

The Beauty, Gravity, and Unity of the Gathered Church



Three powerful and influential 'isms

Individualism

My relationship with God is personal;
and my practice of faith is personal.

*“This is what I’ve found to be true,
so I’m going to go with that.”*

Three powerful and influential 'isms

Subjectivism

Meaning and value are determined by how I experience things, by how I'm moved, by how I feel.

CORNERSTONE BEREAN CHURCH

"I really didn't get much out of that."

Three powerful and influential 'isms

Pragmatism

It's what works that matters,
and if it works it must be good.

*“Hey, as long as it helps people
come to Jesus let's do it.”*

Main Ideas

There is beauty made visible in the gathered church that cannot be seen anywhere else.

God is doing something to and in you in the gathering that *He will not do* anywhere else.

There is a unity believers have in Christ that can only be displayed in the gathering.



The **beauty** of the gathered church.



Psalm 84:1-4

How lovely are Your dwelling places,
O LORD of hosts! My soul longed and
even yearned for the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

The bird also has found a house,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King and my God.

How blessed are those who dwell in Your house!
They are ever praising You.



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My King and my God.

**How blessed are those who
dwell in Your house!
They are ever praising You.**

The image shows the exterior of a modern church building. The main structure is light-colored with horizontal siding and a brown roof. A prominent feature is a low wall made of stacked stones in shades of grey and tan. The words "CORNERSTONE BEREAN CHURCH" are inscribed on this wall in a light, serif font. In front of the wall is a well-maintained green lawn with several small, yellowish-green plants. The sky is clear and blue. Overlaid on the image is a large, black, sans-serif text block.

It is the **presence** of the LORD that makes the temple so lovely.

CORNERSTONE BEREAN CHURCH

The image shows the exterior of a modern church building. The lower portion of the wall is constructed from stacked, irregular stones in shades of grey and brown. Above this stone base, the building features white horizontal siding. The roof is a dark brown color with a wide, overhanging eave. A white downspout is visible on the right side of the building. The foreground consists of a well-maintained green lawn with several small, light-colored shrubs and a gravel mulch bed. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

**But now we are His temple;
we are His dwelling place;
His *presence* is here among us.**

CORNERSTONE BEREAN CHURCH

2 Corinthians 6:16

For **we** are the temple of the living God;
just as God said,
“I will dwell in them and walk among them;
And I will be their God,
and they shall be My people.”



This is us!

2 Corinthians 6:16

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And I will be their God,
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Ephesians 2:19-22

So then **you** are no longer strangers and aliens,
but **you** are fellow citizens with the saints,
and are of God's household, having been built
upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,
in whom the whole building, being fitted together
is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
in whom **you** also are being built together
into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.



We are His House

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We are His temple

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and are of God's household, having been built
upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,
in whom the whole building, being fitted together

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temple in the Lord;**

in whom you also are being built together
into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.



We together are His dwelling!

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but you are fellow citizens with the saints,
and are of God's household, having been built
upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,
in whom the whole building, being fitted together
is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

in whom **you also are being built together
into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**





What makes our gathering so beautiful?

It is the *presence* of Christ Himself that makes this gathering so beautiful!

“For where two or three have gathered together in My name, **there I am in their midst.**”



How is the beauty of Christ seen here?

In the gathering, you hear the glories of Christ held out to you in Scripture, prayer, and preaching.

In the gathering, you see the beauty of Christ pictured for you in the ordinances: baptism and communion.

In the gathering, you hear the Spirit of Christ move as voices sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

In the gathering, you see the glory of Christ and power of His grace being worked out in the lives of others.



How is the beauty of Christ seen here?

In the gathering, you see the unity of Christ as male and female, young and old, black and white, tall and short, worship as one.

In the gathering, you see the manifestations of Christ's supernatural love as weaknesses and offenses are covered.

In the gathering, you see the costs of Christ's sacrifice illustrated as others pay their price to gather for worship.

The image shows the exterior of a modern church building. The upper portion of the building has light-colored horizontal siding and a brown roof with a wide overhang. The lower portion is a stone wall. The text "CORNERSTONE BEREAN CHURCH" is visible on the stone wall. A large, bold, black text overlay is centered on the image.

**In the gathering,
you see Christ in us!**

CORNERSTONE BEREAN CHURCH



Beauty

The **gravity** of the
gathered church



Hebrews 10:23-25 as a start...

Hebrews 10:23-25

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.



Here is urgency!

Hebrews 10:23-25

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope
without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
and let us consider how to stimulate
one another to love and good deeds,
not forsaking our own assembling together,
as is the habit of some,

but encouraging one another; **and all the more,**

**as you see the day drawing
near.**



Here is gravity!

Hebrews 10:23-25

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope
without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
and let us consider how to stimulate
one another to love and good deeds,

**not forsaking our own
assembling together,
as is the habit of some,**

but encouraging one another; and all the more,
as you see the day drawing near.

If we believe that God instructs us to gather,
If we believe He does **all things** with purpose,
It is clear that He purposes to do
something in the gathering that He
doesn't intend to do anywhere else.



What does God do that is so important?

In the gathering, God speaks to you and reveals Himself to you in ways unlike anywhere else.

Matthew 18:20

“For where two or three have gathered together
in My name, there I am in their midst.”

God reveals Himself to you
in the glory of Christ as He is
made visible among us.



2 Timothy 4:1-2

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

preach the word; be ready in season and out of season...

God reveals Himself to you as the message of Christ is preached!



There are some who by teaching or by practice dishonor Christ and devalue His Church by doing *churchy things* apart from any church, acting as though no church is needed to be a church.



What does God do that is so important?

In the gathering, God speaks to you and reveals Himself to you in ways unlike anywhere else.

In the gathering, the Spirit works upon your soul with the Word in ways unlike anywhere else, *regardless of whether you know it or feel it.*

1 John 3:2

We know that, when [Christ] appears,
we shall be like Him, because
we shall see Him just as He is.



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1 John 3:2

We know that, when [Christ] appears,
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we shall see Him just as He is.

Seeing Christ transforms you!



Remember what we said:

In the gathering,
you see Christ Himself!

You see Him in baptism!
You see Him in communion!
He is held out to you in His Word!

God's work in you is
not subjective!



The value of the gathering is not found *primarily* in the feelings generated or in the social interactions provided.

It is found in the manifestations of Christ's presence, in the visible display of His gospel, and in the communications of His grace *that are found nowhere else.*

If these things are true...

You will place immeasurable value upon the gathering of the church and will come in happy anticipation of receiving the gifts of God's grace found only in the gathering.



Beauty

Gravity

The **unity** of the
gathered church



Unity?

Ephesians 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.



Unity already exists!

Ephesians 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance

to one another in love, **being diligent to preserve**
the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.



Why?

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The *basis* of Christian unity is not simply an ideal; it is an identity!

We are united in Christ!



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**We are also united by
the truths of the gospel.**



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The *beauty* of Christian unity is displayed as believers gather and learn to walk together in a manner of life consistent with who they are.



What is the lifestyle of this people?

Ephesians 4:1-6

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to **walk in a manner worthy of
the calling
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and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance
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There is one body and one Spirit, just as also
you were called in one hope of your calling;
one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and
Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.



What does that look like?

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to **walk** in a manner worthy of the calling

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Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

How might we work this
out in a pandemic?

Conclusion

Let's turn our hearts to see the beauty, feel the gravity, and practice the unity that are found only when we gather in the name of Christ as the people of Christ for the glory of Christ.