

BIBLE CHALLENGE - The Church of God

To whom does Paul say the elders (overseers) should 'pay careful attention?'

- 1.
- 2.

What do you think it means to 'pay careful attention to yourselves?'

What do you think it means to 'pay careful attention to the flock?'

What does Paul say will happen once he leaves?

Do you think Paul literally means 'fierce wolves?' What do you think this means? What is Paul warning the elders about?

What do you think it means for Paul to commend the elders and the EKKLESIA to God?

What is the *word of God's grace*?

What is the word of God's grace able to do?

Acts 20.28-32

(These are words of instruction and encouragement from Paul to the Elders of the EKKLESIA at Ephesus. Paul was on his way to Jerusalem where he would be imprisoned. These are his last words to them.)

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you [*to commit or to place in the care of another*] to God and to *the word of his grace*, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Sermon Title: 'Here Comes the Bride': EKKLESIA RISING

11 February 2024

Matthew 16.13-20 *underline the word church*

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Ephesians 1.15-23 *underline the word church*

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And [God] put all things under [Jesus'] feet and gave [Jesus] as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

As you listen to the message, draw a picture of a *City* and *Citizens*.

Here Comes the Bride - _____

IMPORTANT WORD: *Ekklesia* - the Greek word translated as 'church.'

God chose the word EKKLESIA.

- Ekklesia IS: 'the totality of those who are called out'
- Ekklesia IS NOT *only*: 'Called out ones' or 'church like we think we know'

The word EKKLESIA made people think 'CITY.'

- Life in cities involved normal day-to-day living TOGETHER
- Cities influenced their surrounding areas
- Cities had walls and gates
- Greek cities had a government with a city official, a council of elders AND an EKKLESIA – an assembly of **citizens called out of their homes**

The EKKLESIA is the administration (the work) of the Kingdom of God

- Jesus is the King. He exercises His Kingship alongside His Bride.
- The **citizens** of God's Kingdom are called out of their homes to a central place to administrate (*do the work of the Kingdom*) TOGETHER.
 - The elders are like the 'city council'
 - The minister is the 'city official'
 - The church members TOGETHER are the 'citizens'

The church as the EKKLESIA changes our understanding of our importance in God's Kingdom.

- Corporate worship (worshiping *TOGETHER*) shows the rulership of God – His Kingdom
 - Our gatherings TOGETHER are where we share with other **Citizens**:
 - spiritual gifts, talents, abilities and resources
 - Corporate prayer - partnering with God in growing His Kingdom
 - Spiritual warfare against Satan's strongholds
 - good works that go out to influence and serve the surrounding areas
 - Being saved by grace through faith in Jesus is the requirement for CITIZENSHIP – Submit to Jesus as Lord!
 - Baptism is the public ceremony
 - The Bible is our constitution, guiding us in all we do
 - Exercising authority from God to fulfil God's commands are our keys of the Kingdom
- God's Holy Spirit fills our EKKLESIA with power, unity and love so that we can fulfil God's mission by doing God's will TOGETHER.

Big Idea: Who are the CITIZENS of God's EKKLESIA?

What words describe God's EKKLESIA? What does God's EKKLESIA do?

