

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
Outline for "First Principles Class"
Given by Larry Powers
www.oabs.org

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is probably no other religious term more commonly used, and concerning which a greater amount of confusion exists among men today than the term "church."
 - a. Today one hears so much about "my church," "my wife's church," "your church." Such expressions have caused people to regard the church with no more sanctity, no more reverence and no more importance than a club or a lodge.
 - b. Today it is often heard that one can "join the church of his choice," or "attend the church of your choice."
2. Why should men misunderstand the Lord's church?
 - a. The Bible freely uses the term, church; it occurs more than 100 times in the New Testament.
 - b. It is used with such clearness and simplicity that there is really no reason for misunderstanding among those who have the proper respect for God's Word.
3. Therefore it is most certainly true that poor understanding of what the church actually is has been the major cause of confusion existing on the subject.

I. Who is responsible for the establishment of the church?

- A. God planned and purposed the church (Eph. 1:3-5; 3:8-11; II Tim. 1:9).
- B. God promised to build the church.
 1. God promised to build one church (Gen. 3:15).
 - a. Christ is the seed of woman (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-23; Gal. 4:4).
 - b. Notice Satan would bruise the seed of woman (Christ) but Christ would bruise Satan's head.
 - c. This was complete in the church (Eph. 5:23-27).
 2. God promised Abraham that through his seed all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).
 3. This promise was restated to Judah (Gen. 49:10).

II. What is the church?

- A. The word "church" in the original language is "ekklesia."
 1. This word is a combining of two other words to make one distinct idea.
 - a. "Ek" is the prefix and is a preposition, meaning "out of, from, of; spoken of such objects which before were in another but are now separated from it, either in respect of place, time, source, or origin" (Zodiates).
 - b. "Klesia" is the verb form of the word ekklesia meaning "to call."
 2. The word means to call out, or "that which is called out."
 - a. This originally was a common term for a congregation of God's people.
 - b. The called out people then were the ekklesia, church.
 - c. The calling power and the thing out of which one is called are not inherent within the word.
 - d. These facts must be learned from the context.
 3. The word ekklesia is translated church 112 times and assembly three times.
 4. This word is used for the first time by our Lord (Matt. 16:18) and the last time by our

Lord (Rev. 22:16).

- B. Since the church is composed of those who are called out, what is the calling power?
1. Jesus is the calling power (Matt. 16:18).
 2. Christ has the authority to call men to follow Him (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - a. He has the authority by virtue of His being God's Son (Matt. 16:16; Rom. 1:4; John 3:16).
 - b. He has the authority by virtue of His being the Savior (Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; Titus 1:4).
 - c. He has the authority by virtue of the fact that He is the head of the church, the builder and foundation (Col. 1:18; I Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11).
 - d. He has the authority by virtue of His death, burial and resurrection (Acts 2:22-36).
 3. But the question to ask is "How does Jesus call today?"
 - a. Jesus uses the gospel as His instrument for calling (Rom. 1:16,17).
 - b. Today men are called unto salvation only by the gospel of Christ (II Thess. 2:13,14).
 - c. Those who heed the call are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:20,41,47).
- C. Since the church is the called out from what is one called?
1. One is called out of sin (Matt. 9:13).
 2. One is called out of the snare of the devil (II Tim. 2:26).
 3. One is called from his trespasses (Eph. 2:1,5).
 4. One is called from the old things of the world (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:12; 4:18).
 5. One is called out of darkness (Col. 1:13,14; Eph. 4:18).
- D. Since the church is the called out into what is one called?
1. One is called into salvation (Acts 2:47; II Thess. 2:13,14).
 2. One is called into Christ, into the church.
 - a. Salvation is in Christ (II Tim. 2:10; Eph. 5:23).
 - b. One cannot be in Christ without being in His church.
 - c. One is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27); one is also baptized into Christ body (I Cor. 12:13).
 - d. The body is the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22,23).
 - e. Therefore, to be in Christ is to be in His body, His church.
 - f. There is no such thing as one being saved and later becoming a member of the church.
 - g. Therefore those who say that one can be saved out of the church just do not know what the church is.
 3. One is called into sanctification (I Cor. 1:2).
 - a. To be sanctified is simply to be set apart (Ex. 13:2,12).
 - b. This takes place when one obeys the gospel of Christ (John 17:17; Heb. 2:11; 13:12; I Cor. 6:9-11).
 4. One is called into fellowship with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and saints (I John 1:7; Acts 2:42).
 5. One is called into life (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1).
 6. One is called into all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).
 7. One is called into the light (Col. 1:13,14; I John 1:7-10).

E. The word church is used in the universal sense.

1. The New Testament church composes all the saved throughout the whole world.
 - a. When Jesus spoke of building His church (Matt. 16:18) He was speaking of the church in the universal sense.
 - b. It was to this church to which the 3000 were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41,47).
2. Relative to the church universal there is no functioning government on earth (Zech. 6:13).

F. The church is used in the local sense in the Scriptures.

1. The New Testament speaks of the church in the local setting such as the church at Antioch, the church at Ephesus or the church at Corinth.
2. People in a given geographical area work together as a local congregation.
3. There is no sort of ecclesiastical tie that organically binds all local congregations into a highly centralized organization.
4. Each local congregation is autonomous.

G. What the church is not!

1. The church is not a denomination.
2. The church is not a material house or building (Acts 17:24), but a spiritual house (I Peter 2:5,9; I Tim. 3:15).

H. What are the names of the church?

1. Much can be understood about the church by a study of the terms by which it is called.
2. The church has received different names according to the standpoint from which it is viewed and the various relationships under which it is contemplated.
 - a. It is called the "Kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33; Mark 1:14,15; 4:11,26,30; 10:14,15).
 - b. It is called the "Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 13:24,31,33,38,44,45).
 - c. It is called the "Kingdom of God's dear Son" (Cil. 1:13).
 - d. It is called the "Kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5).
 - e. It is called the "Kingdom of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9).
 - f. The church of God (I Cor. 11:22; I Tim. 3:15).
 - g. The church of Christ (Matt. 16:18).
 - h. The church (Acts 2:47; 5:11; I Cor. 15:9; Eph. 1:22).
 - i. And when it is contemplated with reference to several congregations, it is called:
 - 1) The churches of God (I Cor. 11:16; I Thess. 2:14; II Thess. 1:4).
 - 2) The churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16).
 - 3) The churches of (I Cor. 16:19; II Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2).
 - 4) Simply the churches (Acts 15:41; 16:5; I Cor. 7:17; 14:34; II Cor. 8:18,19).
 - j. To this list might be added:
 - 1) The house of God (I Tim. 3:15).
 - 2) The body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18,24).
 - 3) By implication the army of the Lord (Eph. 6:10-20; I Tim. 6:12), the temple of God (Eph. 2:19-22; I Peter 2:5) and the vineyard of the Lord (Matt. 21:28-31; 20:1-16; Matt. 13:18-23).

I. As to organization the church of Christ is a body. Here one sees its unity and fellowship.

1. Jesus is the head of the body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22,23; I Cor. 12:12-27).
 - a. The head is the seat of government.

- b. There are many members of the body and each member is important and each has his particular function (Rom. 12:4,5; I Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:16).
- 2. The body and head are inseparable. Injury of one member of the physical body is felt by others, and the head (I Cor. 12:24-27).

J. As to labor the church of Christ is a vineyard. Here one sees its work.

- 1. Labor is necessary to salvation (Phil. 2:12,13; Acts 2:40).
- 2. Where one works is important (Matt. 21:28-30).
 - a. Laborers were hired into the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16).
 - 1) The household went out early in the morning.
 - 2) This implies the importance of the work.
 - 3) There is nothing as important as the Lord's work (Matt. 6:33).
 - b. The household went out to hire laborers.
 - 1) He did not try to scare them into his vineyard; a scared man will make a mighty poor workman.
 - 2) He did not try to force them into his vineyard.
 - 3) He did not try to get people into the kingdom by coercion.
 - 4) He went out to hire laborers, he did not want loafers or shirkers; there is no place in the kingdom of God for a lazy person.
 - c. The household went out to hire laborers into his vineyard.
 - 1) It makes a difference where the work is done.
 - 2) Many are attempting to work in the wrong place.
 - 3) Some think it makes no difference where the work is done (Matt. 7:21; Col. 3:17; Eph. 3:21).
- 3. The laborer is worthy of his hire (Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 2:10; II Peter 1:5-11; Rev. 3:20,21).

K. As to relationship the church of Christ is the bride of Christ. Here one sees the purity of the church.

- 1. When one is married he goes through the process of being married.
- 2. Christ has but one bride.
 - a. Christ condemned polygamy (Matt. 19:1-12).
 - b. Did He preach one thing and practice another?
 - c. Does He have a plurality of wives? NO
 - d. As the bride forsakes all others and keep herself unto her husband, unto him alone, so should the church keep herself unto Christ and unto him alone.
 - 1) The church should herself ever separate from the world (Rom. 12:1,2; II Cor. 6:14,17).
 - 2) She must not become a part of the world, or flirt with the world (I John 2:15-17; James 4:4).
- 3. Here in this metaphor one especially sees portrayed the purity of the church (Eph. 5:27).
 - a. The very nature and character of the church demands its purity.
 - b. Every person that obeys the gospel of Christ is made pure by the blood of the Lamb (I Peter 1:18,19; Rev. 1:5).
 - c. The church should be kept pure because the salvation of the lost demands it (Matt. 5:13-16).
 - 1) Influence is something that all have (Rom. 14:7).
 - 2) It is either good or bad (Matt. 12:30).

- d. The church should be kept pure because of its oneness with Christ.
 - 1) It is united with Christ (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30).
 - 2) It would be ridiculous to take the members of Christ and dedicate them to sinful purposes (I Cor. 6:15,16).
- e. The church should be kept pure because the destiny of the church demands it (Rev. 19:7-9; 21:27).

J. As a family the church of Christ is the household of God.

- 1. This His household (Eph. 2:19).
- 2. This is His house (I Tim. 3:15; Gen. 28:16).
- 3. Christ is over the house (Heb. 3:6).
- 4. God is the Father (Eph. 3:14; 4:6; I Cor. 8:6; Matt. 6:9; 23:9; Heb. 12:9).
- 5. All Christians are God's children (Gal. 3:26-29; 4:6,7; Rom. 8:14-16).
- 6. There are benefits provided for His children.
 - a. Providence (Matt. 6:19-33; James 1:7).
 - b. Correction (Heb. 12:5-11).
 - c. Protection (Phil. 4:5-7; I Cor. 10:12,13).
- 7. There are certain things connected with this relationship.
 - a. Obedience (Eph. 5:1,6; Matt. 7:21-29; I Peter 1:14).
 - b. Purity (I John 2:15-17; II Cor. 6:16=7:1).
 - c. Love brethren (I John 3:11-15; 4:7).
 - d. Wear the proper name (Isa. 56:5; 62:2; Acts 11:26; 4:12; I Peter 4:15,16).

K. As to worship the church of Christ is a temple.

- 1. The tabernacle and temple of Old are types of the church today.
 - a. Moses built the Tabernacle according to the pattern (Ex. 25:8,9; Lev. 26:11,12).
 - 1) The tabernacle consisted of three parts (outer court, Holy Place, and Most Holy Place).
 - 2) The outer court is a type of the world.
 - a) The outer court was 100 cubits by fifty cubits (Ex. 27:18).
 - b) Located in the outer court was the altar of burnt offerings. On this altar were sacrifices made for the sins of the people (Lev. 9:7). This is a type of Christ. Christ is the antitype (Heb. 7:26,27).
 - c) Located in the outer court was the laver (Ex. 30:18). Priests were washed (Ex. 29:4-9). Priests must be pure before doing service (Ex. 30:17-21). This was placed between the altar of burnt offering and the holy place. The antitype is baptism.
 - 3) The Holy place is a type of the church (10 by 20 cubits).
 - a) Inside the Holy Place was the table of Shewbread (2 cubits length, 1 cubit breadth, 1 1/2 cubits high) (Ex. 25:23). Located on the north side (Ex. 26:35).
 - b) On the south side of the Holy Place was the golden candlestick (Ex. 25:31-40). This was to burn continually. Antitype – the word (Psa. 119:105,130).
 - c) Before the veil in the Holy Place was the altar of incense (1x1x2 cubits). Offered morning and evening (Ex. 30:7,8). Antitype – prayers (Rev. 5:8; I Tim. 2:8; Matt. 6:6; I Thess. 5:17).
 - b. The Temple is also a type of the church (I Kings 6:1; II Cor. 6:12,13).
 - 1) David purposed and prepared (II Sam. 7; I Chron. 28:3; 29:2).

- 2) Solomon built it.
- 3) Material was stone.
- 4) God's glory filled the temple (II Chron. 5:13,14).
- 5) The church is the antitype.
- c. God's name there (Ex. 20:24).
2. The temple, the church, is composed of living stones (I Peter 2:5,9) all the redeemed (I Cor. 3:16,17; 6:19,20).
3. Christians are priests.
 - a. What was the function of the priests in the Old Testament (Heb. 8:2,3)?
 - b. What are the functions of the priests today (I Peter 2:9)?
4. The temple was built according to God's pattern.

III. When and Where was the church established?

A. The prophets of God prophesied of the church/kingdom.

1. Nathan prophesied of the establishment of the church (II Sam. 7:12-17; I Chron. 17:11-15 [1055-1015]).
 - a. The seed of David was to build (Acts 2:30).
 - b. Build the house (Acts 2:30,47; I Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19-22).
 - c. The throne of the Lord is in heaven (Psa. 89:3,4,34-37; Acts 2:32-36).
 - d. Christ to rule as priest (Zech. 6:13; Acts 2:33-35; Heb. 8:1; 7:1-28). This could not take place while on the earth (Heb. 8:4).
2. Joel prophesied of the establishment of the church (Joel 2:28-32 [800 B.C.]).
3. Isaiah prophesied of the establishment of the church (Isa. 2:2,3 [750 B.C.]).
4. Daniel prophesied of the establishment of the church (Dan. 2:44 [605 B.C.]).

B. The way was prepared for the establishment of the church by 84 preachers.

1. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ (Isa. 40:3,4; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 3:1-3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:17,77; John 1:33).
2. Jesus prepared the way for the church (Matt. 4:7; John 4:1; Matt. 16:13-19; Mark 9:1; Luke 24:44-47; Acts 1:8).
3. The twelve apostles prepared the way for the church (Matt. 10:7).
4. The seventy prepared the way for the church (Luke 10:9).

C. The church was established (presented) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47).

1. Right foundation - Christ
2. Right builder - Christ
3. Right Time
 - a. In the last days (Isa. 2:2,3; Joel 2:28-32; Dan. 2:44).
 - b. Pentecost (Acts 2:17).
 - c. If the church was established before Christ died?
 - 1) No foundation (Isa. 28:16).
 - 2) No head (Eph. 1:20-23).
 - 3) No blood (Acts 20:28).
 - 4) No Spirit (John 7:38,39).
 - 5) No gospel (Matt. 16:19,20).
 - d. Power was to come during the time of those then living (Mark 9:1).
 - e. Apostles were to wait for power (Acts 24:49).
 - f. Power came on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff).
4. The right place – Jerusalem (Zech. 1:16; Isa. 28:16).

5. The terms of admission were presented on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41).
6. The plan or pattern of worship presented (Acts 2:42).

IV. Why was the church established (Eph. 3:8-10)?

V. How has the church progressed since the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)?

A. How did the church progress in the first century?

1. Souls added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41,47).
2. Great fear in the church (Acts 5:1-11) [AD 33].
3. Persecution against the church (Acts 8:1-4) [AD 40].
4. Tidings to the ears of the church (Acts 11:22) [AD 40].
5. Church at Antioch (Acts 13:3; 14:27) [AD45].
6. Christ the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18) [AD 61].
7. Translated into the kingdom (Col.:13) [AD 61].
8. Throughout the whole (Rom. 1:8; Col. 1:5,6,23) [AD 61].
9. House of God (I Tim. 3:15) [AD 63].
10. Christ king (I Tim. 6:15) [AD 63].
11. Immovable kingdom had been received (Heb. 12:28) [AD 64].
12. John in the kingdom (Rev. 1:9) [AD 96].
13. Churches in Asia (Rev. 2,3) [AD 96].

B. How did the church progress in the centuries that followed?

1. What happened to the church from AD 100 - 1300?

a. The first departure came in organization. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus of this departure (Acts 20:28-32).

- 1) 150 – the organization fo the church had begun to change. The clergy began to pattern itself after the Jewish priesthood.
- 2) 325 – Ecumenical councils began with the one at Nicaea.
- 3) 450 – Leo I claimed to be the first pope.
- 4) 588 – Claim first universal bishop of Constatinople
- 5) 606 – First pope (Boniface III)
- 6) 1054 – Split Roman and Greek church

b. The second departure was in doctrine.

- 1) 150 – Millennial view began to be taught by Papias
- 2) 220 – Original Sin taught by Tertullian
- 3) 248 – Infant baptism was introduced but did not gain general acceptance until the time of Augustine (354-430)
- 4) 251 – pouring
- 5) 500 – Extreme unction
- 6) 593 – Purgatory
- 7) Lord Supper changed called the Eucharist and it was thought to have had power to help the dead
- 8) 666 – Instrumental music was introduced but not generally accepted until 800s and choirs began to be used about this time.
- 9) 788 – Transubstantiation
- 10) The worship of departed saints, had begun in early centuries was made

official.

- 11) 1015 – celibacy
- 12) 1100 – Indulgences

- 13) 1215 – Auricular confession
- 14) 1311 – Sprinkling
- c. The third departure was in manner of life.
 - 1) Externally Greek philosophy and human rationalism effected the way of life.
 - 2) Pride of man continued to be a problem.
- 2. What happened to the church from AD 1300 – 1700?
 - a. Men began an attempt to reform the apostate Catholic church.
 - 1) The Renaissance had spread to such an extent that through a revival of interest in study of the Scripture many people were aware of the fact that the church of the New Testament was far different from the church in existence at this time.
 - 2) The hierarchy of the Catholic church was corrupt.
 - 3) There was religious and moral corruption on every hand.
 - b. Who were some of the men involved in this early attempt at reformation?
 - 1) William of Occam (1300-1349). He taught that the pope was not infallible. He also advocated that the Bible is the only infallible source of authority in the church and in secular matters, the church and the pope should be subordinate to the state.
 - 2) John Wycliffe (1320-1384). The morning star of the Reformation. He opposed the pope, declaring that in the Scripture there are only two orders of officers in the church, elders and deacons.
 - 3) John Huss (1373-1415). Strongly opposed the doctrine of indulgences and encouraged a return to the study of the Scripture.
 - b. But from this reformation came more and more departures and division.
 - c. The departure in organization which began in AD 150 continued.
 - 1) Lutheran church founded by Martin Luther (1521).
 - 2) Presbyterian church founded by John Calvin (1533).
 - 3) Church of England by Henry VIII (1535).
 - 4) Baptist by Thomas Helwys (1611).
 - 5) Methodist by Wesley (1729).
 - 6) And on and on it goes today.
 - d. The departure in doctrine continued – Calvinism, faith only, etc.
- 3. What has happened to the church since 1700?
 - a. Men begin to call for a restoration of the church. 1775 – James O’Kelly (Methodist), 1779 – Elias Smith (Baptist), 1801 – Abner Jones (Baptist), 1798 – Barton W. Stone (Presbyterian), 1807, 1809 – Thomas and Alexander Campbell and many others followed the pleas for a return to the Bible – Walter Scott, Ben Franklin, J.W. McGarvy, Moses Lard, etc.
 - b. These men were calling for a return to the Bible for the proper organization and doctrine.
 - c. But once again perversion was on the move. 1849 – missionary society, 1859 – instrumental music in Midway Kentucky and on and on it goes today.

C. What about the church today?

- 1. The church for which Jesus died had been preserve throughout the years (Luke 8:11).
- 2. This is the church which was purposed and planned by God (Eph. 3:10,11), this is the church that was promised by God, of which was the Old Testament prophets prophesied, this is the church which was prepared by 84 preachers, this is the

church that was presented on the day of Pentecost.