



"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 14, 2010

Heart to Heart...

The Greek word that is translated into our English language as “church” is ‘ekklesia.’ I wrote on this last week. The English word “church” is not the translation from this Greek word. The translation word is “assembly.” If we would better grasp the meaning of the word “church” it would help us in understanding God’s purpose for us today.

In Acts 20:28 it says, ***“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church (ekklesia) of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*** Paul was addressing the elders from the “church” or literally the “assembly” at Ephesus. God expected the elders to *“shepherd the assembly of God.”* It sounds a little strange to hear it this way, but that’s how it is literally translated. ***“When they had appointed elders for them in every church (ekklesia), having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”*** (Acts 14:23) We see from this that there were elders over every “assembly.” There were not elders over an area of “churches.” They were over each local assembly of the Lord’s people.

What is this “assembly” about? First, it is an of God assembly (I Corinthians 1:2). It is an assembly in the name of Jesus. That tells us that whatever is to be done is to be centered on God and Jesus who purchased the assembly with His blood. The apostle Paul wrote letters to the “assemblies” in each location. ***“Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church (ekklesia) that is in her house. When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church (ekklesia) of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.”*** (Colossians 4:15-16) Looking closely at these verses, this letter was to be read to the assembly at each location. All who were part of the assembly were to hear them. They didn’t have Bibles like we have. They read these inspired words at the assembly! If a person said they were members of the assembly at Laodicea but never attended the assembly, they aren’t part of the ‘ekklesia’. We say today that we are a “member of the church.” If you are a member of an assembly, you assemble with others who are members of that assembly. If you do not assemble with them, then you are not a member of that assembly!

“Paul and Sivanus and Timothy, to the church (ekklesia) of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.” (I Thessalonians 1:1) The assembly is comprised of Thessalonian people who have a relationship with one another because of their relationship to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

What makes what we call “church” in the New Testament was not the word ‘ekklesia.’ There were all kinds of assemblies (ekklesias) all over the world. That which makes the “church” unique is the kind of assembly it is. It is a blood bought assembly! It is an in God assembly! It is a God centered and Christ submitted assembly! It is the assembly of the saved and our relationship is based to one another because of our relationship to the Father. Think about it!!!

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