

Why I Am A Member Of The Church Of Christ

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

Why am I a member of the church of Christ? I think this is an appropriate question to ask considering the overwhelming number of churches that have been started over the past 2000 years. Why did I choose to be a part of Christ's church as opposed to one of the others? First, you need to understand what I mean when I claim to be a member of the church of Christ. Then I will explain why I decided to be a member of His church. I will end by showing how I became a member—hopefully if you are not a member, you also will be convinced to come into fellowship with Christ in His church today.

Discussion:

- I. In what am I claiming membership?
 - A. Please understand, when I claim to be a member of the church of Christ, I am not claiming to be a member of some human organization made up of all the local churches who have the name "Church of Christ" on their sign. I am not a member of any such super organization. Additionally, in this lesson, I am not even talking about being a member of a local church of Christ. Though I am a member of the Franklin Church of Christ. In a later lesson, I will explain why I am a member of this congregation. Today, I am talking about a universal body of individuals.
 - B. The word "church" translates the Greek word "ekklesia." It is a compound word from "kaleo," meaning "to call," and "ek" meaning "out." Thus, the word "church" literally means "the called out." The term does not strictly apply to a religious group, but simply denotes a group of people who have been called together. However, I am not claiming to be a member of just any "called out." I am claiming to be a member of the "called out of Christ." When I claim to be a member of the church of Christ, I am claiming to be a member of the universal body of individuals who have been called out and belong to Jesus (**cf. Galatians 3:28-29**).
 - C. Note some passages that describe this church of Christ.
 1. In **Ephesians 1:22-23** and **Colossians 1:18, 24**, we learn that this church is the body of Christ, over which Jesus is the head.
 2. In **I Timothy 3:15**, Paul calls it the house or household of God, which is the pillar and support of God's truth. Paul had earlier spoken of the house of God in **Ephesians 2:19-22**, in which he describes the church as a building that was founded on the apostles and prophets (that is, their revelation from the Holy Spirit) and was being fitted together to be a dwelling place of God in the Holy Spirit.
 - D. As we consider all of this, we must recognize that this is the very body which Jesus promised to establish in **Matthew 16:18**, as He spoke to Peter saying, "... on this rock I will build My church..." Jesus came into this world with the plan to establish and build a church. The New Testament described that church. I wanted to be a member of it and I have become so. Yet, you may still wonder, why I became a member of this church described in scripture.
- II. Why did I become a member of the church of Christ?
 - A. Before I can tell you why, I must give you a little background information about myself. I am a sinner. I have known that for almost 20 years now. If I were to catalog the sins I have committed in my lifetime, I am certain that I would become as loathsome to you as I have been to myself. But, please, let me suffice it to say that I am a sinner and you can certainly believe that because you can read for yourself **Romans 3:23** and **I John 1:8**. As such, I have become separated from God (**Isaiah 59:1-3**) and I have earned the sentence of death (**Ezekiel 18:20**). I am not talking about a physical execution, but an eternal condemnation in the everlasting fire (**Matthew 25:41, 46**). I have become a member of the church of Christ, because I have learned that the answer to my greatest problem—sin—is in Christ's church.
 - B. **Hebrews 12:22-24** speaks of Christ's church. It says that when we come to the general assembly and church, we are coming to Mount Zion (fulfillment of **Isaiah 2:2-4**), the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. This church is made up of the firstborn, which is not a reference to Jesus here, but rather a reference to the status of all the members. That is, members of this church are like a firstborn who has a claim on the inheritance (**cf. I Peter 1:3-5**). These numerous firstborn are registered in heaven (**cf. Philippians 3:20-21**). And this is a

group of people who have been made perfect because they have come to a Mediator of a new covenant whose sprinkled blood speaks better things than that of Able and whose blood has the power to take away sins. This leads us to our next passage.

- C. In **Acts 20:28**, we learn that the church of God has been purchased with Christ's blood. Why is this purchasing or redeeming so important? Note what it says in **Romans 3:23-26**. With redemption through the blood of Christ comes justification. And again in **Ephesians 1:7**, when we are redeemed or purchased by His blood, we have the forgiveness of sins.
- D. Notice also what Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:23-30**. Paul described Jesus as the model of a loving husband. The church is His bride. Jesus sacrificed Himself for His church, becoming its Savior, sanctifying it and cleansing it. He did all this so that the church might be presented to Himself as glorious, without spot or blemish.
- E. Why am I a member of the church of Christ? Because these promises are only for those who become a part of His church. Salvation is only in Christ Jesus and in no other (**Acts 4:12**). Consider **I Corinthians 1:12-13**. No one but Jesus shed His blood for me. Why would I follow after some man in a church of man's design? Men may make up churches and creeds, but I am not a member of a church in order to please men. I am a member of the church because I desperately need what only Jesus can give—redemption, justification, sanctification and forgiveness. That is why I am a member of His church.

III. How did I become a member of this purchased and forgiven body?

- A. I looked to the scripture to see how those in the New Testament became members of Christ's church. In **Acts 2:47**, I learned that I cannot place myself into the assembly of the firstborn. I can only be added by God. He is in charge of the membership roll of His great universal church. I also learned who God adds to this called out body—those who are saved.
- B. In **Romans 10:9-10**, I learned that I must believe and confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that He was raised from the dead. Both of those are things I have done for more than 20 years. But I also learned from **II Corinthians 7:10** that I needed to have the godly sorrow that produces repentance leading to salvation. That is, I must turn from my sins and commit myself to doing right continually. I have been committed for nearly 20 years—though, regrettably, there have been lapses in that commitment, especially during my college years.
- C. But even though I had recognized and done these things while I was younger, having been brought up in a church that did not belong to Christ, I learned suddenly at age 13 that I had not submitted to Christ's gospel, but to man's. I had not been saved and added to His church, but rather had been added to some other church. I had not become a Christian, but had become something else. At that moment, I had to decide if I truly was committed to turning from sin and submitting to Christ's doctrine. I learned that in order to be saved and therefore added to the church, I had to be baptized for the remission of my sins (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12; I Peter 3:21**). And that is exactly what I did, because I wanted to be saved. I wanted to be a part of Christ's church and nothing else.
- D. Certainly, had you asked me when I was 13, I could not have spoken with the clarity and force of so many scriptures as I have today. But even then, if you had asked, I would have told you that I had learned that I was not saved. That I had become something other than a Christian. I was a member in something other than Christ's church. I was still in my sins and I chose to be baptized because I wanted to be a saved Christian only and a member of Christ's church only. I still do not want to be anything other than a disciple of Christ and a member of any church other than the church of Christ.

Conclusion:

Allow me to ask you—are you a member of Christ's church? Are you a member of the called out body that has been purchased by the blood of Christ, sanctified and washed clean of sin in order to be presented to Jesus without spot or blemish? Have you obeyed His gospel? Have you believed that Jesus is the Christ, confessed that faith, repented of your sins and been baptized for the remission of your sins? If you have, then continue steadfastly in the hope of the gospel (**Colossians 1:23**). If not, why not be added to that body today? Why not submit to Christ and have your sins forgiven as well.