

"WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH?"

EPHESIANS 3:1-12

INTRO: Observations about Local Church throughout the world today.

- Some are biblically incorrect
- Some have lost their mission
- Some are introverted
- Some are museums
- Some are bars or taverns
- Some are growing and on fire for the Lord (In the minority)
- Some are holding their own
- Some are in name only
- Some are dying
- Some are dead
- Some are closing

NOTE:

I. THE REALITY OF THE CHURCH

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

- The Universal Church: *The Spiritual organism of which Christ is the head and is composed of all regenerated people from Pentecost in Acts 2 to the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4.*
- The Local Church: *A group of professing believers in Christ who have been baptized and who have organized themselves to evangelize the lost, edify the believers and exalt God.*

- A. The Church is Absent - Ephesians 3:5
- B. The Church is Predicted - Matthew 16:18
- C. The Church is Birthed - Acts 2:41-47
- D. The Church is Expanded - Acts 3-18
- E. The Church is Taught - Romans - Jude
- F. The Church is Warned - Revelation 2:1-3:22

ILLUSTRATION:

II. THE RUINATION OF THE CHURCH

NOTE: *The true Body of Christ will last forever, but many local churches are being ruined due to the lack of biblical truth being taught and practiced.*

- A. The Lack of Sound Doctrine BUT the Presence of Secular Concepts
- B. The Lack of Commitment to Christ BUT an Emphasis on Personal Desires
- C. The Lack of Obedience to Scripture BUT the presence of Personal opinions
- D. The Lack of Righteous Living BUT the Exercise of Sinful Lifestyles
- E. The Lack of Worldly Separation BUT Compromise with Worldly attitudes and actions
- F. The Lack of Biblical Preaching BUT the Presentation on Watered-down sermons with Little Spiritual Meat
- G. The Lack of Evangelism BUT the Abundance of Social Work
- H. The Lack of Emphasis on Ministry for the Youth BUT an emphasis on getting a Good Education or Job

ILLUSTRATION:

III. THE REVIVAL OF THE CHURCH

NOTE: *The revival of the Church will stem from the individual Christian's personal spiritual growth and desire for biblical truth.*

- A. Individual Commitment to Christ - Philippians 3:8

- B. Individual Commitment to the Church - 1 Timothy 3:15
- C. Individual Commitment to Faithful Attendance - Hebrews 10:25
- D. Individual Commitment to Prayer - 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- E. Individual Commitment to Biblical Authority - 2 Timothy 3:16
- F. Individual Commitment to Personal Evangelism - Mark 16:15
- G. Individual Commitment to Interpersonal Edification - Romans 14:19
- H. Individual Commitment to Divine Exaltation - Romans 15:6
- I. Individual Commitment to the Biblical World View - Romans 12:2
- J. Individual Commitment from Pastors to Preach the Whole Counsel of God without Compromise - 2 Timothy 4:2

ILLUSTRATION:

LESSON/APPICATION:

The Church is the BODY OF CHRIST with Christ AS ITS HEAD and should represent Christ in every way on earth. The Church is the arms and legs of Christ on earth and should do HIS WORK ONLY. The Church MUST SUBMIT TO EVERY ORDINANCE OF SCRIPTURE if it is going to please Christ. The Church **WILL ONLY BE AS STRONG AS EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER. DOES YOUR LIFESTYLE STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OR WEAKEN THE CHURCH?**