

Throughout Scripture, God has always desired a people who belong to Him. While holiness begins with God's own nature and extends to the individual believer, the Bible also teaches that the Church itself is called to be holy. The Church is not merely an organisation, a building or a weekly gathering. The Church is God's holy assembly — a people called out of darkness and set apart for His purposes.

Pastor Melissa reminded us that the New Testament word for Church is *ekklesia*, meaning "the called-out ones." The Church is the community of people who have responded to God's call through Jesus Christ. We do not simply attend church; we are the Church. God has called us out of sin, out of darkness, out of the kingdom of this world and into fellowship with Christ and participation in His Kingdom.

The foundation of the Church's holiness is not human perfection but divine ownership. The biblical concept of holiness means being set apart, consecrated and devoted exclusively to God. Just as the vessels in the Temple were considered holy because they belonged to God, the Church is holy because it belongs to God. The Church exists for God's purposes and glory, not its own.

The Apostle Peter describes the Church as "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession" (1 Peter 2:9).

This reveals the unique identity of God's people. Unlike earthly nations defined by geography, ethnicity, language or culture, the Church is made up of people from every tribe, nation and language who have been united through Christ. Through His blood, Jesus has created one new people belonging to God.

Pastor Melissa highlighted that the Church is both a holy nation and a royal priesthood. As a holy nation, the Church lives under the rule of King Jesus, follows God's Word as its law, embraces the culture of Heaven and carries God's Kingdom into the world. As a royal priesthood, believers are called to minister to God, represent God to people and intercede before God on behalf of others.

Acts 2 shows believers devoted to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, prayer, worship and generosity. They shared their lives together, cared for one another and lived in such a way that God's presence was evident among them.

Pastor Melissa also explained that a holy church is marked by certain visible characteristics. A holy assembly pursues God's presence above programs, values holiness rather than compromise, practises prayer and intercession, honours God's truth above personal opinions and remains connected to the body of Christ. It serves the world while remaining distinct from it.

The Church is called to be in the world but not of the world. Holiness does not mean isolation from society. Rather, it means belonging so completely to God that His life flows through us into the world around us. We are called out of darkness so that we may bring the light of Christ to others.

The message concluded with a powerful reminder that the Church is holy by calling, holy by union with Christ and holy through the ongoing work of sanctification. We do not become holy by trying harder. Instead, we embrace what Christ has already accomplished through His death and resurrection.

As we submit ourselves to Him, the Holy Spirit continues His work of transforming the Church into the holy people God has called us to be.

"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."

— 1 Peter 2:9

Key Takeaways

- The Church is not merely something we attend; believers collectively are the Church.
 - The word *ekklesia* means "the called-out ones."
 - Holiness means being set apart and belonging exclusively to God.
 - The Church is holy because it belongs to God.
 - The Church is a holy nation made up of people from every tribe, language and nation.
 - The Church is a royal priesthood called to minister to God, represent God to people and intercede for others.
 - God's Kingdom transcends earthly political and cultural divisions.
 - A holy assembly pursues God's presence above programs and activities.
 - Truth must govern experience, rather than experience determining truth.
 - Kingdom culture is visible through integrity, holiness, love, purity, compassion and generosity.
 - The Church is called to be distinct from the world while remaining engaged with it.
 - The Church is holy by calling, holy by union with Christ and holy through ongoing sanctification.
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Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you most from the description of the Church as "the called-out ones"? How does this change the way you think about being part of the Church?
2. Peter describes the Church as a "holy nation" and a "royal priesthood." What responsibilities and privileges come with these identities?
3. The message stated that the Church loses power when it becomes people-centred rather than Christ-centred. What are some practical ways we can keep Christ at the centre of our church life?
4. What are some visible signs that a church is functioning as a holy assembly according to the teaching from Acts 2 and 1 Peter 2?
5. How can our home group better reflect the characteristics of a holy assembly?
6. What practical step can you take this week to help build up Christ's Church and live out your calling as part of God's holy nation?