



EXCERPT OF SERMON

Sunday 12 June 2022

Title of Sermon : **Keys to Ephesians**

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The letter to the church in Ephesus contains truth relating to “the church”, “The Body of Christ.” Ephesians is a doctrinal book on the church and is followed by Philipians which is a reproof book followed by the correctional letter to Colossians.

Today there are three keys I want you to use to unlock the door to a better understanding of “the church”. When the writer refers to “the church” he speaks of a spiritual dynamism, an entity, a community of believers.

EKKLESIA

The Greek word for church is “ekklesia” which means “those called out.” It’s unfortunate that the term “church” is too often interpreted as a religious denomination or a building made up of a brick and mortar. The word “ekklesia” is in reference to believers called out of the world by God to be a living community that represents Christ’s Body on earth. The Bible refers to Israel as the church in the wilderness

Ekklesia, called out, Israel was called out of Egypt, thus the church in the wilderness. Every time the word church appears in the Scriptures, folks are inclined to think of the Christian church. In regard to Jesus statement in the Gospels—**Matthew 16:18** “*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*”

The church or ekklesia referred to was the Apostles whose mission as “called out” of Israel was to announce the Kingdom message primarily to Israel.

The church that Paul refers to is the Christian church that was non-ethnic or non-nationalistic but a spiritual entity made up of believing Jews and Gentiles.

Believers were first called Christians in Antioch—**Acts 11:26** “*And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*”

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Antioch was a Gentile city significantly Gentile not Jewish. As believers each one is a building block in God's edifice, the Christian church.

ELECT

We are not only God's ekklesia, called out ones, we are also God's elect. Now the teaching of election or predestination can become a conundrum. Some would suggest that the verse ***Ephesians 1:4*** "*Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*" refers to our election before the foundation of the world. Reformed and ultra-Calvinism proposes that God elects some and rejects others and that God's Sovereign Will excludes human choice. This false version of election has destroyed many souls who thought of themselves as "unelected" and, therefore, eternally doomed.

We believe that our election is in Christ. **The operative phrase is "in Christ"**. Those in Christ are God's elect. All people who refuse to accept Christ are outside of Christ and, therefore, lost.

The following **illustration** may make it clearer:

As the minister of the church I manage to secure tickets for a bus trip for all our people on condition that they collect their ticket before the bus leaves. Those who have a ticket can board the bus, those without a ticket miss the opportunity. Provision has been made for all (the bus is Christ), but not all collect their ticket and are left behind. Those in the bus made their choice, those outside who failed to collect their ticket miss the trip.

If we are in Christ, we are the chosen, the elect. In Christ you are God's elect.

EQUIPPED

We are not only God's ekklesia and His elect, we are also His equipped. God has equipped us to do good works. While we are not saved by works, but by Grace—***Ephesians 2:8*** "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*"

We certainly are saved to be God's workmen—***Ephesians 2:10*** "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*"

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You would be wise to identify your talents and gifts God has equipped you with to do His work on earth.

Recently I was requested to visit an elderly gentleman, a retired medical doctor. A member of his family made the request but advised that I don't tell the good doctor that she sent me. Now it's always difficult to call on someone who has no clue who you are or the purpose of you visiting uninvited. Faced with the dilemma I prayed that the Lord would equip me with the wisdom and necessary sensitivity to broach the subject of this dear man's eternal destiny. Although I was warmly welcomed, as a stranger, I noticed that the elderly doctor's eyes revealed a sadness and loneliness that one often sees when visiting a person who is deprived of regular interaction with others. God graciously opened the door of communication for me to freely share the gift of forgiveness and the offer of life eternal. The gentle soul of a very special and precious man embraced the message of salvation through Christ and after prayer he thanked me for making his day so meaningful.

When I left his home I left a man different from the man I met when I arrived.

God had equipped him with a new and lasting assurance of life beyond his circumstances and limited physical condition.

The Lord has equipped you to communicate His message to desperate people who are lost. How will they hear unless you and I speak hope and grace found in Christ.

The 3 keys of Ephesians are namely:

1. The Ekklesia
2. The Elect
3. The Equipped
- 4.

These keys will unlock the door to opportunities to be of service to our Lord God.

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ἐκκλησία

ekklesia

church

The term “church” is often misunderstood and construed as church as we know it today.

The Greek work “ekklesia” is often translated as “church” in the Bible. This has led to a faulty interpretation of the term.

EKKLESIA

The word “ekklesia” *means those who are “called out.”* Israel was called out of Egypt (Acts 7:38).

EKKLESIA
means
THE CALLED OUT ONES

With this in mind we need to consider the various Bible ekklesia:

The “Eve” Ekklesia

Eve was “taken out” or called out of the side of Adam – Genesis 2:23.

The “Abrahamic” Ekklesia

Abraham was “called out” of his family = Genesis 12:1.

The “Hebrew” Ekklesia

The Hebrews were called out of Egypt – Acts 7:38.

The “Messianic” Ekklesia

The Messianic Ekklesia consisted of those “called out” of Israel who believed Jesus was the Messiah.

The church referred to in Matthew 16:13-19 was the Messianic Kingdom church. The gates of hell symbolise death. So death would not prevail or overcome the Kingdom church, it will survive.

The Pentecost church was a Messianic church empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the coming Kingdom – Acts 2:41.

The “Christian” Ekklesia

The Christian church consists of all believers, gentiles and Jews called out of the world who make up the church, the Body of Christ – Ephesians 2:10-22.