

ENTERING THE CHURCH

Acts 2:47

INTRODUCTION

- A. What's Valuable – What's Not?
 - 1. Some things are very expensive – but not really valuable. I.e., yacht.
 - 2. Some things are inexpensive, but very valuable. I.e., sunshine or rain.
 - 3. Some things are very expensive and very valuable. I.e., the church of our Lord.
- B. Value of the Church (*Plan of Redemption*).
 - 1. See its worth in its unique origin planned and purposed in the eternal counsel of heaven, Ephesians 3:10-11 (*cf. Col. 1:24-27; 1 Pet. 1:10-12*).
 - a. It was prepared for through the earthly ministry of Jesus, Matthew 4:17.
 - b. It was Divine forethought – not a mistaken afterthought.
 - 2. See its worth in its unrivaled cost.
 - a. Purchased by the blood of Christ, Acts 20:28.
 - b. The ultimate purpose of the death of Christ was to bring the church into existence.
 - 3. See its worth in the unsurpassed value placed upon it.
 - a. Seek above all else, Matthew 6:33.
 - b. The pearl of great value, Matthew 13:45-46.
- C. How is the church entered today?

I. THE ANSWER ANNOUNCED.

- A. Worldwide Charge to the Disciples.
 - 1. Go into all the world, Mark 16:15.
 - 2. Preach [*teach*] the gospel – in each narrative of Mt., Mk., Lk.
- B. Conditions to be Met.
 - 1. Believed and be baptized, Mark 16:15-16.
 - a. Baptism clearly mentioned.
 - b. In the narrative of Mark, *belief* is emphasized.
 - 2. Repentance stressed by Luke, 24:46-47.
 - a. Repentance is the turning from sin to God.
 - 3. Baptism emphasized, Matthew 28:18-20.
 - a. Baptizing in the name of the Father, ...
- C. Three Conditions for Salvation:
 - 1. Believe.
 - 2. Repent.
 - 3. Be Baptized.

II. THE ANSWER AMPLIFIED.

- A. Acts 2.
 - 1. The gospel of Jesus [*vss. 22-36*] was proclaimed.
 - 2. They believed the message and asked the question, “*What shall we do?*”
 - 3. Peter’s response, Acts 2:38.
 - a. “*Repent and be baptized...*”
 - b. “*For you and your children, and for all who are far off...*”

4. 3000 were baptized that day, vs. 41.
5. Acts 2:47, and they were added to the number.
 - a. That “number” was identified as the church in Acts 5:11.
- B. Acts 8.
 1. Philip instructed to go south, vs. 26.
 - a. On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.
 2. He met an Ethiopian traveling in a chariot, vss. 27-28.
 - a. He was a very religious man [*to Jerusalem to worship*].
 - b. But he was not a Christian.
 - c. He was reading from the prophet Isaiah, vs. 28.
 3. Philip joined him and preached the gospel of Christ, vs. 35.
 4. Seeing a body of water, he asked, “Can I be baptized?”, vs. 36.
 - a. Based on his belief in the gospel of Christ.
 - b. Philip baptized the Ethiopian, vs. 37.
- C. A Different Look.
 1. You live in a kingdom and know the king – a personal friend.
 2. You owe taxes. He tells you to return later to see him and he will forgive your taxes.
 3. Eventually, you return to see the king, but he is gone on a trip.
 4. You are told that special arrangements have been made:
 - a. Meet with 12 administrators.
 - b. Specified terms as follows:
 - i. Return home.
 - ii. Write a letter stating your story.
 - iii. List all members of your family.
 - iv. Sign the letter in the presence of 3 witnesses.
 - v. Meet those terms and your taxes will be forgiven.
 5. Christ on earth.
 - a. Could forgive sins, Luke 23:43 (*criminal on the cross*).
 - b. When He left (ascended to heaven), the terms were shared with the apostles.
 - c. Until the end of the world, Matthew 28:20.
 - i. “*Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...*”

III. THE ANSWER APPLIED.

- A. Final Commission of Christ.
 1. Unchanged.
 2. Terms precisely the same.
 3. Christ set the terms.
- B. Where are You?
 1. Have you believed? The source is the Word of God, Romans 10:17.
 - a. Do you believe in God?
 - b. Do you believe Christ is His Son?
 2. Have you repented, Acts 17:30-31.
 - a. Turned from sin to the living God?
 - b. Committed your heart to God?
 3. Stated publicly that you believe in Jesus as God’s Son, Romans 10:10?

- a. Confessed with your lips that Jesus is Lord under His authority?
- 4. Been baptized?
 - a. Great commission by immersion, Romans 6:4.
 - b. Baptized into Christ, Romans 6:3.
 - c. Received forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16.
 - d. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19-20?
- C. When One Meets the Terms.
 - 1. It is reasonable to believe our faithful Lord will add to His church.

CLOSING

- A. Have you entered the New Testament church?
- B. Would you like to today?
- C. The Greatest News:
 - 1. The church of the New Testament can be entered into by anyone willing to comply with the Lord's terms for entrance, Ephesians 2:14.
 - 2. If you are not confident that you have complied with His terms, then fulfill those terms completely and immediately.
 - 3. Enter His kingdom and live as a citizen of His kingdom!