

The Church

Sunday Morning, April 15, 2012

Thesis:

The Church is a Mystery For Some. Structured With a Purpose to Reveal Christ Jesus the Savior!

Introduction:

Newsweek, April 9, 2012

"Forget the Church Follow Jesus" by Andrew Sullivan

I. The Church or Kingdom of God is a Mystery Revealed in Parables

(Mark 4: 10 – 12)

10 When He was alone with the Twelve, those who were around Him asked Him about the parables.

11 He answered them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to those outside, everything comes in parables

12 so that they may look and look, yet not perceive; they may listen and listen, yet not understand; otherwise, they might turn back— and be forgiven."

Two Groups: **Insiders - Willing to Hear**
Outsiders - Unwilling to Hear

(Mark 4: 26 – 32)

26 "The kingdom of God is like this," He said. "A man scatters seed on the ground;

27 he sleeps and rises—night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows—he doesn't know how.

28 The soil produces a crop by itself—first the blade, then the head, and then the ripe grain on the head.

29 But as soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, because the harvest has come."

30 And He said: "How can we illustrate the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to describe it?

31 It's like a mustard seed that, when sown in the soil, is smaller than all the seeds on the ground.

32 And when sown, it comes up and grows taller than all the vegetables, and produces large branches, so that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade."

Do You Understand This Parable?

What Process Do You See Building the Kingdom of God?

What Promise Does the Kingdom of God Offer in This Parable?

II. The Church or Kingdom of God Has Structure Designed by God

(Ephesians 4: 11-13)

11 And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,

12 for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ,

13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

(I Timothy 3: 1 – 16) – On Next Page

(I Timothy 3: 1 – 16)

1 This saying is trustworthy: "If anyone aspires to be an overseer, he desires a noble work."

2 An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,

3 not addicted to wine, not a bully but gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy—

4 one who manages his own household competently, having his children under control with all dignity.

5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God's church?)

6 He must not be a new convert, or he might become conceited and fall into the condemnation of the Devil.

7 Furthermore, he must have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he does not fall into disgrace and the Devil's trap.

8 Deacons, likewise, should be worthy of respect, not hypocritical, not drinking a lot of wine, not greedy for money, 9 holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

10 And they must also be tested first; if they prove blameless, then they can serve as deacons.

11 Wives, too, must be worthy of respect, not slanderers, self-controlled, faithful in everything.

12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households competently.

13 For those who have served well as deacons acquire a good standing for themselves, and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

14 I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon.

15 But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

16 And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great:

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

III. The Church or Kingdom of God Has A Practical Purpose

(Matthew 14: 13 – 21)

13 When Jesus heard about it, He withdrew from there by boat to a remote place to be alone. When the crowds heard this, they followed Him on foot from the towns.

14 As He stepped ashore, He saw a huge crowd, felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.

15 When evening came, the disciples approached Him and said, "This place is a wilderness, and it is already late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

16 "They don't need to go away," Jesus told them. "You give them something to eat."

17 "But we only have five loaves and two fish here," they said to Him.

18 "Bring them here to Me," He said.

19 Then He commanded the crowds to sit down on the grass.

He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

20 Everyone ate and was filled. Then they picked up 12 baskets full of leftover pieces!

21 Now those who ate were about 5,000 men, besides women and children.

[Take Resourceful Steps to Minister](#)

[Trust in the Resourcefulness of Christ To Bless Those Steps For His Glory!](#)

Note: (12 Baskets) - Reap the Harvest of Faithfulness!

Conclusion:

[As Christians, Believers in Christ, Followers of the Way. . .](#)

[Let Us Have Ears That Hear Truth](#)

[Let Us Guard the Structure of the Church As Seen in the Scriptures](#)

[Let Us Be the Hands and Feet of Faithfulness to Christ and His Commands](#)

[That Jesus and His Glory May Be Revealed to Those Who Seek Him!](#)