



# Christ's Church is Awesome

Brownsburg Church of Christ

by Edwin Crozier

August 29, 2010

AM Assembly



## Introduction:

What do you think when you hear the word “church”? You might think of a building. You might think of a group of people. You might think of a service or assembly. Sadly, some of you might be carrying even worse baggage. You might think, “Church? Church is boring.” You might think, “Churches are abusive.” You might think, “Church is for perfect people.” You may think, “Churches are full of hypocrites.” You might think, “Some of the best people I know are in church.” But you might also think, “Some of the worst people I know are in church.” Of course, you may be saying, “I really don’t know anything about church.” We all have different experiences with “church.” We all, therefore, have different perceptions of church. We all have different baggage. I hope today we can cut through our misperceptions and preconceptions. I hope we can unpack the baggage. The reality is Christ’s church is awesome. I want to show you the four reasons why.

## Discussion:

- I. It has an awesome Savior.
  - A. When some people think of Christ and His church, they see Jesus as the cosmic killjoy. We don’t want to be part of His group because His mission in life seems to be taking away our fun. That is not Jesus at all. Jesus did not come to stifle and stickle the living. He came to seek and save the lost (**Luke 19:10**). He didn’t come to annoy us. He came to save us. He came to save us from sin. He came to save us from ourselves.
  - B. Most of us know Jesus came to shed His blood and die, but do we realize what that blood did? According to **Acts 20:28**, Jesus purchased the church with His blood. Jesus wanted us to be saved so badly, He gave up the glories of heaven, came down here to live as a man, was beaten and put on a cross, just to save us. Does that sound like a cosmic killjoy or a colossal love? But not everyone is purchased with that blood. He only purchased His church.
  - C. The truly awesome side of this is seen in **Ephesians 5:25-27**. Jesus loves His church so much, He gave Himself up for us. Why? So he could present us to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle. He purchased His church with His blood so we might be holy and without blemish. If you are like me, you want that. You’ve wanted to be holy. You’ve wanted to be clean. You’ve wanted to be righteous. You’ve wanted to do good. But you’ve fallen short over and over again. Sin has taken hold and corrupted you. It seems like there is simply no way out of that trap. But that is exactly why Jesus came. He came to save you from your sins, to set you free from your sins, to give you victory over your sins so you might be presented to Him in the end as holy, righteous, undefiled. Jesus is an awesome savior of an awesome church. That is awesome.
- II. It accomplishes awesome work.
  - A. So many churches are so different that our heads are spinning with what churches are about. Sadly, many churches have become distracted from the real work Christ has given His church. Some churches have been distracted by trying to provide for social, educational, medical, or political needs and wants. There are numerous groups that already accomplish these good works. Christ’s church does something that no other organization can.
  - B. **I Timothy 3:15** says, the church is the pillar and buttress (support) of the truth. The church upholds God’s truth for all the world to see. Now, admittedly, just hearing that may seem to be a bit of a letdown. But wait until you hear why we uphold the truth. **John 8:32-34** says the truth will set us free. It sets us free from our sins. With our sins removed it will also set us free from doubts, despairs, fears, anxieties.
  - C. No other organization can offer this. Oh, don’t misunderstand, there are a lot of decent organizations that provide a lot of good help in a lot of ways. But there is no other organization that can provide both the forgiveness and freedom from sin that Christ’s church can. What an amazing message. What awesome work. In the church, you can be part of that awesome work. You can carry the message of truth that will set folks free, providing liberty from the bondage of sin and death.
  - D. As we see ourselves and those around us set free, we will naturally want to accomplish the second aspect of Christ’s work for His church. **Ephesians 3:20-21** says the church’s work is to bring glory to God. I have no doubt that many in the world see that as stale. But for those of us who have been set free by God, this is the most awesome work of all. We can’t wait to bring Him glory; He has done so much for us.
  - E. We get to be part of this work in Christ’s church. That is just awesome.

### III. It provides an awesome family.

- A. The way we use the word “church” in modern conversation conveys some terrible misconceptions. The church is not a building. The local church may meet somewhere, but it doesn’t meet in a church. Further, church is not a service or a meeting of rituals. We don’t conduct or have church for an hour on Sunday. Christ’s church is actually the people who belong to Christ and they are the church whether they are meeting together in a building or not. Consider **Acts 8:3**. Granted this tells of a seeming dark day for Christ’s church, but it demonstrates our point. Paul was ravaging the church. Was he ravaging a building? Was he ravaging a meeting of rituals or service? No, he was ravaging the people, dragging them even from their houses. Christ’s church is the people. And these people make up an awesome family.
- B. **Matthew 19:29** explains that when we become part of Christ’s church, we might lose a great deal within this life. We may lose biological family. We may lose jobs. We may lose houses and land. However, we gain something greater in the church. We will receive a hundredfold spiritual family within the church, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters. Look around you and see the family you can have. It won’t just be the family in this building, but in Christ’s church the world over. I have seen this family in action. I can tell you the stories of tragedy and watched as Christ’s church “familied-up” around their brothers and sisters. When Katrina ravaged New Orleans, Christ’s church sent aid to their family, providing supplies, rebuilding homes, giving emotional support. When Rita ripped through Beaumont, Texas, Christ’s church was there for the family. When Nashville flooded back in May, I was living there, and some good friends lost their home. The couple had a place to stay because of their family in Christ’s church. Their house was the first one on their block cleaned up because of their family in Christ’s church. They recently moved back in with most of their belongings replaced. Yes, they received government assistance, but most of their help came from their family in Christ’s church.
- C. This, however, only considers the awesome family in Christ’s church in material and physical issues. More importantly, Christ’s church provides an awesome family in spiritual issues. **Proverbs 18:24** talks about the friend who sticks closer than a brother. You can find that kind of friend in Christ’s church. You can find a family that will accept you where you are. You can find a family that won’t judge you when you share what is really going on in your heart. **James 5:16** says we can confess our sins to one another and instead of judging one another, ridiculing one another, belittling one another, we’ll pray for one another. I’ve been there. I have family in Christ’s church that know absolutely everything about me. When I say everything, I mean everything. They have heard my darkest secrets. They know my pains, my weaknesses, my struggles, my embarrassing fears. Do you know what they’ve provided me in exchange for that? Love, understanding, and acceptance. They have prayed with me and uplifted me. They have let me cry on their shoulders. They have let me mourn in their arms. They have held up my hands in time of struggle.
- D. Now, I don’t want to blow smoke. The family that makes up Christ’s church isn’t perfect. We Christians don’t always do what we are supposed to. As you’ve often heard, we aren’t here because we’re perfect; we’re here because we’re sinners in need of a Savior. We still mess up sometimes. Some of us have fallen short of being the kind of family we want to be. But we are in Christ’s church. We are in Christ and we are growing. While some make mistakes, only Christ’s church provides the kind of family we are all wanting, wishing we had, hoping to have. This is just awesome.

### IV. It leads to an awesome life.

- A. **Romans 7:14-24** describes my life outside of Christ’s church. I wanted to do right, but I kept doing wrong. I wanted to be good, but I kept being bad. I wanted to be holy, but I kept on sinning. I completely get that cry, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” The life I used to have was miserable. It was filled with fear, anxiety, depression, shame. But notice **Romans 7:25**. There really is a deliverer. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ really will deliver us from the law of sin that plagues our bodies.
- B. The church is the body of those who have turned to Jesus for freedom. He is granting us progressive victory over our sins. He is perfecting us and setting us free. We really are growing in Christ. As we surrender to Jesus, His fruit is growing in our lives. **Galatians 5:22-23** describes that fruit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Doesn’t everyone want that fruit? God is doing that in our lives because we are in Christ and we are in His church.
- C. Again, I don’t want you to feel deceived. This is a growth process (**II Peter 1:5-11**). We make a lot of mistakes along the way. We struggle and stumble. Living in reality as we walk hand in hand with Jesus takes us out of our fantasies, removes our sinful escapes, brings us face-to-face with who we really are. That is painful sometimes. There are hard days. Giving our lives over to Jesus is described as carrying a cross in **Luke 9:23**. That alone demonstrates the difficulty that goes along with being in Christ’s church. But look again at the fruit it produces. Think of the freedom Christ is offering.

- D. I admit it; I have some bad days in Christ's church. I have some hard days, some tough days. I still have pains and struggles. But I would take a bad day in Christ's church over a good day in the world any day. Being in Christ's church is giving me an awesome life.
- E. But there is more. There is more than just a better life here on this earth. There is more than just overcoming and being set free from sins, fears, doubts, anxieties, and shame. Not only does Christ's church lead to an awesome life here, it leads to an awesome life in the hereafter. The gift of God through Jesus Christ is eternal life (**Romans 6:23**). When this life is over, we don't simply return to the ground. We don't endure eternal torment. Instead, we get to go be with God forever, glorying in Him, being glorified by Him (**Romans 8:18**). Consider the apostle Paul's approach to death in **Philippians 1:21-23**. He faced death with confidence because he knew physical death meant eternal life with Jesus Christ. Wow! That is just awesome.

#### Conclusion:

Christ's church is awesome. Let's not miss out on that because of our baggage and misperceptions.

I know I'm talking to folks in many different places spiritually this morning. I'm talking to some people who really didn't know much about Christ's church and even after this lesson, you don't really care to know any more. I'm sad for you and I'll be praying for you. When you reach that point of pain and realize you can't go on by your own strength anymore, remember that we are here. We love you and want you to have the liberty and freedom that comes from Christ for His church.

I'm talking to some people who didn't know much about Christ's church and now your interest is piqued. You want to know more. I don't expect you to want to jump in feet first and be part of Christ's church today. However, we do want to help you as you study and learn about Jesus and His church. Feel free to talk to me on the way out and let me know what we can do to help. Or, better yet, on the guest card in the brochure you received, check the boxes that let us know what you would like to know about and someone will contact you to help.

I'm also talking to people who already knew a good bit about Christ's church but hadn't made the plunge into membership yet. Today's lesson may have helped you decide you want to be part of Christ's awesome church, but you don't know how. **Acts 2:38, 41, 47** shows us how. If you believe Jesus is the Christ and you need Him to be saved, you can repent of your sins and submit to Jesus Christ in water baptism. You'll be saved by that and Jesus Christ will add you into His church. You will become part of that blood-bought church that has been forgiven and is being set free.

Finally, I'm talking to some who are already in Christ's church. Some of you have been progressing in Christ, growing in the Spirit's fruit, reaping the rewards, achieving progressive victory over sin. Continue on in your joy. God is working with you and in you to conform you to Christ. Stay true to Him. Others, however, despite having tasted the awesomeness of being in Christ have started to abandon Him, laying down your crosses, taking back the reins, striving to control your own life again. You have run headlong into the same problems you had before you entered Christ—the same sins, the same fears, the same anxieties, the same shame. Come back to Him. Give Him control again. Let us, your brethren who love you, be of help. Let us pray with you and for you. Let's work together to take up our crosses and surrender our lives to Jesus.

If you want to enter Christ and His church in baptism or if you need some other spiritual help from us, please let us know right now. You too can be part of Christ's awesome church and have eternal life through Him.