as the city of sin, against God.
 4. This perspective makes sense from these examples. But we see in the rest of Scripture that cities are not sinful in themselves, but just like people, if its inhabitants are sinful, then the cities will be sinful.
- C. Biblical survey of cities
 1. Bible story starts with a Garden and ends with a city- the New Jerusalem.
 2. Ir- Hebrew word for city- human settlement surrounded by walls; not so much referring to population numbers but population density.
 - a) In the bible, cities were seen as places of safety/stability (walls of the city, law and order- elder court by the gate of the city to rule justly for peace, refuge for minorities/individuals), greater diversity (safety for minorities; center of economy, culture, ideas, politics, legal system), and productivity/creativity.
 3. Psalm 107- men who are lost and unsafe without cities
 4. Cities of refuge in the Law- places of safety, refuge, and life
 5. Jerusalem- city of peace, God's city, location of temple (God's dwelling)
 6. Jeremiah 29- after the Babylonian exile, seek the prosperity of the city
 7. NT- Jesus' ministry was geared toward cities; also the apostles' ministry in the book of Acts- Paul's missionary journeys were defined

by city relocation; Paul's letters in the NT were sent to churches in cities

8. Paul talks about how we are citizens in Ephesians 2:19.
9. The author of Hebrews talks about how we await another city, the heavenly city (Hebrews 13:14).
10. In Revelation, we see God's people defined as a city, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2).

D. The goal of the cultural mandate in Genesis 1:28 was the New Jerusalem.

1. Increase- population
2. Fill the earth- establishment of culture, sharing of ideas
3. Subdue/dominion- law and order, politics, structures, systems
4. God works through the city (change city, change world)

III. The Significance of the City

A. Since we are the new Israel, heading toward the new Jerusalem, we need to see ourselves as the city within the city: a heavenly city living in the earthly cities. And this marks us upward, inward, sideward, outward, and onward.

B. Upward (worship)

1. Cities in biblical times would be marked by the "god" they worship. Even if their religion was pantheistic, they would attach themselves to a god.
 - a) Cities today marked by a national sports team... or Korean communities marked by an H-mart.
2. The temples would usually be in the center of the cities.
 - a) "Temples" of our cities today- finance district (money), government district or the palaces of kings/rulers (power), casinos/sports/strip club/red light district (pleasure)
3. The Triune Godhead is the God of our city as the church. We worship Him. We are His temple, and He dwells in us.

C. Inward (citizenship- member of the city with rights and privileges)

1. The fact that Paul uses this language is significant. In the book of Acts, we see Paul using the benefits of his Roman citizenship (only held by 5-10% of the Roman empire) by birth (held in greater esteem).
 - a) Freedom from beatings without trial
 - b) Right to be tried before the emperor rather than in a local court
 - c) Right to not be executed by crucifixion
2. American citizenship- Bill of Rights, Privilege to vote and be on jury in various trials
 - a) Grandma- America citizen- social security
 - b) My wife- affected our tax return and welfare status

3. Citizenship of heaven
 - a) Freedom from sin, shame, and death
 - b) Justified before the courts of God
 - c) Savior King who died for us in love and rules over us for our good
 - d) Free access to God
 - e) Acceptance by His people
 - f) Perseverance of the Saints
 - g) Heaven-bound destination
 - (1) Free Hawaii trip as a citizen

D. Sideward (people)

1. We are a city together with God's people.
 - a) Eagles fans
2. Same goal- worship
3. Same King
4. Same destination

E. Outward (redemption)

1. City within a city
 - a) Not grow through power, force, domination but through humility and love in discipleship
 - b) Exilic- not assimilating or separating
2. Lights within a city
 - a) Matthew 5- city set on a hill- good works
 - b) Justice and peace
3. Prayer for the city
 - a) Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18)
4. OT- centripetal (draw people in); NT- both centripetal and centrifugal (draw people in, while sending them out)

F. Onward (future hope)

1. We know that our true home is in heaven.
2. We will suffer and experience brokenness in this life.
3. We press onward, looking forward to the New Jerusalem, while living out heaven here on earth.

IV. The Savior of the City

A. Jesus is the ultimate citizen of heaven.

1. Upward- worshiped God in perfect obedience to the point of death.
2. Inward- had every privilege and right as a citizen... no, as a king.
3. Outward- lived as the ultimate exile, doing good works and pursuing justice and peace

4. Onward- hope of the resurrection and vindication
- B. And yet, He took on the opposite.
1. Jesus is the ultimate citizen and yet He was cast out of the city to die. He was cast out of old Jerusalem to Calvary, to bring us into the New Jerusalem.
 2. He was the king and yet crucified as a criminal, so He can make us into citizens.
 3. He lost all rights and privileges, so we can have all the rights/privileges of being in the kingdom of heaven.
 4. No safety... no refuge... on the cross, so He may become our refuge.
 5. No city for him but they were against him (Jerusalem, Rome); no people- alone, so we may never be alone.
 6. He became the ultimate foreigner, alien, exile... who lost His home, so He can bring us to our home in heaven and for Him to make His home in us.
 7. He pursued justice and peace for us, at the cost of justice and peace for Himself, receiving the injustice of the cross... losing all peace on the cross. And that was His ultimate good work to save us.
 8. And yet He counted all this as joy... because He would receive us.