“The Church: The City of God”

**Hebrews 12:22-24, 28-29**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Sean Hoisington, Hayden Bible Church, 8/22/21)

[Today’s sermon is the beginning of a new series: ***Exploring God’s Design for His Church: The Heavenly City***.]

The Pharisees missed the heart of God. They had convoluted the Mosaic Covenant. When Jesus told them that their father was Satan, the devil, you can imagine that that ruffled more than a few feathers! In John 8: 23-24, He said that they were earthly, and that He was Heavenly. That ruffled even more feathers! Now read 1 Corinth. 15: 47-49. This leads us all to a point of decision: Do you want to represent the earthly kingdom, or the Heavenly Kingdom?

Here is the foundational truth of this series: God’s church is of Heaven. His church, the City of God, is a prophesied city, a present city, and a future and eternal city. All the heroes of Heb. 11 lived lives that testified of a city yet to come. Read Psalm 48:1-3. This earthly Jerusalem foreshadows the true city of God, the church. The really important thing to understand is that we, the followers of Christ the King, are **presently** citizens of that Heavenly city. Read Heb. 12:22 again. It says “you **have come**.” By faith, based on the merit of Christ, we are **now** citizens of that city. (see also Phil. 3:20-21) The city of God is also a future and eternal city (Dan. 2:44). It is a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and Jesus is our King! In Luke 1:31-33, Gabriel told Mary that “His kingdom will know no end.” Hallelujah! (Q1)

The city of God is the church of God. Read Heb. 12:22-24 again. Charles Ryrie put it this way: “The old covenant (the law) and the new covenant (the gospel) are contrasted by comparing Mt. Sinai, where the law was given, with Mt. Zion, the spiritual city, eternal in the heavens and symbolic of the gospel of grace.” Rev. 21:1-5 describes how God will dwell with man. A few verses later in Rev. 22:14, John relates how inside this eternal city are those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb: His church.

Pastor Sean then gave us some reminders for living life as the church. First, remember that the church belongs to the Lord. We have been summoned out of darkness into **His** marvelous light (1Peter 2:9-10). As the church we have been pulled out of the world and set apart to bring glory to Him. Christ is the head of the church (Col. 1:15-18). We are to do His will for His purposes. (Q2) The church is governed by the Lord, not man. There are many earthly voices trying to give direction to the church. The real design is from God above. The question for each of us is: Am I willing to study His design and follow it, or will I just follow my own ideas? (Q3)

The church receives her identity and purpose from the Lord. God has given us a mission and a methodology to carry about His purpose. (Q4) Our unchanging God commands that we honor Him in our worship. Our worship is to be holy and reverent. Our worship should not reflect the world’s values. We must never be conformed to the patterns of the world in our worship. Jesus gave us a model of worship when He taught the disciples to pray. Read Matt. 6:9-13. His followers should hallow His name “on earth as it is in Heaven.” Read Rev. 4:8, 11 to hear how it’s done in Heaven! (Q5)

Is there a place in your heart where you are drifting away from the Lord in worship? Is your worship holy? Does your worship please Him? Does your worship focus on Him? God’s church is the church of Heaven. Rejoice that you have citizenship in this church! Arise and put your armor on. **You are His body** here on this earth. The gospel is your battle cry. The city of God is a conquering city. You are a warrior, washed in the blood of the King. Be enlivened and emboldened to go outside of your walls (Q6) and bring glory to your God and King. Amen.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What are our rights as citizens of the Heavenly City? What are our responsibilities?
2. Christ is the head of the church. How does this relationship inform your daily decisions? … what shows you watch on TV? … how you respond to current events?
3. What is God’s design for the church? How come there are so many different “flavors” of the church in Kootenai County and around the world?
4. What is our mission? What is our methodology?
5. How do you worship? Worship doesn’t just happen at a Sunday morning church service! What does worship look like during the rest of the week?
6. What walls restrict your worship? What walls restrict your sharing of the gospel? What can be done about those walls?

“The Church’s One Foundation” (Stone)

The Church’s one foundation

Is Jesus Christ her Lord;

She is His new creation

By water and the Word:

From heav’n He came and sought her

To be His holy Bride;

With His own blood He bought her,

And for her life He died.

’Mid toil and tribulation,

And tumult of her war,

She waits the consummation

Of peace for evermore;

Till, with the vision glorious,

Her longing eyes are blest,

And the great Church victorious

Shall be the Church at rest.