

## 1. The Church is God-Possessed

## a. God-possessed

i. 1 Pet 2:9-10

ii. The foundational nature of the Church is this: God's Possession

1. Every function and form flows from this foundational truth of God's electing and sanctifying choice in Christ Jesus

## b. Gathered

i. "Church" from *ἐκκλησία*

ii. Word means "called out"

1. Thus, Paul mentions "call" or one of its cognates three times in this greeting
2. The idea is that God calls a people out of the world, for Himself, to Himself, to call His own

iii. Jewish usage: Word is used to refer to Israel's gathering ("assembly" or "congregation") 77 times in the OT

iv. Greek usage: It is used in the socio-political Greek usage of those who belong to a city-state and thus have political participation, obligations, accountability, and benefits of belonging to the membership of the city-state

v. In general, it is the gathering of those who share common participation and membership under a ruling power for a particular and unique purpose

1. Thus, "church of God" are those who are gathered together by God, set apart for God, under common allegiance to God, with Christ Jesus united with God, for the glory of God, to be in the presence of God.
2. Thus, we are members of His body, branches in His vine, stones of His Temple, and beloved of His binding love.

## c. God-ruled

i. Gathered and united to Him, we are called out to an allegiance to Him as our Lord

ii. Note the emphasis on lordship by Paul here in the beginning of the letter

1. Unity and lordship
2. ALL under Him

## d. God-delighted

i. Called by God means that it is His pleasure to gather you to Himself and to one another

ii. He delights in you: in saving you, in sanctifying you, in uniting you to His Son, in giving you His Spirit, in transforming you into the image of Jesus, in glorifying you, in uniting you to one another in brotherly love, in drawing you up near to Himself, in dwelling with you for all eternity, etc.

iii. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us...in Christ..." (Ephesians 1)

## 2. The Church of God is Addressed Locally

## a. Local church

i. Distinguishable from other local churches by "in Corinth"

ii. "one anothers"

1. The practical outworking of love is accomplished in our local relationships
2. Headship and submission to one another under Christ;

## b. Body

i. Organically connected

1. United
2. Interdependent

- ii. Accountable
  - 1. One Head – Christ
  - 2. Mutuality for health
    - a. As leaven leavens the entire lump, so sin in one part affects the whole
    - b. Your life is not merely your own – my business is your business as a part of the Body of Christ – mutual accountability is the language of love
- iii. Service
  - 1. Each part working to the building up of the whole into unity of the faith and the knowledge of God
  - 2. 1 Cor 10:31
  - 3. Gifted for Edification
- c. The calling to carry on the ministry of Christ Jesus is not an individual calling, a one-person mandate, but rather a corporate mission, a family’s purpose
  - i. We are to *work* together
  - ii. We are to *encourage* each other
  - iii. We are to *admonish* each other / hold each other accountable
  - iv. We are to *covenant together* for the glory of God through the exaltation of Christ Jesus as the Divine Savior-King
    - 1. This means that you do not live for yourself, or entrust yourself to your own heart, but rather to the Church according to the Word of Christ Jesus
    - 2. “Membership” is not the participation of the country club or the team fan club, but the “Covenant” promise of a family member to the family, organically connected and inseparable from the Head (Colossians 1:18; 2:19)
  - v. We are to *devote ourselves* to each other (Acts 2) just as we devote ourselves to the Word, to Worship, and to Prayer
- d. This life in Christ, as God-possessed and on His mission, is functionally lived out locally

### 3. The Church of God is Sanctified

- a. Sanctify = make holy
  - i. Holy is an adjective that means “set apart for sacred use; unique; distinctly different”
    - 1. Thus, the people of God are called “‘to be holy, as I am holy,’ says the Lord”
    - 2. Our “uniqueness” is to reflect the uniqueness of our God
      - a. As His image-bearers, we are to bear His image of holy, distinct, uniqueness
      - b. Distinctly different purity, Distinctly different love, Distinctly different justice, Distinctly different mercy, Distinctly different relationships as distinct from the world because they reflect the God who rules over all created things and who created the world
  - ii. Thus, anything that God set apart from other things for the express purpose of sacred and unique use is called holy.
    - 1. Holy assembly (Ex 12:16) with which to remember the finishing of God’s works
    - 2. Holy Place and Most Holy Place (Ex 26:33-34) were locations of various degrees of unique purity set apart to establish God’s purity and uniqueness
    - 3. Holy vessels (1 Kings 8:4) are the vessels used for worship in the Temple, thus they are extraordinary, not by value or inherent quality, but by purpose of being set aside for sacred use
    - 4. Holy garments (Ex 28:2) the high priest wore which separated his tasks from the common tasks of everyday life because they were done expressly for the honor and reverence and unique worship of the LORD
    - 5. Holy nation ( ) because God called them out from the other nations to worship Him exclusively and to receive His blessings from His gracious hand

- iii. "Holy" is opposite of "common" (profane)
- b. Holiness is the theme of 1 Corinthians
  - i. Paul is correcting unholy attitudes, actions, and inactions with the appeal to act in a manner consistent with the unique relationship of allegiance to the Lord to whom we now belong
  - ii. He appeals for holy sexual relationships, holy social relationships, holy forgiveness, holy submission, holy leadership, holy service, holy gifts, holy hope, and holy allegiance to the authoritative Savior-King.
- c. pft pass – "having been sanctified"
  - i. pft shows completed action with ongoing result
  - ii. pass shows that this sanctification is worked/accomplished by Another
    - 1. God sets us apart as His church *as those whom He possesses*
    - 2. He has called us out from various people groups of the earth to worship Him exclusively and to receive His blessings as His chosen people
    - 3. He has set us apart as belonging to Him in a unique way
      - a. You are His Temple in which He dwells (1 Cor 3:16-17)
      - b. You are His field, His building in which He labors and assigns laborers to produce fruit (1 Cor 3:9)
      - c. You are His Body and individually members of it (1 Cor 12:27) by which He works and labors in the world.
      - d. You are His letter, delivered by His servants, on which the ink is written by the Spirit of God on the hearts of men (2 Cor 3:3)
      - e. You are His branches (John 15:5) that you might produce His fruit by abiding in Him.
      - f. You are His children whom He loves and supplies and delights in (Rom 8:15-17; Gal 4:6-7; Ps 18:19; Ps 147:10-11)
    - 4. These ARE – they are already accomplished realities
  - iii. In this same manner, Katie has sanctified me as her husband – I am now uniquely hers in a unique relationship with her different than any other man – that IS
    - 1. Now I ought to act like it, yes?
- d. in Christ Jesus – union with Him
  - i. This is the "how" we are set apart to God and for God
    - 1. All who are united to Jesus by faith have been made holy, set apart to belong to Christ as a beloved Bride and thus belong to God
    - 2. 1 Cor 3:23; Colossians 3:3-4
  - ii. This union is the antitype of the type of marriage itself
    - 1. Marriage was created to show this union of unique complement
    - 2. Jesus considers himself incomplete without His Bride! What?!
    - 3. Just as every created order in the Genesis account has pairs (Heavens/Earth; Land/Sea; Sun/Moon; Light/Darkness, etc.) so, too, does humanity (Man/Woman)
      - a. Neither one interchangeable, but together 'one' – so that Jesus and His Church are not interchangeable, either, but are one in a way that the man/woman marriage as 'one flesh' portrays
      - b. This is also why single gendered marriage cannot be marriage in a biblical sense – the genders are not interchangeable any more than Jesus and His Church are interchangeable – the Church is not Christ, nor Christ the Church, yet they are inseparably complementary in union for the glory of God

#### 4. The Church of God is Sanctified for Godly Works

- a. The structure of the syntax is the same as Paul's calling to be an apostle
    - i. "called holy ones"
  - b. Belonging to God, set apart for Himself, we are to walk in a manner consistent with this holy calling
    - i. Titus 2:14
    - ii. 1 Peter 2:9 – He chose us "a people for His own possession, that you might proclaim the excellencies of Him who call you out of darkness into his marvelous light."
      - 1. Chosen of God, with a new nature of God-belonging, God-possessed, our transformed deeds of humble faith, allegiance, and obedience are the aroma of the glory of God's transforming gospel
      - 2. These deeds of light reveal the deeds of darkness for what they are: "debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry."
      - 3. Our deeds proclaim to the world the uniqueness of the God who called us
        - a. They proclaim His nature
        - b. They proclaim His holiness
        - c. They proclaim His mercy
        - d. They proclaim His marvelous light
  - c. Having been set apart in Christ, our purpose and mission is now that we are called to live holy (set apart for God in submission, purity, etc. by the power and resolve of God) lives
    - i. Just as Paul was to labor as an apostle, so we are to labor for holiness
    - ii. "To know Christ, is the shortest description of true grace; to know him better, is the surest mark of growth in grace; to know him perfectly, is eternal life." – John Newton
  - d. Believers, set apart in Christ by the grace of God, are now at war against that which is infinitely opposed to God
    - i. Satan –an enemy of God
    - ii. Sin – at enmity against God
    - iii. "The gospel came with grace, but demanded irreconcilable war." – Rosaria Butterfield
5. The Church of God is Connected
- a. Together with those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus
    - i. Though there is distinction in locale, there is also unity of belonging, sanctification, and the call to holiness in every place
    - ii. We have unity of "God-possessedness" together with all those who belong to God through being united to Christ Jesus by faith
  - b. Their Lord and our Lord
    - i. Note the emphasis on authority
    - ii. What unites the church is the lordship of Jesus Christ – our united, unique, and absolute submission to the Lord and His Word
    - iii. Being made holy by God's electing grace, we pursue holiness together for the sake of His name

Conclusion: As we seek to fulfill the mission which our Savior-King has commanded us, to make disciples, we must begin with our calling. We are possessed by God, belonging to the One who rules over all. And our calling, therefore, is not to please the world or pander to it, but to proclaim the excellencies of the One who made us His own when we were His enemies. We seek His glory, His renown, His fame, and as we progressively see this holy God who loves us so deeply, we are made more like Him, producing fruit from His Spirit, zealous for good works, entrusting ourselves to His Word together. Holiness begets holiness. May it be so in me, in us, and in all God's people. Amen.