

## The Church is Necessary

### Acts 20:28-30

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Many people think you can be a good Christian without being a \_\_\_\_\_ of any church. Is church \_\_\_\_\_ necessary? Today, we're going to explore what \_\_\_\_\_ says about the church, and you can't afford to miss this study!

We know the Lord's way is the best way, the right way, and the holy way of \_\_\_\_\_. The best way to know the Lord's way is to \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures. They are God's \_\_\_\_\_ to us today. They were true when the Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ the apostles and prophets to write them, and they're true for all time.

When you mention the word "church," people \_\_\_\_\_ in a multitude of ways. Some think of the church as \_\_\_\_\_. Some think of the church as an \_\_\_\_\_. Some think the church is made up of prejudiced \_\_\_\_\_. Some think the church needs reinventing in a style more like the \_\_\_\_\_ of our times. Everyone seems to think they know what the \_\_\_\_\_ should be like. Even folks who have never read the Bible or have not entered a church door in many years have an \_\_\_\_\_ about what the church should be.

You've probably noticed religion in America has \_\_\_\_\_. Many groups have become religious \_\_\_\_\_ venues and others have become like shopping malls. Some think the primary purpose of church is to \_\_\_\_\_ to my wants and desires. We've become self-centered, thinking Jesus ought to be our \_\_\_\_\_ rather than thinking we ought to be His. It's no wonder some see the church as \_\_\_\_\_ and others as a waste of \_\_\_\_\_. Few want to \_\_\_\_\_ what Christ envisioned for the church that He built or what place it has in His heart. The Lord never thought of the church as an option; in His \_\_\_\_\_, it's necessary.

### **Our reading today comes from the Book of Acts 20:28-32.**

The Lord Jesus considered the church as necessary. He wants everyone to be a member of His church and to \_\_\_\_\_ worship regularly. The idea that you can be a good Christian and yet not be a member of the church is not from the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Anyone who takes a \_\_\_\_\_ look at the New Testament will see that the church is quite necessary to our relationship with the Lord. The church Jesus built does not \_\_\_\_\_ to you and me. It belongs to the Lord. He \_\_\_\_\_ it. After Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus said, "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock (that is, the confession that He was the Christ) I will build \_\_\_\_\_ church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus took the time to build His church, and not even His \_\_\_\_\_ could prevent it.

The church belongs to the Lord, because He \_\_\_\_\_ it with His own blood. The apostle Paul, by inspiration, told the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Be on guard for

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PO Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 1-800-321-8633

This study sheet is prepared by Jerry Campbell – [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org); [jerry@searchtv.org](mailto:jerry@searchtv.org)

yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own \_\_\_\_\_” (Acts 20:28). If Jesus loved the church enough to \_\_\_\_\_ for it, how can we think so little of it. The church must be precious to the Lord.

The Bible reveals how \_\_\_\_\_ related Christ is to the church in Ephesians 1:22-23: “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as \_\_\_\_\_ over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Just as your head is inseparably connected to your body, so Christ is inseparably connected to the church. Just as your body does your will as it is conceived in the brain, so the church does the will of its head, Jesus Christ. The church is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. We must never \_\_\_\_\_ Christ from His church or the church from Christ.

The church is most precious to the Lord; in fact, He considers the church as His \_\_\_\_\_. **Read Ephesians 5:25-27.** Jesus has gone to great lengths to \_\_\_\_\_ and to sanctify the church. He wants the church to be radiant with \_\_\_\_\_. We need to be \_\_\_\_\_ how we think of the church. When people slander the church or make it trivial, they mock and really \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ Himself. They’re saying Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ to sanctify and glorify the church. If you wish to make a man \_\_\_\_\_, just slander his wife. Do you think the Lord Jesus will look \_\_\_\_\_ on anyone who slanders His bride?

I want to \_\_\_\_\_ the church that the Lord Jesus calls His bride from what people today think when they hear the word “church.” What I am speaking about is the Lord’s church described in the New Testament. Many religious groups who call themselves “churches” are not anything \_\_\_\_\_ the New Testament church. They differ in name, in organization, in doctrine, in mission, and even in worship. They’re often more a reflection of \_\_\_\_\_ culture than of what God intended for the church to be. Some groups have so little \_\_\_\_\_ value and content it is no wonder people see them as unnecessary.

This difference confuses and causes people to \_\_\_\_\_ from the will of God. More than ever, people need to know the \_\_\_\_\_ revealed in God’s Word about the church. They need to think clearly about what God desires rather than be pulled into a \_\_\_\_\_ hope by something that calls itself a church but differs greatly from the church that Jesus built as described in the New Testament. The Scriptures clearly make the church Jesus built a necessity for us to \_\_\_\_\_ if we wish to please God.

Why is the church so necessary? There are several reasons. The first is this: the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ the saved to His church. When the Jews at Pentecost heard Peter \_\_\_\_\_, they were pierced to the heart and they wanted to know what to do. Peter replied that they \_\_\_\_\_ repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. Acts 2:41 says, “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were \_\_\_\_\_ about three thousand souls.” In verse 47 the Bible says, “And the Lord was \_\_\_\_\_ to their number (that is, to the church) day by day those who were being saved.” The Lord adds the saved or the baptized

forgiven to His church. Baptism was the \_\_\_\_\_ that they were forgiven or saved and when they were added.

When a person is \_\_\_\_\_, the Lord Himself adds that person to His church. To be in the church means the Lord has \_\_\_\_\_ you. The Scriptures never see a person who is saved as a person who hasn't been baptized or a person who's not in the Lord's church. The apostle Paul told the church at Colossae, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the \_\_\_\_\_ of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14). Just as the Lord grants forgiveness when one repents and is baptized, so the Lord adds the baptized to His church. The church is the kingdom of Christ!

When John wrote to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation chapter one, he revealed what Christ had done for them. **Read what the Bible says in Revelation 1:4-6.**

When John wrote the seven churches of Asia, he spoke to a people who had come into a \_\_\_\_\_ and were priests to God. John taught that "we" Christians "are of God, and the whole world lies in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). There are but two kingdoms, and that's the domain of darkness and the kingdom of His beloved Son. To enter the church is to enter the kingdom of the beloved \_\_\_\_\_.

The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of the church as a kingdom. **Read what the Lord said in Matthew 16:18-19.** Why would the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ one thing and then give Peter \_\_\_\_\_ to something else? He doesn't do that. The church is the kingdom of God today.

How do I know that? Think about this. In Acts 20:28 the Lord Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the church with His own blood. We have no \_\_\_\_\_ anywhere in the New Testament that the blood of Jesus ever purchased anything but the church. **Read what the twenty-four elders sang in Revelation 5:9-10.** The same blood did not purchase \_\_\_\_\_ different things—the church is that blood-bought kingdom.

Being in the church means that you're blood-bought, but there is no \_\_\_\_\_ of being blood-bought to those outside the church. The church contains the cleansed, but the others outside are not cleansed. The kingdom contains priests to God, but outside there are no priests to God. The Bible says, "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12). Being in the Lord's church is vital to our eternal salvation.

Ephesians chapter two contrasts the difference between people who are in the \_\_\_\_\_ and outside of Christ from those who come into Christ and His \_\_\_\_\_. The apostle Paul reminds those who came out of paganism at Ephesus of what they had \_\_\_\_\_ they became members of the church or body of Christ. **Read Ephesians 2:12-13.**

**Read Ephesians 2:19 to 22,** where Paul describes them after they became Christians, after they became \_\_\_\_\_ of the church. Before, they were \_\_\_\_\_ without hope and without God. Now, they are God's family and fellow citizens in God's kingdom, the church.

The church is vitally necessary because being in the church means that you are a member of God's \_\_\_\_\_. Paul told Timothy, "but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know

how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). In this passage, Paul identified the \_\_\_\_\_ as God’s household or family. The children of God are \_\_\_\_\_ the church. If you claim to be in God’s family, but then say church membership is unnecessary, my friend, you are confused and may be deceiving yourself.

The very act that puts one into the family of God is the \_\_\_\_\_ act that puts one into the church. Compare two passages. First, Galatians 3:26-27, “For you are all sons of God through \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves with Christ.” Baptism as an act of faith is what \_\_\_\_\_ us children of God. Then second, consider 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” This verse says that we were \_\_\_\_\_ into the body. The body of Christ is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). So, God makes one His child, a member of the church, the body of Christ; and He does that through baptism.

When we realize the church is God’s family, the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, the saved, and bought by the blood of Jesus, we will see \_\_\_\_\_ the church is so important in God’s eyes. Being a member of the Lord’s church is not \_\_\_\_\_. My friend, are you a member of the church that Jesus built? The one that you can read about in the New Testament. I hope you are. If not I hope you will become one.

Many people claim to be members of the church, but they aren’t \_\_\_\_\_ members. They’ve ceased to \_\_\_\_\_ church or to support it. By their actions, they’ve actually abandoned the church and in that sense abandoned the \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible says, “let us consider how to \_\_\_\_\_ one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25). The Lord wants us to \_\_\_\_\_ each other to love and good works, and to not forsake assembling with other Christians. You can’t encourage other Christians to stay faithful if you \_\_\_\_\_ going to church altogether.

I know some of you can’t attend worship because of your \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord understands your situations. But, if you can attend worship yet \_\_\_\_\_ to forsake meeting with the Lord’s church, you’re forsaking the Lord, too. The Lord loves His people and knows His church. If you quit \_\_\_\_\_ Him, He knows it. When you stop attending, you also open the \_\_\_\_\_ to temptation of every kind. To stay spiritually healthy, stay in church!

To become a member of the church and to be saved, \_\_\_\_\_ with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins; \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus as the Christ; and be \_\_\_\_\_. When you’re baptized, the blood of Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins and cause you to be added to the church. You’ll become a child of God, born again into His family. If you’re a member of the church of Christ and you’ve stopped attending, why not come back to the Lord and to the church. Get right with God!