

I Love Church

Ps. 26:8—*“LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelt.”*

David loved God’s house. He said, *“Because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God...”* (1 Chron. 29:3). I like David's mindset. His love showed up in his giving to God’s house.

David said, *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD*” (Ps. 122:1).

There was a time in America when the church was the most respected institution in the country. Not any more. Most people are not glad about going to church. The popularity of the church has fallen on hard times.

- Many politicians don’t like the church because it doesn’t pay taxes.
- Backslidden ministers have given the church a black eye (youth pastor found guilty of having affair with teen girl; priest accused of child molesting; Pastor discovered viewing pornography; church treasurer indicted for embezzling funds; etc.)
- Hypocritical church members have soiled the testimony of some churches.
- Some dislike the church because they feel legalistic churches are judgmental and trying restrict their freedom.
- Many don’t like the church because they are impacted by the negative influence of the media (news, TV, movies).

Some well-meaning pastors feel because of all the negative propaganda they need to “reinvent” the church in the public’s eye. They believe they must change everything about the church, or church will die. I am not opposed to change, but some churches are taking matters to the extreme. One pastor advertised his church as: “The Church For Those Who Don’t Like Church.” Some have changed their name from a “church” to “worship center.” One cartoon showed a pastor changing his church sign from “First Baptist Church” to “The Faith Boutique.”

I will admit some of the criticism leveled against the church is valid since the church is made up of imperfect people like me. But, with all the church’s faults and failures, the local church is still the best thing

happening on planet earth right now. Personally, I've had it up to here with all the bashing of the church we hear today!

Besides God and the Bible, I love many other things: My wife and my family... my friends... our two rat terriers. I love music... books... Triumph motorcycles... Ford Mustangs... Seahawks football. I love hamburgers... pizza... Snickers... grilling outdoors... bicycling... mowing the lawn... watching a good movie or TV show while relaxing with my wife.

However, there's nothing that I love more and enjoy more in this life than church. In particular, I love *THIS* local church—The Bible Baptist Church of Port Orchard. Why? Six reasons ***WHY I LOVE THE CHURCH...***

I. Because of it's FOUNDER.

- The church is not a man-made institution. Jesus forged the church out of a handful of disciples.
 - A. The church belongs to Jesus. He purchased it with His own blood (Eph. 5:25). He loves the church. He is the HEAD of the church.
 - If you love the Founder, you will love what He founded!
 - If you love “the Head,” you’ll love what He is the head of.
 - The church ain’t perfect, but it has a perfect Model!
 - B. David loved God’s house because God’s honor dwelt there (v. 8)
 - To love the place where God’s honor dwells means you want to be there. Today, the church is the place where God’s honor dwells (Eph. 3:21).
 - C. The Bible knows nothing of an unchurched Christian!

II. Because of it's FOUNDATION.

- The foundation is the most important part of any structure. It's stability depends on it—Something solid and unchanging.
- The foundation of the church is TRUTH. Truth is truth—It never changes. It is solid ground.
- The church is called “*the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - Jesus is THE TRUTH (John 14:6). He never changes. The church is built BY Him (Mt. 16:18) and ON Him (1 Cor. 3:11).

- Jesus' word is truth (John 17:17). It is forever settled in heaven. Christ and His Word are inseparable. The church is built upon it's Founder, and His Word is it's foundation. The Word of God is our foundation (Mt. 7:24-27).
- A. The SCRIPTURES. The Bible is our final authority in all matters of faith and practice.
- Our Christian "handbook" and our "Owner's manual" showing how spiritual things work.

- Peter began sliding when he sat with the wrong crowd.
 - Lot began sliding when he pitched his tent towards Sodom.
 - Samson began sliding when he flirted with Delilah.
- A. The MEMBERS of the church— love this church because of YOU.
- *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren”* (1 John 3:14).
1. YOU are what makes BBC what it is. A building doesn’t make a church. I work here throughout the week and most of the time this building is empty. I come in here to get something and sometimes even to pray, but it is not the same as when people are sitting in the pews. YOU are the church— There is something special about everyone of you that makes this church special.
 2. My best friends are church going people. In fact, I don’t have any close friends who don’t faithfully attend church! Who are your best friends? Are they faithful church goers?
- B. The MINISTERS of the church— I didn’t meet Dr. Dave Reese at a ballgame; it was at church! Other *“men of God”* I have met at church: Dr. Larry Brown... Dr. Steve Hurte... John Allen... Nathan Bemis... Johnny Pope... Joe Arthur.
- C. The MISSIONARIES of the church.
1. Missionaries are called in a church (Acts 13:1, 2).
 2. They are heroes of the faith... spiritual dignitaries—the greatest servants of God in the world. I want our young people to meet missionaries. Where can they meet them? In church.
 3. I’m serving the Lord here in Washington because of a missionary I met at Galilean Baptist Church in Livonia, Michigan.

IV. Because of it’s FUNCTION.

- I like the stuff we do at church. I like what goes on here.
 - Many don’t get a blessing out of church because they come with a critical spirit. I may not like everything, but what little I don’t like I don’t allow to tarnish the many things I do like. A happy marriage is one where the husband and wife don’t dwell on what they dislike about the other, but magnify what they do like.
- A. PREACHING (right out the Bible—expounded verse-by-verse).

- Many people who “go to church” have forgotten what it exists for—Preaching the Gospel and edifying the saints. No institution or organization has a higher or nobler commission.

B. PRAYING (bearing one another burdens).

1. The church was birthed in a prayer meeting held in the upper room. Jesus called His house, “*a house of prayer.*”
2. We pray at the beginning of each service; at the offering; Prayer Partners; before the sermon; after the sermon; in Life Groups!
3. How many of you have seen God answer your prayers at church?

C. PRAISING the Lord.

1. No other music brings comfort and encouragement to the soul than the old hymns of the faith.
2. Nothing blesses me more than the testimonies of God’s people... the singing of God’s praise... and the preaching of God’s Word!

V. Because of it’s FRUIT.

- A. Jesus told His disciples go bring forth fruit and that their fruit should remain. In the first 25 years of church history, the church “*turned the world upside down*” and grew to over 100,000 people, in spite of Roman persecution and death threats. Today churches continue to exist around the world.
- B. The fruit of the church in America over the past 200+ years:
- America’s beginnings are rooted in the principles of Christianity and the Bible.
 - Of the first 108 colleges in America, 106 were started by churches.
 - Most of the first hospitals in America were started by churches.
 - Inner city missions are the fruit of churches.
 - The first orphanages were begun by churches.
 - Crisis pregnancy centers are the fruit of churches.

- When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, who was first to help out? Local churches!

C. Fruit of BBC— Matthews, Trembly... Coale... Brownings... Hake.

➡ ILLUS: 1961 picture of BBC. Current picture.

VI. **Because of it's FUTURE** (Mt. 16:18).

- ➡ The church will outlast every other organization on earth. One day Christ is going to receive the church unto Himself *“a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish”* (Eph. 5:27).

SUMMATION: Yes, the church today has some blemishes. But, in spite of all the church's faults, it is still the best thing going on planet earth!

I'm glad to be a part of it! I love the church!

I think that I shall never see
 A church that's all it ought to be:
 A church whose members never stray
 Beyond the strait and narrow way;
 A church that has no empty pews,
 Whose pastor never has the blues,
 A church whose deacons always “deak,”
 And none are proud, and all are meek;
 Where gossips never peddle lies,
 Or make complaints or criticize;
 Where all are always sweet and kind,
 And to others' faults are blind.
 Such perfect churches there may be,
 But none of them are known to me.
 But still, we'll work, and pray, and plan
 To make BBC the best we can.

Jesus loved the church, and so do I! How about YOU? Does it show in your attendance... your involvement... your giving?