



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – February 7, 2010

Heart to Heart...

In a Bible study once, the teacher asked the class what a certain Scripture meant they were studying. One person responded, *"I don't know what it means, but it cannot mean what it says!"* The problem with this statement is the verse meant exactly what it said. The problem in most cases is not what God's word teaches or says, but our minds thinking what we think it says. Sometimes we have great difficulty in accepting what was written in the context of what was being said.

I want to use the word *"church."* A fellow friend and preacher in Texas called my attention to this and it prompted me to study about it. Here is what I discovered. The word in our English versions known as *"church"* is not a true translation. A true translation will help us understand what the Bible says about *"church"* but we need to realize the meaning as defined in Scripture. Let me give us one word of advice that would help us in our studies: try not to form a doctrine on a word study. This can be dangerous and has proven in some of the things we have handed down over the years. That doesn't mean word studies are not important. They can be very helpful but they need to be used to help us see the usage of a word in its given context.

The Greek word from which the word *"church"* comes from is the word *'ekklesia.'* (Pronounced ek-klay-see'-ah) We have heard this word many a time over the years. The old time preachers who wanted us to understand the importance of the church taught us often about this word. This word is a compound word and it comes from two Greek words: the preposition *"ek"* which means *"out"* and the word *"kaleo"* which means *"to call."* Putting them together we get *"to call out"*. Many quote I Peter 2:9, *"...who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."* While this is a true statement, it is not the meaning of the word *"church."*

In Acts 19:23-41, the true meaning to understand the word *'ekklesia'* is used three times in this context. In verse 32, 39 and 41 the word *"assembly"* is actually translated. Strong's Concordance defines *'ekklesia'* as *"a calling out, i.e. a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saint in heaven or both): KJV – assembly, church."*

The meaning of the word *"church"* is *"assembly"*, or *"a called out assembly"*, or *"called out to assemble."* It is important to know the meaning of this word so we can gain a better grasp of what the *"church/ekklesia"* is suppose to be. It is an assembly! That's the real meaning of the phrase *"going to church."* It is *"going to the assembly."* It is going to assemble! From this we can understand the importance that God placed on the assembly and the assembling of ourselves together.

There were all types of assemblies (*ekklesias*) over the world. What makes the *"church"* unique is the kind of assembly that it is. *"To the church (ekklesia) of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours."* (I Corinthians 1:2) This *"assembly/church"* is unique that it is an *"of God"* assembly! This should make us see a greater importance of why we assemble. More next week. Think about it!!!

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