

RELATED SCRIPTURES

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STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 01.2025

SUMMARY

When we consider the mission of the church, Paul’s letter to the Ephesians provides detailed instruction on how the Church should function. In Ephesians 2:19–22, Paul likens the Church to the imagery of a household, a structure, and a temple. The word household was used repeatedly throughout the Old Testament as the unit of the national life of Israel. Each household was complete within itself, the oldest living male being the unquestioned head of the whole who provides for his family. This household structure foreshadows the New Testament Church—one family—a whole family—under the headship of the Father, who is the ultimate Head and Provider. Paul also likens the Church to a building—a sturdy structure upheld by a cornerstone and a foundation. Jesus is the Cornerstone, the one who sets the trajectory and direction from which the foundation itself is set. The prophets and apostles of the New Testament—those whom Jesus personally gave direction and authority to—have cast the vision for the Church, and the Church carries the vision forward until Jesus comes again. This is why we’ll often refer to the true church as the “Apostolic Church”—it is the Church Jesus charged the apostles to build. Paul also likens the Church to a temple which, in the Old Testament, was considered the House of God—the very dwelling place of the Almighty. The temple, however, foreshadowed what would become the New Testament Church, which, by the power of his Holy Spirit, would be the very dwelling place of God—the hearts of all believers! All these images of the Church paint a picture of an expansive and universal Church under Christ, which is what the word “catholic” actually means—united, universal, and whole. The Christian Church was “catholic” long before the word became synonymous with the Roman Church. The Christian Church is a unified catholic church, likened to a household, structure, or temple, and it is the Church that Christ called the apostles to build. We are catholic and apostolic to this very day!

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Ephesians 2:19–22.

In what ways has the church changed since the apostolic era? Are those changes bad? In what ways has the church remained the same since the apostolic era?

When you think of the Church being universal or “catholic,” what does that mean? How is the Church universal? Are there specific things the word universal doesn’t mean or imply for the church?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.