

Timothy ... will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Paul - 1 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)

In Christ

Or don't you know that all of those who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...burial...and resurrection.

Paul - Romans 6:3-5 (NIV)

David Kuykendall Ministries

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Obey the five commands listed below and experience your life "in Christ." Experience the abundant life through living by grace. Notice that each command is either to believe something or to choose to do something.

THE FIVE COMMANDS

Believe

Romans 6:11

Reckon (believe) yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord

Choose

Romans 6:12

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in its lusts

Choose

Romans 6:13a

Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin

Choose/Believe

Romans 6:13b

Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead.

Choose

Romans 6:13c

[Present] your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

We can and should obey each of these commands because Romans 6:3-5 teaches that all believers have been baptized into Jesus and as a result all believers have been baptized into his death, burial, and resurrection.

A Great Church

David Kuykendall

It is not an uncommon thing for someone to describe for us a "great church" he has heard about. Ordinarily, he tells us such things as the size of the church and how rapidly it is growing. It is known by many as "a great church."

If this is the true description of a great church, then many churches will never have the opportunity to be great just because of their location.

However, Jesus has an altogether different understanding of greatness. He thinks of greatness in the eyes of God and not man. Consider the statement of Jesus recorded in Matthew 23:11.

But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

One of the saddest scenes in the New Testament came just hours before Jesus would be on the cross. As Jesus and His Apostles gathered for the observance of the Passover and the first observance of the Lord's Supper, an argument broke out among the Apostles about which one of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Jesus spoke to them about their argument. He continued his statement to them with, "... he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger" (Luke 22:26).

After taking the bread and the cup, Jesus put an apron around Himself and washed the feet of the Apostles. It is said that in that culture such service was done by the lowest of servants.

After Jesus washed their feet, He said, "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). They surely understood that He was telling them to be servants.

Meditate on what Jesus, the greatest one of all, said about Himself. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). In Acts 10:38, Peter describes Jesus as one who went about doing good.

With these statements from and about Jesus, we have a clear picture that in God's sight greatness is in being a servant.

If you know one of God's children who can be described as a servant of God and others, you know a great person. He may not be talented to a great extent, rich, or well educated, but in the eyes of God, he is great.

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It is not difficult to conclude that if we could find a church that is filled with such great people, we have found a great church. This church may not have a building, social standing, riches or education. In God's eyes, it is a great church.

How do the leaders of a church go about leading the church to greatness?

First, they need to teach the church some of the things Jesus said of Himself.

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner (John 5:19).

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works (John 14:10).

I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. John 5:30

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For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak (John 12:49).

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Second, church leaders need to explain to the church members the sin nature with which Adam infected himself and us.

Satan had made Adam and Eve believe that if they would eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would become like God in wisdom. They ate and they believed that they were wise.

The New Testament confirms that Adam passed down to everyone born into the natural race the belief that he is wise. In a passage showing that no one comes to God on his own Paul writes:

Professing to be wise, they became fools. Romans 1:22

Third, church leaders must teach church members what the sin nature has done to us. One expression of that is found in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. The passage reads:

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Our know-it-all attitude results in a desire to live for ourselves. Naturally, one must have freedom from his sin nature and spirit of selfishness in order to be a servant to God and others.

Fourth, church leaders need to teach that freedom from selfishness comes from experiencing our union with Christ.

God gave us some freedom from selfish desire when He saved us. However, according to Scripture, more is needed. We must understand and experience our union with Christ in crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

In Romans 5:14c, Paul writes:

Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Understanding the meaning of the word "type," is a key to our becoming servants of God and others. Other translations are pattern, figure, image and picture.

"Picture" does a very good job of expressing the meaning of the word type. It means that there are likenesses between Adam and Jesus just as a picture of a person is a likeness of that person.

Romans 5:12-14b reveals that Adam is the head of the human race but also reveals that when one enters the race of Adam by birth, things true of Adam become true of him. We received from Adam a sin nature and a death nature.

First Corinthians 15:45 calls Jesus "The Last Adam." Jesus is the head of a spiritual race. When we entered His race, things true of Him became true of us. Romans 6:3-5 reveals that when we were baptized (by the Holy Spirit) into Jesus, we were baptized into His death, burial and resurrection. When we became Christians, we were spiritually crucified, buried and resurrected.

When we experience our crucifixion, burial and resurrection our old man is put out of power (Romans 6:6). This includes our attitude that we are wise. We also are filled with the Holy Spirit and with divine love.

Finally, church leaders must teach the church members how to experience their crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Romans 6:11-13 tells us five things we are to do.

First, we are to believe that we are dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11).

Second, we are to choose not to permit sin (the sin nature of thinking we are wise) to reign in our mortal bodies (Romans 6:12).

Third, we are not to willfully give our bodies to the control of our sin nature (Romans 6:13a).

Fourth, we are to make ourselves available to God as those who are spiritually crucified, buried and resurrected (Romans 6:13b).

Fifth, we are to make our bodies available to God that He might use us to do works of righteousness through us (Romans 6:13c).

How is it that experiencing our oneness with Christ results in our becoming servants of God and others? Look again at 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

As mentioned earlier, this passage is saying that because of our sin nature, our tendencies are to take care of self. However, it also implies that experiencing our death with Christ will free us from our spirit of selfishness.

A second truth that reveals experiencing our oneness with Christ makes us servants of God and others is found in the last two of the five commands for experiencing our oneness with Christ.

When we give ourselves, including our bodies, to God for Him to do works of righteousness through us, He expresses Himself through us just as He did through Jesus.

When we are set free from our selfishness and God is living out His righteous deeds through us, we have become servants of God and others. We have become great in the eyes of God.

Imagine a church of any size with all of its members being servants in this manner. That church is made up of great Christians and is therefore a great church in the eyes of God.

Rejoice that your church can be a great church regardless of such things as size, your location or the economic and educational level of your people.

Your church can be great.

Book orders, newsletter contributions, or tax-deductible contributions may be sent to:

David Kuykendall Ministries
318 North Brighton
Dallas, Texas 75208
214-943-4473

www.living-by-grace.org