



Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

In **Matthew 16:18**, Jesus said, "...on this rock I will build my church" (ESV). I am excited to tell you that I am part of this church. I am excited to be part of this church. It is the church of Christ, the church He built, the church that belongs to Jesus. It doesn't belong to any other man. It is not my church, your church, the Pope's church, Martin Luther's church, John Wesley's church. It is not the people's church. It is the Lord's church. And I get to be part of it. But why? Why would I want to be part of the church of Christ? Why would anyone? Before I answer this question, I need to clarify what I'm claiming membership in. If you misunderstand what I mean by "the church of Christ" you'll misunderstand what I'm saying when I answer the question. Then, I want to explain why I am a member of the church of Christ. Next week, I'll explain how I became a member. But for today, I just want to convince you that you want to be a member of the church of Christ.

Discussion:

I. In what am I claiming membership?

- A. Please understand, when I claim to be a member of the church of Christ, I am not claiming to be a member of some human organization made up of all the local churches who have the name "Church of Christ" on their sign. I am not a member of any such super organization. When I claim to be a member of the church of Christ, I am not referring to a denominational subset of Christians. I do not mean that there are a group of Christians who have divided off of the larger group of Christians to form a smaller organization. Additionally, in this lesson, I am not even talking about being a member of a local congregation that uses the description "church of Christ." Though I am a member of this body which most commonly identifies itself as the Brownsburg Church of Christ, I am not discussing today why I am a member of this particular local body. I will explain that in a later lesson. Today, I am talking about a universal body of individuals.
- B. The word "church" translates the Greek word "ekklesia." It is a compound word from "kaleo," meaning "to call," and "ek" meaning "out." Thus, the word "church" literally means "the called out." The term does not strictly apply to a religious group, but simply denotes a group of people who have been called together. It was originally a reference to the assemblies of citizens in Greek city-states gathered together to conduct public business. We see a similar use of the term in **Acts 19:32, 39, 41**.
- C. The word is a collective noun, like the words club, group, class, herd, flock, etc. These are singular words that refer to a group of members. A flock is a collection of sheep. A club is a collection of people. A herd is a collection of cows. A church is a collection of people. That is exactly how the word "church" is used in the New Testament. See **Acts 8:1**. In this verse, a persecution arose against the church. It arose against a singular group. However, it says, "*they* were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria..." (emphasis added). The singular church was made up of multiple people.
- D. However, I am not claiming to be a member of just any "called out." I am claiming to be a member of the "called out of Christ." When I claim to be a member of the church of Christ, I am claiming to be a member of the universal body of individuals who have been called out and belong to Jesus (**cf. Galatians 3:28-29**). The modifying prepositional phrase denotes ownership. The phrase "church of Christ" is the same as saying "Christ's church," that is, the church that belongs to Jesus Christ.
- E. Note some passages that describe this church of Christ.
 1. In **Ephesians 1:22-23** and **Colossians 1:18, 24**, we learn that this church is the body of Christ, over which Jesus is the head.
 2. In **I Timothy 3:15**, Paul calls it the house or household of God, which is the pillar and buttress of God's truth. Paul had earlier spoken of the house of God in **Ephesians 2:19-22**, in which he describes the church as a building that was founded on the apostles and prophets (that is, their revelation from the Holy Spirit) and was being fitted together to be a dwelling place of God in the Holy Spirit.
- F. I want to be a member of the church of Christ and I have become so. Yet, you may still wonder, why I became a member of this church described in Scripture. Why would anyone want to be part of this body? Why would they want to belong to Jesus Christ?

II. Why did I become a member of the church of Christ?

- A. Before I can tell you why, I must give you a little background information about myself. I am a sinner. I have known that for almost 30 years now. If I were to catalog the sins I have committed in my lifetime, I am certain that I would become as loathsome to you as I have been to myself. But, please, let me suffice it to say that I am a sinner and you can certainly believe that because you can read for yourself **Romans 3:23** and **I John 1:8**. As such, I have become separated from God (**Isaiah 59:1-3**) and I have earned the sentence of death (**Ezekiel 18:20**). I am not talking about a physical execution, but an eternal condemnation in the everlasting fire (**Matthew 25:41, 46**). I have become a member of the church of Christ, because I have learned that the answer to my greatest problem—sin—is, in a sense, in Christ's church.
- B. **Hebrews 12:22-24** speaks of Christ's church. It says that when we come to the general assembly and church, we are coming to Mount Zion (fulfillment of **Isaiah 2:2-4**), the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. This church is made up of the firstborn, which is not a reference to Jesus here, but rather a reference to the status of all the members. That is, members of this church are like a firstborn who has a claim on the inheritance (cf. **I Peter 1:3-5**). These numerous firstborn are registered in heaven (cf. **Philippians 3:20-21**). And this is a group of people who have been made perfect because they have come to a Mediator of a new covenant whose sprinkled blood speaks better things than that of Abel and whose blood has the power to take away sins. This leads us to our next passage.
- C. In **Acts 20:28**, we learn that the church of Christ, here called the church of God, has been purchased with Christ's blood. Why is this purchasing or redeeming so important? Note what it says in **Romans 3:23-26**. With redemption through the blood of Christ comes justification. And again in **Ephesians 1:7**, when we are redeemed or purchased by His blood, we have the forgiveness of sins.
- D. Notice also what Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:23-30**. Paul described Jesus as the model of a loving husband. The church is His bride. Jesus sacrificed Himself for His church, becoming its Savior, sanctifying it and cleansing it. He did all this so that the church might be presented to Himself as glorious, without spot or blemish. And so, when I read **Revelation 19:6-9**, I know if I want to be invited to that marriage supper I need to be part of the bride which is the church of Christ.
- E. Why am I a member of the church of Christ? Because these promises are only for those who become a part of His church. Salvation is only in Christ Jesus and in no other (**Acts 4:12**). Consider **I Corinthians 1:12-13**. No one but Jesus shed His blood for me. Why would I follow after some man in a church of man's design? Men may make up churches and creeds, but I am not a member of a church in order to please men. I am a member of the church because I desperately need what only Jesus can give—redemption, justification, sanctification and forgiveness. That is why I am a member of His church.

Conclusion:

Would you like to be a member of Christ's church? Why not do so today? If you want to be a member of Christ's church, respond today. We'll talk about how to become a member and you can be part of this blood bought bride of Jesus Christ.