



I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

MOUNT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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Church Theme: “Let’s “BE” The Church” (2nd Corinthians 6:16; Matthew 5:14 – 16)

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Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference

Chapter 6 Review – “I Will Treasure Church Membership As A Gift”

In this session, we will see that Scripture emphasizes that church membership is also a precious gift that should be treasured. When we treasure this gift, it will greatly affect the way we love, serve, give, and pray for our local church.

Rainer noted the two very different perspectives of church membership:

Option 1

“In the first option we approach church membership similar to country club membership noted in chapter one. We are joining the church to see what we can get out of it. The pastor is to feed us through his sermons. We have specified an acceptable range for the length of the sermon. The music is to fit our style exactly. Any deviations are not acceptable. The programs and ministries are for our benefit. We will determine what we like and don’t like. We are members who expect perks, privileges, and service.”

Option 2

“But there is a second option to church membership. It’s the biblical option that sees membership as a gift, something to be treasured. Membership means we have the opportunity to serve and give rather than the legalistic option to do so. Our entire attitude is different when we approach membership the biblical way.”

1. The Biblical Perspective of the Gift of Church Membership

Scripture is clear that salvation (the prerequisite for church membership) is a gift.

Even though we were dead in our sins, we were made alive in Jesus Christ. He paid our sin debt and made it possible for us to have a right relationship with God. This is a priceless gift! It is important for us to recognize that our salvation means that we are part of the body of Christ. The free gift of salvation affords us another gift – being part of the body of Christ. Rainer explained:

“Do you see what’s taking place? You received a gift, the free gift of eternal salvation. That gift includes eternal salvation. It includes forgiveness of sins by Christ’s death on the cross. It includes adoption by God the Father. It includes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And it includes becoming a part of the body of Christ. That’s right: membership in the body of Christ, the church, is a gift from God. It’s not a legalistic obligation. It’s not country club perks. It’s not a license for entitlement. It’s a gift. A gift from God. A gift that we should treasure with great joy and anticipation.”

2. The Universal Church vs. The Local Church

Throughout the New Testament, the term “church” is used in two ways. One way the term is used is to describe the universal church – that is “all believers everywhere for all ages.”

Another way the term is used is to describe the local church – that is a specific group of gathered believers in a specific place at a specific time.

It is important to recognize that the New Testament knows nothing of a person who is in the universal church and not a local church. Local church membership is vital to the growth of believers. It is the place where they are able to serve and use their gifts as well as the place they are held accountable. Some believers have attempted to say that their inclusion in the universal church is sufficient but this is problematic. Rainer stressed this when he wrote:

“It’s a lame and invalid excuse to say you will limit your involvement to the universal church. The Bible is clear that we are to be connected to a specific church in a specific context.”

3. Understanding and Cherishing The Gift Of Church Membership

“Church membership is a gift. A gift must be treasured. It should not be taken for granted or considered lightly. Because it is a gift, we must always be thankful for it. And when we are thankful for something, we have less time and energy to be negative. When we receive a gift with true appreciation, we naturally want to respond to the Giver. We, therefore, see service to God as a natural outflow of the joy of our salvation and the consequent joy of our church membership. We consider it a privilege to serve the King, so we look for those opportunities at the church where we serve.”

When we receive the gift of salvation and church membership with a grateful heart, we will naturally desire to serve within the body of Christ. We will recognize that our local church is composed of people just like us – sinners who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. They were once enemies of God but have now become His sons and daughters. When we have this mindset, we will seek to love, serve, and pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Chapter 6 Review – I Will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift

- Like most things in life, it is our ATTITUDE and APPROACH to salvation and church membership that will make the biggest difference in how we EXPERIENCE God, Christ, salvation, and the church!
- _____ is a gift. Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23 tells us why we need Jesus! We cannot save ourselves! Ephesians 2:8-10 lets us know that we cannot work for _____. It is a gift.
- When we receive the gift of salvation, we become part of the _____ of Christ. _____ in the body of Christ, the church, is a gift from God. A gift that we should treasure with great _____ and anticipation.
- Christians should show their appreciation for the gift of salvation that God has given us through _____ and giving.
- We should display _____ and thanksgiving for the gift we have received. Our lives should be reflective of our thanks to Christ for what He has done.
- Local _____ membership is vital to the growth of believers. It is the place where they are able to _____ and use their gifts, as well as the place they are held accountable.