

1/7/24 - SERIES: FOR EVERYONE (#5)

PASTOR ROB

Our Blessed Church!!

- Pastor Rob makes point of all the great festivities at our Church these past few weeks....and ALL THE PEOPLE who made it happen....with a special nod to the Mexico Project which...in just a 3 plus week December campaign...is all paid for!!!!

The Church Vs. A 'Club'

- God is doing wondrous things at and through our Church. Rob reminisces about his childhood and his 'growing-up-in' Church experience.....a very traditional and classic bible-based Church...question he asked himself...'is this what Church should look like....is this (all) that God intended?' His conclusion: depending on time in history/geography, culture, etc...maybe so.....but, in context of our "FOR EVERYONE" Series, the scriptural passage this morning (Acts 2:42-44) describes the very world-changing 'early' Church (Pentecost) of the apostles and offers more light on this issue: *****(parenthetical 'preceding -the-passage' question: "What is the difference between a church and a country club???").

The Church: Community of Believers AND Out Reach

- Lots in common but the Church has precious differences. (eg. its a gift of God) As an observation/metaphor: Pastor Rob presents a valuable silver eagle coin.....and explains that, like any coin, there are two 'flip' sides to it....just like there are two 'flip' and complementary sides to our Church. One side of the figurative church coin is 'community'. The Church is designed to lead us and to help us grow spiritually as believers. The flip side is designed to reach the world so that new people could come to know Jesus. And, symbolic of the coin but infinitely more so, the Church (both sides) is precious.

- Some people embrace a bias...that is, they view the Church simply based on one 'side' or the other...but, actually, it represents a healthy tension....that is, the Church should represent both! And much of what the Church does is not exclusive to one side or the other (eg. sermons, kidz-town, pickle ball, etc.); both believers AND others need to be spiritually fed...sometimes even in these common forms.

Church Differentials:

- Back to question of Church verses country club, we will see three ways in which the Church definitively differs in this passage:

- Devotion
- Spiritual Substance
- Common Interest

- ACTS 2:42-44- -And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And awe came upon every soul, and many signs and wonders were being done through the apostles. (44) And all who believed were together and held all things in common.

- So the difference(s) of our Church (vs. the 'club') centers on 1. What it is that we are DEVOTED to; 2. There is SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE to it; 3. We have COMMONALITY OF INTEREST.

Devotion To
Jesus --
Through prayer
& worship

- Re: 'Devotion'.....we are devoted to 'the' Scripture (eg. Core of our sermons)....to Fellowship (eg. Affinity groups).....'the' breaking of bread (eg. Our communion) ((replacing blood sacrifices))).and 'the' prayers (eg. their Psalms, our worship music). You'll see things emphasized in so many ways at our Church. (Prayer and worship are vitally connected.)
- The best hope we have is coming together for Jesus! He's the main focus of who we are....on both sides of the coin!!!
- Pastor Rob culminates this part of message with Church Communion.

Sheer
AWESOMENESS
Of Church &
Its Spirituality

- Back to country club 'differentials' (the Church vs the club): Verse 43- - "AWE"....our church community has a spiritual and serious weightiness....a feeling of God's presence. "Every soul", in context, means everyone in the whole community (back then, meaning ALL Jerusalem). "Signs and wonders" (miracles)...as manifested, for example, by the dramatic change in peoples' lives as they come to faith and trust in Jesus...perhaps representing bigger miracles than even healings, etc. (Best example: the gospel story of the man lowered through the roof....Jesus starts by wiping away the man's sins- -the more impactful miracle by far.)
- Rob relays story about young guy encountered at Church posing to him one strategic question: "If a friend asked you what it means to be a Christian, what would you say?" He responded with a typical answer: "Be a good person." Wrong answer!
- Rob explained: "Jesus is the reason for Christianity". Faith in Him....who paid for our sins (propitiation). The man was in awe...he exclaimed "wow!" And the Spirit was entering his heart....THATS a miracle! For you believers....do you remember that day....that miracle?
- So there's a spiritual substance to our Church and we are all blessed by the community.

Unity In
Faith

- To 'differentials' again and #3,(V44) .."and had all things in common". Is this, to you and I, hyperbole...or truth!? Community, unity in the belief that, beyond Jesus, nothing else matters.surpasses, almost infinitely, and 'club' unity (see Phil 3:8..."I count all things rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ, Jesus, my Lord." This faith trumps all else (culture, age, geography, etc) and binds us together.
- Remember the final prayers of Jesus in the Garden.....He prayed for unity!!!

Community In
Christ!

- Why are we here?!.....in Church, in bible study groups, in pickle ball, etc.....re-read the Passage. Community in Christ!! Substance in Christ. Love in Christ. Thank you, Jesus!

KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS!!!!!!!!!!