

Purity of the Church

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Date: 15 December 2013

[0 : 00] Ephesians 5 verse 25 I want to talk about the purity of the church.

The Lord Jesus cares about His church, so much so that He died for it. His design is that it be a healthy church. That glorifies Him, that pleases God, that's built according to His pattern. Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. I love the church, don't you? I love the church, the church of God, the people of God, the assembling of God's people.

Our text tells us that our Lord Himself gave Himself for His church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, by the Word.

I have a burden, a zeal, a passion for the church. The church matters to God. You matter to God, you that are believers here today. And in these days where many are careless about doctrine, where many are apathetic, where relativism abounds, in other words, believe any way you like, when worldliness and humanism is all around us, and within churches, where many are willfully, woefully ignorant and accepting of such things going on, how we need to know the truth, to know that church that God is preparing, be a spotless bride without blemish.

[2 : 01] And today we're seeing an intentional, deliberate deconstruction of historic Christianity, and a replacement of it with a poor substitute. We're witnessing a deliberate campaign of destruction that's waged against true Christianity in our day, eroding it, undermining it, reversing the reformation and replacing the church, and the construction of a false church in its place, based on falsehoods, false teaching, false doctrine, false prophets, false you name it.

The church is being redefined on planet earth today. But God's church is pure. It's a glorious church. It's without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

It's without blemish. And that is the church that our Lord will come for. Yet today we see the unholy now predominates in the so-called holy place.

Julie and I were just watching some film clips of what church is like in many places today. Church. It's not a holy place any longer. It's an unholy place.

It's an unholy thing that is going on in the so-called church of today in many places. Sadly, our world needs a New Testament church, a pure church, a holy church, a glorious church.

[3 : 21] And you are that church. By faith you are that church. It's God's will that you be such a church. A church cleansed and purified, made of holy and righteous, sanctified.

Purity of the church. Now purity has to do with principles. Purity comes from principles. And as a church we need godly principles to be built upon.

Things such as the honour of God, the glory of God, the righteousness of God, the obedience to the word of God, biblical preaching. All of this is being weakened and supplanted today.

Where is the church that Jesus Christ will ultimately come back to? Where is this glorious church?

You are that church. You are that church. You are that church. As one section of that church.

I'm not saying you're the only people that are that church. But that God helping us, we are that church. As God helps us to be that church. By faith. In 1 Timothy 3.15 it tells us that house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

[4 : 29] Truth must be our foundation as the glorious church. As such a purified church. A church that follows the Bible, that glorifies the Lord. A church marked by faithfulness.

Faithfulness. That marked the people who have gone through history. Faithfulness. Faithfulness of faithful people. Faithful, ready to die for the truth. Ready to die rather than deny it.

Preachers who stood against error. Martyrs who went to their deaths rather than compromise. They maintained the truth despite fire and sword. Sadly, we see the opposite trend.

The downward spiral in Christendom today, churchdom today. A downward spiral of carnality, of pragmatism. In other words, whatever works. A wholesale selling out.

And a blatant condoning of half-truths and of error. A half-truth is a lie. People chase after the latest novelties and naphat things.

[5 : 28] For whatever's sensational and entertaining. Truth is not popular. It never has been. And it never will be. And as a result of this trend, there is a result of this.

Is that our churches are filled with tears. In other words, the unconverted. Churches are filled with people who have not been converted. And churches are filled with the world, the flesh and the devil. This is popular Christianity today. Jeremiah 5.31, it says the prophets. The prophets prophesy falsely. And the priests bear rule by their means.

And my people love to have it so. Truly Ichabod, the glory is departed, could be written over the many gathering places of worship today.

And I just last weekend, I had the morning off and I went to a church that must have been there for over a hundred years. And yet, sadly, there was something missing there.

[6 : 26] I felt there was something missing there. And I think that's sadly the case. The glory has departed. The glory has departed. I think that a church such as that, in ten years there won't be anybody left.

They'll all have aged away and passed away. And I think the word has passed away as well. The gospel message has passed away. And then on the other extreme, we've got churches that have a new fat gospel that's no gospel at all.

Friends, we need pure doctrine. In Titus 1 verse 9, Paul urges Timothy, holding fast the faithful word. As he had been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Holding fast the faithful word. We must hold fast the faithful word. Our Lord Jesus gave strong rebuke to some churches such as in Ephesus in Revelation 2 verse 4.

He says, Nevertheless I somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Let us not have that set of us that will leave our first love.

[7 : 33] But we'll have that love of God. That love of his truth. Let us rather purpose to be like Daniel. He purposed to be free from defilement.

Daniel 1 verse 8. Purity. Purity. What's the opposite of purity? Impurity. Now I could hold a glass of Adelaide water up here, but I don't have one to show you.

But you know, I could say this is pure water and you'll tell me, no it's not. It's full of impurities. It's had all sorts of additives and chemicals put in it.

Even the water you get from your rainwater tank is not pure water. But there is a lack of purity today. Where sin has a spreading influence. It's like a canker.

Like a cancer. Like rot. It must be withstood and removed. Paul says, of a little leaven. Leaveneth the whole lung. Galatians 5 verse 9.

[8 : 31] And as the church of God worldwide, we need to search out and get rid of the leaven. We dare not compromise in these days. We must be steadfast in these days. Ever more so as we see in the days that we're living in.

We dare not compromise the purity of the church. In 2 Peter 2 verse 1 the Bible tells of damnable heresies. We must stand against such things.

I love an old message by a preacher called Paisley. He said this. I'm going to quote him in part. He tells of how he should let us go forth without the cam. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the cam.

Bearing his reproach. I'm quoting now. In part he says how Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal. How the Lord started his ministry by cleansing the temple. How Moses reckoned the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

I quote. In every evil age that we read of in God's word there has always been a challenge to that evil age. A challenge to the darkness of that evil age.

[9 : 36] A challenge to the leadership of the apostasy of that evil age. And there has always been the triumph and the victory of God's people in an evil age.

The darkest days in church history were always the brightest days for the church of Jesus Christ. When there were burning saints of God the gospel burnt with mighty fire.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. He goes on. I like that word against. There are things that you and I are against.

Against. Yes we are against them. I am against the Pope. You remember that. I am against the World Council of Churches. I am against the National Council of Churches.

I am against the great apostate denominations. Whether they be Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist or called by any other name. I am absolutely and totally against them.

[10:40] From the top of my head to my big toe. I am against them. Every bit of me against them. This word will do it. It is a pure thing. It is a holy faith we have. It does not need the gimmicks of the devil or the worldly methods.

It just needs a pure faith. Give me a holy man with faith in his soul and a Bible in his hand. And he will shake the community God puts him into. He will shake it.

He does not need anything else. There is something worse than an empty church. It is an offended God. Honour the Lord and the Lord will honour you. We must honour our Lord, brothers and sisters. He is coming for a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He is the God of the truth. And we need a renewed fear of him. A fear of the Lord.

We are living in a days that call for an alertness. For a warning. 1 Timothy 4 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving him to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

[11:52] What are the days he is talking about? The latter times. We can't get any latter than right now. Well, I suppose now we are latter than what I just said. But you know what I mean.

These are the last days, brothers and sisters. These are the days of the end. Of the age. And the devil's religion, the Antichrist's religion will be an apostate Christianity.

The devil's religion will be an apostate Christianity. Many Christians are biblically illiterate. Biblical absolutes are being abandoned big time. No wonder Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 4, Preach the word!

Be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

But after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves, teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables.

[12:58] A spiritual war is now raging, brothers and sisters. A war, a battle for the truth. And so, it behoves us to be alerted and alarmed to such things that are going on.

The Lord calls us to be on guard against seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. A dark spiritual force is perverting the truth across planet earth today.

And pure Christianity and sound doctrine is being abandoned. There is a demonic power behind false doctrine. It's toxic and it's damnable.

1 John 4 it says, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God. So, as a church we must confront error. A wise man said, The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.

Just do nothing. But God wants his church to do something, doesn't he? He wants his church to be a pure church, built after his pattern. Where the truth is guarded and maintained.

[14:15] In Acts 2 it says, And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers. So, I just want to urge and exhort you, and encourage you, people of God here today, to be that steadfast church.

That church where the strength and power of the church is in its purity. And that's not to mean that we all have to be perfect, or get to that. We have a duty of God though to maintain the stand of the truth.

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against such a church. And sometimes we have to say, as someone else has said, Here I stand. I can do no other.

We cannot deviate. The people of God are the ones who are without the cam and within the veil. Without the cam and within the veil. We must commune with our Lord within the veil.

We must come without the cam. In other words, leave those things that are out of accord with God. And be like the people in 1 Corinthians 16. The house of Stephanas, the family of Stephanas, they were addicted.

[15:24] A good addiction. They had an addiction, an allegiance to God's service. So the opposite of purity is corruption. We are not as many which corrupt the word of God.

2 Corinthians 2 verse 17. We don't corrupt things, we hold them fast. Sound doctrine. Not doctrine watered down. Biblical standards that will stand the test of time.

I was just watching a message lately, and one of the things that really spoke to me was, But this preacher said, we can't reform Babylon.

We have to flee Babylon. Now some people think they can stay in some mediocre, nominal kind of Christianity, and try to change or reform it from within.

We have to flee Babylon. Get out of it. Get out of Babylon. The Lord will keep his church pure. He will sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

[16:26] The word of God which liveth and abideth forever. A church that believes the Bible. 1 Peter 1.23. It's incorruptible. Incorruptible.

It's unpolluted. God's word stands. Our one absolute authority. It's not me. It's not any man. It's not any man's sayings or statements. It's the word of God. We must stand on that.

Our one absolute authority. Our one source of truth in the universe. It's God's word. It's true. We can believe it. The final authority. It's not human reasoning as some would say.

It's not human experience as some would say. The final authority is the Holy Bible. A man called Umgis said this. The Bible, God's living word of truth, is the Christians only sure protection against doctrinal deception.

Satan and his host can bypass human opinions and man's interpretations, but they cannot penetrate the impregnable defense of God's holy word.

[17:26] We see through the dark ages. It was dark because they didn't have the light. It was the dark ages when doctrines became corrupted and people turned from the truths of scripture to man's wisdom.

And it's true of churchdom today. Umgir goes on of how a great problem is the denying of the verbal inspiration of the Bible.

It's a fundamental doctrine. He says, the result is a weakened, worldly church, impotent to regenerate, powerless to attract, unable to answer the distress cry of humanity, sinful humanity for a spiritual reality.

We need to hold fast to the truth. And God has given us the blueprint for his church. A church with purity. A church built, separated from all impurity.

A church built to honor God. To be the pillar and ground of the truth. Friends, that's the wonderful joy that we can know. A pillar and ground of the truth.

[18:27] That is the stand that we can have. That foundation that we can have. And in contrast it says, not to be friends of the world, but to be rather the friend of God.

James 4 verse 4. So we don't need Egypt's systems and methods. The thinking of the world. That's what's happening today. Where many preachers are adopting the techniques, the marketing, the mindset of the world.

As if we've got to copy Egypt or Babylon. You know, the things of the world. And not that which guides us. But sound doctrine, biblical principles to declare the whole counsel of God.

The Word of God. And yet the catch cry today is tolerance. Tolerance. But God commands us not to have any fellowship. No fellowship. With anyone or anything that's disobedient to the Word of God.

Have no fellowship. It's a command. A command from God. Where will it all end up? Where is it all going? Revelation 17 tells us where it's all going.

[19:37] There's a woman who's riding a beast. And on her forehead is written a name. Mystery Babylon. The mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth.

We cannot reform Babylon. We've got to flee Babylon. Get out of it. Stand fast for the purity of God's church. Even if you're in an isolated area.

Stand fast with God's people in that place. Don't be swayed. Don't support Babylon. Biblical separation is spiritual power.

It's a vital Bible doctrine. Right through the pages of the Holy Bible. This is holy. It's separated. It's sanctified by God. The Holy Bible.

We see the principle, the doctrine of separation right through the Bible. For example Noah. Noah was invited by God into the ark to be with himself. With Lot.

[20:34] God's angels went to Lot's house. Where he was separated from the ungodly. When the Hebrew children were in the furnace. The one like the son of man was there with them.

They were separated. Purity has a wonderful joy and victory. It's a beautiful thing. The beauty of holiness. There's a wonderful joy in that.

And purity means a running away from temptation as Joseph did. Purity is something wholesome and good. Friends, young people, if you lose your purity, that is a great loss indeed. Guard your purity. Guard your purity until that time when God grants you his spouse for you. Guard your purity. Paul says to Timothy, keep thyself pure.

1 Timothy 5 verse 22. And call on them, call on the Lord, sorry. He says follow righteousness, faith, charity and peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

[21 : 37] 2 Timothy 2 verse 22. So there's a wonderful sense where there's a purity. Personally, keep thyself pure.

1 Timothy 5 verse 22. And then gather with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2 verse 22. And that's what the church is about.

We gather together with the people who love God. We gather together with the people who want to follow God. We're in fellowship with people like them.

Now again, you don't have to be perfect to join the church. Because God's perfect church is made up of very imperfect people such as me.

For example, Noah was a drunk at one point. Elijah was, some have said he was suicidal. Peter was a coward. Jacob was a deceiver.

[22 : 33] Rahab was a prostitute. Samson was a womaniser. David was an adulterer and a murderer. The Samaritan woman was divorced five times. Thank God, God's pure, perfect church is made up of imperfect people just like you and me.

Thank God for that. Amen. And everybody said? Amen. Real people, less than perfect people.

Broken people, flawed people, utterly unqualified people. People like Sarah.

Sarah doubted. Abraham, oh he's too old. Jeremiah and Timothy, they were considered too young.

Gideon was afraid. Jonah, he ran from God.

Hopeless case. Moses, he had an anger management problem. He killed a man and he stuttered.

Job went bankrupt.

Matthew was a tax collector. They were renowned to be ruthless. Peter denied his law. Martha was one who was worried about everything all the time. And the disciples, they fell asleep when it was the prayer time.

[23 : 41] Oh, God forbid that. Yet God still used them. Flawed people, imperfect people to build his pure church.

The Lord Jesus changes people. He redefines us. He makes us his own. And he purifies hearts by faith. Thank God no matter how sinful you have been, that he can purify hearts by faith.

That's our God. And he helps us to come together with others. You can call on the Lord with a pure heart. Praise God for that. So, think of it today, the church.

Jesus loves his church. He considers it so important that he died for it. And we ought to love the church. What is the church? What does even the word mean?

The church. It's the called out. The called out. The called out. The assembly. The called out. The church of God. There's a separation. A calling out.

[24 : 44] A calling out. A separation from and a separation unto. To spiritual life. To community. The church is the called out. Here's what a preacher said about the church.

It's a called out assembly. I quote, God told Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. Moses went to Pharaoh and said, Let my people go. Now, he looked through Exodus.

There's chapters of it. Let my people go. Let my people go. Let my people go. Pharaoh refused. So, God sent the plagues. Finally, Pharaoh said, Stay here in Egypt and sacrifice to your God.

Moses said, No, we can't do that. Pharaoh said, Then do not go very far. Moses said, We are going to go as far as we are supposed to go. He said, Then don't take your wives and your children with you.

Moses said, No, No, Not one hoof of one animal is going to be left here. If they had assembled in Egypt, They would not have been called a church.

[25 : 44] Because the word church is a called out assembly. Friends, you're called out. You are called out. You are a called out people. Called out. Called unto God. I've finished quoting that man now.

It's going to take a commitment to be a pure church. To be willing to stand in the minority like Noah. He stood alone. When the world rejected the truth, Job stood alone.

The Hebrew children stood alone. They would not bend or bow to the king's orders. And they did not burn. Daniel kept on praying. Paul faced all manner of hardships for the gospel. Most of them on his lonesome. We must not go with the flow. Any dead fish can float downstream. This is not a time to go with the flow, Brothers and sisters.

We must get a hold of God. Get a hold of God. And God helping us will be that church. That will please our God. That will bring glory to Him. Jesus says, Sanctify them through thy truth.

[26 : 45] Thy word is truth. We set apart. Through God's word. We sanctify through His word. From the world. Now some would say, As they said to an evangelist, Billy Sunday.

That his hard preaching was rubbing people up the wrong way. Like you're rubbing the cat the wrong way. Who's ever done that? Yeah. I do that with my dog sometimes. He doesn't like it. Now rubbing the dog or the cat the wrong way. You know, It gets people's bristles up and makes people feel uncomfortable. And they said to Billy Sunday, You're rubbing the cat the wrong way. He said, Turn the cat around. Turn the cat around. That's what we need to do. We need to turn the world around. We're not here to accommodate the world.

But to accommodate the word of God. And we need to alert the people, brothers and sisters. The church is not just a good cause. There are some nice people getting together on a Sunday.

[27 : 42] Which I'm sure you all are today. Nice people getting together to have a nice cup of tea. And a nice little chit chat. The church of God is a glorious church.

Standing fast. Standing firm and strong. Upholding sound doctrine and truth.

I love the church, don't you? I love the church of God. I love the people of God. I pray that we'll have a love for the church as our Lord does. For a church that is truly built according to His pattern. A church that grows in what matters in spiritual terms. As we set our hearts on things that are righteous and true. And remain faithful and true.

We'll hold fast. We won't be a part of a spiritual shipwreck. From rebellion. But we will hold fast.

[28 : 42] We'll be that pure church. So be encouraged, brothers and sisters today. Husbands, love your wives. Even as Christ also loved the church. And gave Himself for it. That He might sanctify and cleanse it.

With the washing of water by the word. That He might present it to Himself. A glorious church. Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. That it should be holy.

And without blemish. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are building Your church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Father, we thank You for those faithful ones who will call on You out of a pure heart.

They'll gather together as the called out people. Called out from the world. And called together into fellowship. That will have that purity of doctrine. Of faith. Of love. Of service.

Lord. We'll be that people with a pure heart. Purified by faith. If there's any here today. Yet to trust You. They'll know what it is. To know a Saviour.

[29 : 44] Who gave His very life for such a church. For such a people. Who would trust Him. Lord, we thank You for that. We pray, Lord, that we'll know that by faith.

We have that salvation which never ends. We have that forever message that is heart changing. And life transforming.

That makes us that church. That one day as that shout comes. We will hear that voice. We'll hear that trumpet call. And we'll be raised incorruptible.

Into life everlasting. Lord, we thank You for Your people here today. Help us to exhort one another as we see the day approaching. Help us, Lord, not to be in Babylon, but to get out of Babylon. Get the Babylon out of us, Lord. Turn us around, Lord. Make us how You want us to be. Help us, Lord, to live right and true. Help us to learn from the example of those not always faithful ones yet.

[30 : 42] Your saints. That You made saints, Lord. Those imperfect people that You chose out of this planet to be Yours. Lord, help us to be among their number, we pray.

For Your glory we ask it. In Jesus' name. Amen.