

SEEKING THE KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

A. Matthew 6:33

Seeking God's kingdom is man's highest priority.

B. Matthew 16:18-19

The kingdom and church are inseparable. Thus, kingdom-seeking largely involves the pursuit of Christ's church.

I. FIND A CHURCH WITH A NAME RECOGNIZABLE IN SCRIPTURE

A. Ephesians 5:24

1. Suppose I was having a Bible study with a guy named Bill Adams when he suffered a serious medical episode requiring an ambulance ride to the hospital, so now I need to inform Bill's wife, but I have never met her and don't know her name. If I could access his phone and she wasn't listed as "wife" or some conspicuous term of endearment, I would probably start scrolling for the surname Adams, with first names that appear feminine because it makes sense that Bill Adams would be married to Mrs. Adams. Since the church is the bride of Christ, and she is a bride who submits to her husband, it stands to reason the church ought to be known by that name.
2. What I would not do is start thinking of random words Bill has said, blend them together, and expect to be able to identify his wife. The fact that Bill has said, "Go, Dodgers!" and "I'm rebuilding a 1964½ Ford Mustang" and "I was born in California" and "I was a plumber for 35 years" should not lead me to think his wife is named Mrs. Dodger Mustang or Mrs. California Plumber. Yet, many churches, instead of simply taking the name of the bridegroom, take a random assortment

of words either that He spoke or that are associated with Him and call themselves that!

- a. Living Water
- b. Christian Faith
- c. Holy Ghost and Fire
- d. Abundant Life
- e. New Life

B. John 3:27-30

I certainly wouldn't expect to find Bill Anderson's wife taking the last name of the best man at their wedding!

C. Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:18

Since Christ is the church's builder, Savior, and head, its name ought to indicate submission to Him.

D. Romans 16:16; 1st Corinthians 1:2; 1st Timothy 3:15

Names with scriptural precedent which express a proper relationship to the Lord include "*churches of Christ*", "*church of God*", and variations on this theme like "*church of the living God*".

E. Romans 16:1; 1st Corinthians 16:1, 19; Colossians 4:16

Because the denominations of men had not yet arisen to compete with the Lord's church in the first century, very often in God's word, churches were referred to merely by their location: "*the church in Cenchrea*", "*the churches of Galatia*", "*the churches of Asia*", and "*the church of the Laodiceans*".

F. 1st Thessalonians 2:14

An example that combines the notion that the church's name ought to bear the Lord's name and indicate location is "*the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus*". We do similarly when we call ourselves the Rio Grande Valley church of Christ or include in the name the city, neighborhood, or street where the church gathers.

II. FIND A CHURCH TEACHING THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

A. **Ephesians 5:23; 1:22-23**

Christ is the Savior of the body and the body is the church. Thus, salvation is directly connected to the church. Accordingly, the church needs to be teaching salvation correctly.

B. **1st Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27**

Entrance into the body occurs at baptism, which is also how entrance into Christ Himself is secured.

C. **Acts 18:8; 22:16; 2:38**

Baptism should accompany hearing, believing, calling on the Lord's name, and repenting of sin. Churches teaching salvation by other means or lesser means don't really have Jesus as the Savior.

III. FIND A CHURCH WORSHIPING ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. **1st Corinthians 14:16; (4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 35); Colossians 3:16**

In a chapter focused on the church being edified when it comes together as such, we are taught to sing. This is the only music the New Testament authorizes in worship – not playing an instrument, clapping, humming, whistling, or any other sound that is not singing. It is how we teach and admonish each other.

B. **Acts 20:7; 1st Corinthians 11:17-26**

There must be a coming together in one place as a church upon the first day of the week in order to break bread in the Lord's Supper. The church that teaches this can be done individually outside of the assembling is not following the pattern of the New Testament. The church that practices this with any other frequency than weekly is different than Scripture describes.

C. **Acts 12:5; 2:42; Ephesians 5:20**

The church must be praying together constantly with those prayers addressed to the Father in Jesus' name.

IV. FIND A CHURCH WHOSE MEMBERS LIVE IN MORAL PURITY

A. Hebrews 10:24-25; Titus 3:14

A major impetus for regular assembling is for the encouragement of good works.

B. Matthew 18:15-17; 1st Corinthians 6:1-11

Before the church was even established, Christ set in order a process whereby the church would discipline its members who sin. Brethren ought to be able to resolve such matters without involving outsiders.

CONCLUSION

A. Matthew 13:45-46

Those who understand the worth of the kingdom are willing to do whatever is necessary to obtain it.

B. Matthew 7:7

Seekers will be finders! Jesus promised.