

It's To Die For !

Text : **I Corinthians 3: 16-17** and **Ephesians 5: 22-32**

S#1.

A. Have you ever heard anyone describe something as “*It’s to die for!*”

1. My grandmother’s coconut cake was often described this way.
 - a. She used fresh coconuts, made six layers and covered it with coconut.
 - b. She tried to teach all three of her daughters to make it, but none mastered it.
 - c. Everyone loved it so much they often requested it. ... “*It was to die for!*”
2. Most of us have experienced something so special we could describe in this way.
3. It’s hyperbole, an exclamation indicating that we view something as extraordinary.

S#2.

B. God has something He very literally views as “*It’s to die for!*” and He did so.

1. **Acts 20: 28** – **Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.** S#3.
2. **Eph. 5: 25-27** **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.** S#4.
3. In the eyes of Jesus His church is literally “*To die for!*”

Since our Lord and Master, our Savior and God cherishes the church that much, what ought our attitude be toward it ? Share His passion.

S#5.

S#6.

I. Value the church as “*to die for*” because it’s the dwelling place of God on the earth.

A. **I Cor. 3: 16-17** **Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.** S#7.

1. “*humeis*” : A plural “**you**” addressed a **group** of people as a unit.
2. The Spirit does dwell within each individual Christian, but here He is referred to as dwelling in the church, **His temple.**
3. Thus, the church is special to God :
 - a. Not just any group of people.
 - b. To say “**the temple of God is holy**” is to say the church is holy.
 - c. **Holy (*hagios*)** : separate from common condition and use; dedicated, hallowed;

B. God watches over His church in a special way.**S#8.**

1. Jesus takes any attack on the church personally. **For Example :**

Acts 22: 7-8 I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'

2. Whoever pollutes, defiles or in any way damages His church, God will judge harshly

- a. Remember .. Vs. **17** – **If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him**

- b. Destroy (*phtheiro*): **1** to corrupt 1A in the opinion of the Jews, the temple was corrupted or “destroyed” when anyone defiled or in the slightest degree damaged anything in it, or if its guardians neglected their duties. (Strong)

3. Can we be any less protective of the church for which Jesus gave His life ?

S#9.

- a. **Gal. 6: 1-2** ... We must be proactive in keeping the church strong. (*each other*)

- b. Elders are responsible to guard the flock / **YOU**. (*spiritual protection, not physical*)

Acts 20: 28 – **Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the H.S.**

S#10.**C. One of the primary functions of the church is to be a dwelling place for God.**

1. **Eph. 2: 17-22** And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, **S#11.**

and peace to those who were near; **18** for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. **19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, **20** having been built on the foundation **S#12.** of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, **21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, **22** in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

2. “**is growing into**” God's temple (the church) is a work in progress.

3. Every Christian is a workman to build and maintain God's temple on earth.

4. Every Christian is also a stone in His temple. (*Living stones gather stones.*)

I Pet. 2: 4-5 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected **S#13.** by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, **5** you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

5. Vs. **17** ... The living stones are searched out from far and near. **WHY??**

- a. Yes, the temple of living stones creates a dwelling place for God. **S#14.**

- * b. **BUT, *this living temple provides the place where God meets His people.***

- c. One who doesn't realize this probably comes to church out of duty, not delight.

* **“I gotta go to church.” rather than “I get to go meet with God.”** (**Mt 18:20**)

S#15.

II. Value the church as “to die for” because it’s the most holy place on the earth.

S#16.

A. God can only dwell in a holy environment. He cannot expose Himself to sin.

1. Moses was required to remove his sandals so as not to defile God.

S#17.

Exod. 3: 5 – Then He said, “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

2. Likewise, the church temple is holy because God is in it.

S#18.

Eph. 2: 21-22 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, **22** in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

B. Each individual stone is cleansed and made holy before being added.

S#19.

1. **Eph. 5: 25-27** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church **S#20.** and gave Himself up for her, **26** so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

2. Those in the church have all been “sanctified” when placed into Christ.

S#21.

I Cor. 1: 2 – To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

3. Every Christian’s sins have been forgiven. (**I Jn 1 kept forgiven / Eph 2 grace**) **S#22.**

I John 2: 12 – I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake.

4. Each one’s sins are forgiven before he receives the indwelling Holy Spirit as a gift.

Acts 2: 38 – Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

S#24.

C. ALL saved people are in the church and ONLY saved people are in the church.

1. The membership role for God’s church is not kept on earth. (**in name only**) **S#25.**

- a. **Phil. 4: 3** – Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- b. **Rev. 21: 27** – (*New Jerusalem*) nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (**cf– 20: 12-15**) **S#26.**

- c. **Rev. 3: 5** – He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name

2. No one can join the church, but God adds all who are saved. S#27.
 - a. **Acts 2: 41** – So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.
 - b. **Acts 2: 47** – praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord S#28.
was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.
 - c. **I Cor. 12: 18** – But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
3. Being on a church role does not guarantee that one is enrolled in Heaven. S#29.
 - a. **Heb. 12: 22-23** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
 - b. **Matt. 7: 21** – Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. S#30.
 - c. **Matt. 15: 8** – This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.
4. Thus, we see that one's relationship with God is a heart-to-heart relationship. S#31.
 - a. First one must totally surrender his heart to God.
 - b. Then, he must surrender his body in obedience to God, beginning with the gospel.

S#32.

III. Value the church as “to die for” because it's our only long-term relationship.

- A. All earthly relationships are temporary. S#33.
 1. Marriage is the longest lasting relationship on the earth, **but** it ends at death. S#34.
 - a. **I Cor. 7: 39** – A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.
 - b. **Mark 12: 18-27** ... Jesus taught there is no marriage in Heaven.
Mark 12: 25 – For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in Heaven
 - c. **Basically** ... Marriage is about reproduction ... no reproduction in Heaven.
 2. Everyone we love will die and be judged. S#35.
Heb. 9: 27 – And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,
- B. Judgment necessitates separation. S#36.
 1. Jesus explained judgment as separation.

Matt 25: 32-33 All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; **33** and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

2. Eternal separation will occur at the time of the resurrection.

S#37.

John 5: 28-29 Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, **29** and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

3. All who do not obey the gospel will be separated from God ... from heaven.

II Thes. 1:7b -9 when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who **do not know God** and to those who **do not obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus. **9** These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

S#38.

- C. The separation of the church from those who are not saved is eternal.

S#39.

1. **I Thes. 4: 13-18** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those **#40.** who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. **15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are **#41.** alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with **S#42.** the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words

2. The church will go with God eternally ... all others will be separated eternally.

- *3. Eternity with God ... ***"It's to die for!"***

CONCLUSION :

S#43.

- A. There are many reasons the church is ***"To die for!"*** We've observed only three.

1. The church was purchased with the life of the Son of God.
2. The church is the most Holy place on this earth.
3. The church is the only eternal relationship on this earth.

S#44.

- B. The vicarious sacrifice of Jesus was so He could present His church to himself.

- C. When Jesus comes for His church, will you go with Him or be left behind ? **S#45.**

Lesson Text :

I Corinthians 3: 16-17

16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? **17** If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

Ephesians 5: 22-32

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **26** so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. **28** So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; **29** for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, **30** because we are members of His body. **31** For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife. And the two shall become one flesh. **32** This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.