

Prayer List

Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What judge of Israel had 40 sons and 30 grandsons?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Micah - Micah 7:2

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The Glorious Church Reflected in the Church's Spotless Nature

By Olen Holderby

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you some thoughts on the above topic. This writer is convinced that this topic has been greatly overlooked; so, let us go directly to our subject.

Our theme comes from Ephesians 5:27; therefore, there can be no doubt that God intends for the church to be glorious. The Random House dictionary defines glorious as, "exalted praise, resplendent beauty..." Vine says it means, "held in honor, of high repute"; and, in this context he used such words as "splendid" and "gorgeously"

The word is used in the New Testament in reference to other things (nature, the eternal state of the redeemed, etc.); but, we are here concerned only with the church. What do we think when we hear the word "glorious"? It may be that we need to re-mold our thinking along these lines.

Our text says, "...a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Take a careful look at the words, "without blemish", "holy", no "spot", and no "wrinkle". Perhaps these terms need no comment; but, they do show good reason to think of the church as "glorious". However, we need to carry this further.

What has God done, how has He designed the church so as to make it "glorious"?

First, the church is glorious because of the equality found therein. This begins with the “every creature” of Mark 16:15, and the “every one that believeth” of Romans 1:16. The gospel terms of pardon apply, absolutely, to every one alike; for, there is no respect of persons with God (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11). The man of the ghetto or a king on the throne must all obey the same terms in order to be a part of His church. Then, in Ephesians 2, Paul argues the equality of Jew and Gentile in the church. In verse 14, he says, “For he is our peace, who hath made both one...” This equality most certainly exalts the church.

Secondly, the church is glorious because of what holds it together – a bond of love for God, for Christ, and for one another. This gives emphasis to the fact that the church is composed of people, of individuals, individuals who first have a right relationship with God. Perhaps John gives us the best reason for our love of God and of Christ, “We love him because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Jesus said that we are to love God with all our heart (Matthew 22:37). He who does this will not find it too difficult to love his brethren. Paul said, “the love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Corinthians 5:14); it compels or controls us, and that it should. In Colossians 3:14, Paul refers to love as a “bond”; and the same author says, “love never faileth” (1 Corinthians 13:8). Faith, itself, is to work by love (Gal. 5:6). A while back I read where someone quoted a first-century writer as saying, in reference to persecuted Christians, “Behold how they loved one another!” This love for brethren, of all ranks in life, is wonderful to behold and to experience. Indeed, how wonderful it is to deal with people who no longer lie, steal, cheat, deceive, are envious. or hurtful; but who’s love for the truth abounds in their lives and relationships with brethren. Jesus said, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” This bond of love certainly can be seen to give greater honor to the church.

Thirdly, our eternal hope is to be found in the church. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15:19). Let it be understood, that the church is not the Saviour; Christ is that Saviour. However, Christ saves all accountable people, only through the church. Paul tells the Ephesian Christians that in their past they had no hope and were without God in this world (Ephesians 2:12); but, he goes on to point out that they are now “made nigh by the blood of Christ” and their hope is secure. This hope, which they had heard through the

preaching of the gospel, is laid up in heaven (Colossians 1:5). We are urged to put on for a helmet, “the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). What wonderful hope! It is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast (Hebrews 6:19)!

Fourth, the church is glorious because the wisdom of our God can be seen, by the world, in observing the church. “To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). This is not just referring to the preaching of the gospel by the church; but, to all functions and relationships in the church. As God’s people go about in doing the Will of God, the wisdom of God is clearly seen. It is God’s wisdom, the wisdom from heaven, that directs the church; and, in doing so it gives glory to the church.

The glory of the church is not something merely to be seen. I well recall the first time I flew over the state of Alaska. A small plane was taking us from Anchorage to our destination on the peninsula. The scenery from a few hundred feet up was absolutely gorgeous, unbelievably so. I recalled the statement of Isaiah, “...Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:3). I did not really appreciate this scene until I was on the ground, walking about, and sharing in these beauties.

So it is with the church! It gives one a feeling of awe just to observe this glorious church; but, the real enjoyment comes from getting down off our “observation posts” and sharing in those things that make it a glorious church. Each participant is assisting in demonstrating God’s wisdom to the world. What a glorious arrangement God has given!

Many do not recognize and appreciate this aspect of God’s church. And, this may well be the reason why some are unhappy in the church; and, it may be the reason many see no difference between the Lord’s church and the denominations. Let us all labor to remove every spot and blemish (sins), from this great and glorious church, beginning with ourselves. I think I understand what Paul meant by a “glorious church”. Do you?