Today, we begin our new series called “I Love My Church.” Over the next few weeks we will unpack what scripture says about what it means to be a part of the universal church. How Ephesians describes us as being “fitted together” and what it looks like to do “life together.”\*

But first, have you ever truly considered the magnitude of just what it means to e a part of this “called out assembly” of God, this plan of God, the Bride of Christ? Listen! The Church owes its origins, its birth, not to man but to God. Great men and women of God have put their lives on the line, forcing persecution, prison, unimaginable situations in order for the church to spread globally, and how the church will one day be called home, and we get to be part of that, the plan of God for His bride!

If that doesn’t make you stand in awe, to view this as something eternally special because of its eternal value, then it’s time to reevaluate.

***To love our church correctly, we must first love the church correctly.***

 There is no greater honor on Earth than to be a part of God’s church ([Ephesians 5:29-30, 32](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5%3A29-32&version=NIV)).

We cannot love Jesus well until we love His bride well. Look with me at Ephesians 2:13 “in Christ.” When we are “in Christ,” all that is true of Him changes what is true of us. Paul uses this phrase “in Christ” or “in Him” over one hundred times. And being “in Him” we share a common vision and mission. And our mission here is to love God and to love people,\*\* connected to the body by being connected to the gospel. One of the beautiful realities of the Christian life is that it is meant to be shared together. And being “in Christ,” love is an expectation.

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**\*See** [**Ephe**sians 4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+4&version=NIV); \*\*”in Christ” being a matter of adoption, not just attendance

We grow in love and understanding of each other because we are growing in our relationship with Christ. Our text in [Acts](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3A41-47&version=NIV) is one of the most beautiful pictures in all of scripture. We covered it recently at Pentecost, but on a series about the church, it must be the springboard. It’s the blueprint for faith in community: in Christ, engaging in life and mission: Verse 47 “and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Think of the intentionality of the love of Christ and the intentionality of the disciples in regard to sharing what was going on. This love, this life together, is not to be kept “in house.” We are to engage people. The redeemed of the Lord will be drawn together. But we cannot keep to ourselves ([Acts 5:32](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+5%3A32&version=NIV)). We are to share the good news and extending the invitation to others to share life together. We are to tell people about Jesus, inviting them to be a part of what He is doing. Without Christ, church is just a gathering. Each of us is to explain to other people why “I love my church”: Because I love my Jesus. We all have a part to play. We will talk more about that later in the series, but it is not only the job of Pastors or staff to share about Jesus.

I realize that this season of Covid-19 has created challenges and changes things, but there is *never* a wrong time to invite people to Jesus or to His church. By doing so, we bring glory to God, regardless of their response. No, because of our redemption, we are compelled to share it with others. Look with me at [Ephesians 2:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A21&version=NKJV). I love the phrase “being fitted together.” Life together is a place where mercy happens. When we grasp that we area all works in progress, grace will do its job. We will be a people learning together, forgiving, encouraging, and inviting others into the family, sharing each others’ burdens and celebrating each others’ victories. God has placed us into a family that He calls The Church. The Church is life together with Christ at the center, with common mission and purpose:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said,

“Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.”

Life together in Christ is a source of joy, strength, and encouragement.

How blessed are we to be a part of life together in Christ? It is a gift of God to be cherished and treasured—part of something sacred, the Heavenly community, something bigger than ourselves. We are part of an eternal plan! When we see The Church from God’s perspective, we cannot treat it as optional. As Paul tells us in [Ephesians 3:8-10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+3%3A8-10&version=NIV), His church provides unfathomable riches. When we see The Church as God does, we know we are married to it not just dating it. It is sacred, life together. Jesus is bigger than Sunday.