

UNITING ALL CREATION

What good is the church? Have you ever wondered? Why do we have the church? And perhaps the bottom line for a lot of people is, why bother with the church?

The church can seem like just another institution or organization wanting our time and money. We can easily get disgusted with the church with all its meetings and church politics and all kinds of things that don't seem to make much difference. And people in the church can be a problem. Many are wonderful and a joy to be around, but some can be a real pain.

So why bother with the church? I suppose God has wondered that a time or two as well. But God has vision for the church.

Over the next several weeks we are going to take a look at vision God has for the church. And hopefully, God's vision will help us see a little clearer what the church is to be about and perhaps even get us excited about what God is doing in and through the church. The book of Ephesians will be our guide. Ephesians is a brief letter in the New Testament, written by the Apostle Paul to Christians living in the city of Ephesus, in what is now the country of Turkey.

Today we read a portion of Ephesians and we heard that the church is part of God's plan to unite all creation through Jesus Christ!

Do you remember the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty?"

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses,
And all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Like Humpty Dumpty, this world has taken a great fall and the fall has caused a lot of brokenness - in individual lives, in families, in communities, in whole nations. Since the beginning of time people have been trying to fix the world, but to no avail. God's plan is to put this world back together again!

Jesus came to do just that and it is working! Christ is healing the brokenness. Christ is reconciling people. Christ is uniting people. And the church is at the forefront of this work. It is not always easy to see the progress. There still is brokenness. There still is resistance to what Christ is doing. But it is happening.

The question is, how can we be part of this work?

Listen again to these words from Ephesians. "*God's plan for the fullness of time is to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.*" And again "*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus.*" And again, "*You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.*" And again, "*In Christ the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.*" (Ephesians 2:13, 19, 21)

The church is part of God's plan to unite all creation through Jesus Christ!

How can we get on board with what God is doing? Here are a few suggestions. I am sure as you ponder this plan of God, you can think of many more ideas of what we can do. We can practice hospitality. We can welcome strangers. We can help people connect with one another. We can reach out to people near and far and invite them into fellowship. We can build bridges among people - within the church and in families and in the community. We can work for reconciliation. We can practice forgiveness. We can grow into a holy temple in the Lord. We can make this fellowship a dwelling place for God.

Each of us can work on this. And we can work on this together.

The church is to be a light, a model, a blueprint of what God is doing in the world. The challenge is to let God do that here, among us. The challenge is for us to put into practice what God is doing.

Is this something we can do? Absolutely! As the children reminded us today, there is no need for us to be timid or afraid or to hold back. We can be fearless! Because God is with us and God will help us. We do indeed have a powerful God!

This God has a plan to unite all creation in Christ. And the church is at the forefront of what God's strategy!