

**Sermon: Not MY Church by Rev David Ho (09-Jun-19)**
Scripture Text: Acts 2:38-47

<sup>38</sup>Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup>The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” <sup>40</sup>With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” <sup>41</sup>Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. <sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Introduction

Today is Pentecost Sunday, it’s the day to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church. Often, many people will preach about the coming of the Holy Spirit on this day. But today, the theme will be about the church itself.

Jesus came to us 2,000 years ago. He was born, crucified, and resurrected. He then spent some time with the disciples, and He ascended back to Heaven. He left the apostles on earth. So, Apostle Peter called a nomination committee together, and decided to do a preaching point in the church of Jerusalem, and the apostles took up various leadership and lay leader roles in the church. **SO NOT TRUE.**

However, the church was birthed not by human institution and constitution. The church is birthed by the Holy Spirit. The church did not belong to the pastors, nor the leaders, but the church belongs to God Himself. Therefore, the sermon topic today, “Not MY Church”, but His. The church is not a building, the church is made up of you and I.

Preaching Points
**1. Not MY Church But HIS (OWNERSHIP)**

- We are the church. We belong to the church, but we don’t own the church.
- Understanding the word “Church” – it was translated from kuriakos (2x) in the New Testament.

“The English word “church” descends from an Old English word *cirice*, akin to an Old High German word, *kirihha*. Both words derive from a Late Greek word, *kuriakon*, which comes from the Greek *kuriakos*, the possessive form of the work *kuriος*, the term for “lord”. *Kuriakos* thus simply means “lord’s,” showing possession, or “belonging to the lord”. – Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.

- Showing that possession of belonging to the Lord.
  - **OWNERSHIP** – Who does the Church belong to, who do you and I belong to? God Himself.
  - **Cross referencing Eph 5:23-27**

- The analogy of the husband and wife is used to describe the nature of relationship between Christ and the Church. The church is the Bride of Christ and we are His Body. We are to love the Church dearly as His Bride, and to take care of the Church as His Body.
- If we think the church belongs to us, to the point we think we own it, then we usurp His authority. But if we neglect the Body of Christ, we are in serious problem.
- We need to come to recognize that Christ is the Lord of all.
  - **Implication:** As Christ's Bride and Body, we would be more than passive worshippers. We need to step up to serve Christ in the Church. Be it a small role or a more impactful role, we serve to avoid neglecting the Body of Christ.
  - One example of serving is the role of an usher. Ushering is an important role in the church. They are the first line of contact and church representatives that people will see when they walk into the church.
  - It is important that we are aware that we are not serving the Church, we are serving the Owner of the Church. We offer our services as an act of Love for our Lord.

## 2. Not In Conformity But A Call Out People (IDENTITY)

- Understanding another Greek word, ekklēsia– mentioned 109x in the New Testament. It consists of two parts: First, the word called “Ek”, which means “out”, while ekklēsia comes from the basic word “Kaleō” means “to call”. Hence putting the words together, the church is what we call “a called-out assembly”.
- We not only belong to the Lord, we are being called out. We are here because God has called us out, not to conform with the world, but to be His people.
- The Church's **IDENTITY 1 Pet 2:9** include (Who we are and Why are we here for)
  - You are chosen.
    - **Matt 5:14-16** – We are to bring light to the world, that is corrupted and falling apart. We are called to be the light, to shine in this world that is falling apart. If we are not shining for Him, then we are in darkness. There is no neutral stand. We are witnesses of God, taken out of darkness into His wonderful light.
  - You are royal, because you belong to the King of kings and the Lord of lords, you are all princes and princesses, children of God.
  - You are the priesthood to God the King. As a priest, we represent the people of the world to the Father, and to represent God to the world.
  - We are called to be His mediator, just as Christ is His mediator.
  - We are a holy nation. We are set apart (Holy), and our citizenship is not of this world, but of the Kingdom of Heaven (nation). We are a new people.

- Implications: How is your light shining to bring the Gospel of Redemption out there? God loves each of them and wants them to be transferred to the likeness of His Son.
- **Eph 5:8-11** – How to live as light in the world (“for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth”).
- **Matt 5:13** – Here is a metaphorical statement, if called to be the “salt of the world”, then your function is to be salty. But if you are not salty, then what are you? If we are not salty, then we are rotting. Because salt preserves (it is a preservative), without salt, food rot. Again, there is no neutral stand.
- **John 15:18-19** – The darkness does not like light, the one who choose the rot, does not like salt. Our identity in Christ is not openly welcomed and accepted by the world.
- **Jas 4:4** – The word of God is not telling us to fight all the battles out in the world that is against Christ, but rather to state the obvious state of the world, and that we are to stand up and make a difference. Our call as the salt and light of the world, is for us to bring the love of our Lord to the world, the Good News to the people. To shine light into darkness, to bring salt to overcome the rot, with love and in love. We are the called-out people, to remember who owns us, and what is our identity.
- *“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on Earth” – John Wesley*

### 3. Not For Our Comfort But For The Great Commission (CAUSE)

- Acts 1:8 – We are not called to be His people for our comfort, but for the Great Commission, we are called for a **MISSION**.
- A church that doesn’t prioritize mission and evangelism, is a dead church. This applies to individuals as well as the church.
- “Mission exists because worship doesn’t” – John Piper. Everything cannot happen until the people of Christ go out there.
- **A Parable of a Life Saving Station** (refer to end for the story in full)
  - Moral of Story: The life-saving station eventually ended up as a museum to showcase what they had done before. Despite that ship wrecks still happened frequently, no saving was rendered. Similarly, a church with a soul-saving cause can become a club.
  - This can happen to any Methodist church, and this can happen to AMC. We have to remember Who own us, What is our identity, What is our Mission.
  - God had started the Methodist movement with John and Charles Wesley. It became a great movement in the UK, that brought about a great revival.
  - If we forget who owns us, who we are, and why we are here, then we will be just like a well-oiled car that sits beautiful for display, but not driven.  
Man -> Movement -> Mission -> Machinery -> Museum.  
We will not be fulfilling our Mission.
  - *“My fear is not that our great movement, known as the Methodists, will eventually cease to exist or one day die from the earth. My fear is that our people will become content to live without the fire, the power, the excitement, the supernatural element that makes us great” – John Wesley*
  - *“I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves faith in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed*

*through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions.*" – John Wesley

- There will be a revival of holiness if our church, but when will the revival come? Only God will bring that revival. We will not know when, and where it will come from. But the question really, is our sail ready to catch the wind? We must always be ready to catch the wind of revival when it comes. Is the Church prepared when it comes?

### Reference Verses

[Eph 5:23-27 \(NIV\)](#) “<sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup>to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup>and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

[1 Pet 2:9 \(NIV\)](#) “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

[Matt 5:14-16 \(NIV\)](#) “<sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

[Eph 5:8-11 \(NIV\)](#) “<sup>8</sup>For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup>and find out what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.”

[Matt 5:13 \(NIV\)](#) “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

[John 15:18-19 \(NIV\)](#) “<sup>18</sup>If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup>If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

[Jas 4:4 \(NIV\)](#) “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. “

[Acts 1:8 \(NIV\)](#) “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

### A Parable of a Life Saving Station

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was a once a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves, they went out day or night tirelessly searching for the lost.

Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding areas, wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little life-saving station grew.

Some of the new members of the life-saving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea.

So they replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the life-saving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they re-decorated it beautifully and furnished it as a sort of club.

Less of the members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired life boat crews to do this work.

The mission of life-saving was still given lip-service but most were too busy or lacked the necessary commitment to take part in the life-saving activities personally.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet, and half-drowned people.

They were dirty and sick, and some of them had black skin, and some spoke a strange language, and the beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal life pattern of the club.

But some members insisted that life-saving was their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the life of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life-saving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. They evolved into a club and yet another life-saving station was founded.

If you visit the seacoast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, only now most of the people drown.

- Author unknown