

and refuse to hold a grudge, or let your failures determine my value of you. Once again at the heart of the church is a relationship, or should I say a multitude of relationships built on Jesus grace and mercy. Relationships which live out Jesus' grace and mercy and we live secure in his love of us.

I know I can trust Jesus with my life, he's already given his life for me, and I know for certain he isn't going to change his mind. So now I'm free to focus on loving my sisters and brothers in Christ, not because of what's in it for me, or because they're such

wonderful people, but simply because in Jesus that's who I am, and that's what we are as his community.

What's essential; Being loved by God in Jesus, loving him in return by loving each other as if it were Jesus himself. That's what is essential for the church, Jesus community where he chooses to live.

Let us Pray.
Jesus thank you for loving each of us.
Thank you for forgiving each of us, giving your life that we might have life with God as our Heavenly Father.
That we might have life with you as our

loving brother. That right now we have life with God through the Holy Spirit, enjoying that relationship, living it daily. Jesus grow us as your community, that out of your love, mercy and forgiveness we love each other, being prepared to die for each other. Fill us with the Holy Spirit that we die to holding grudges, hurts, resentment, anything that would divide us, and that we might be able to love each other just like you do, to your glory, giving you a good reputation and drawing others to you that they too might come to know of your love for them, and become part of your new community. Amen.



Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553
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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

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WHAT'S ESSENTIAL FOR THE CHURCH?

Ephesians 2:11-22

Paul's letter to the followers of Jesus in Ephesus develops the whole concept of church. What is central to the church? What can't we do without?

I'm sure we could all think of lots of things we could do without and still remain a healthy church. We could do without this building. We could do without our liturgies, hymns and songs. We could do without our constitution. We could do without schools and aged care facilities. We could do without a paid full-time minister. What can't we do without and remain church?

Today I'm reminded of two things that are essential.

Paul writes; "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone... In him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19,20,22).

The first essential that we can't do without is Jesus. Take Jesus out of the picture and

all you have is an empty shell. Take the living, breathing presence of Jesus out of the church and all you have is a social club that meets on a regular basis, which seeks to do community work and care for each other. You no longer have a church.

At the heart of the church is a personal relationship. It is Christ Jesus who determines everything. He's the chief cornerstone – the one who determines the shape of everything else. And the shape of everything revolves around this personal relationship we have with Jesus.



If you don't have a personal relationship with Jesus, you're not in the church. It's like trying to be married because you like the institution of marriage but having no-one to marry. It obviously takes two for a marriage to work. Without Jesus the bride is minus her groom, and that just doesn't work.

and all you're left with is a God who is mysterious and impossible to please, let alone get to know on a personal level. In Jesus, God doesn't keep us at arm's length, but he takes us in his arms as his loved, precious children with whom

1: JESUS

idolatry as a nation, and that is why they had been sent into exile. Their response to this dilemma was to keep the law so perfectly that God couldn't find anything wrong with them. There was only one problem, the Ten Commandments weren't the central indispensable essential.

The foundation of the apostles and prophets is Jesus; Jesus as the Christ. The one sent by God to redeem us from the curse of sin, that we might be forgiven through his sacrifice and have the hope of sharing God's life with him in a loving relationship. That's our foundation upon which we can begin to build our lives.

he is well pleased. What a wonderful foundation we have to build our lives on. We have Jesus, God coming in person to redeem us, that we might have a loving, personal relationship with him. Isn't that fantastic.

The Pharisees knew that they as a nation had acted in disobedience, they had committed

Why can James say; "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." (James 2:10) Because; "he who said, 'You shall not commit adultery', also said, 'You shall not murder'..." (James 2:11) It's not the law I hurt but its my trust in Jesus that is shattered. It is the relationship that is essential. Do I trust

Jesus with my sex life as well as my temper? Jesus isn't into a half-hearted relationship, or a compartmentalised relationship; Jesus you can be involved here, but stay out of this part of my life. No Jesus' great desire and passion is to love you. He wants you; you sharing in all areas of his life, living with him, trusting him wholly.

In Jesus God has come and restored our relationship with him. That's why we are followers of Jesus and not moralists, who think the answer to our world's problems are found in a perfect set of rules. Loved people love, even if they don't know all the laws, and hurt people hurt even if they know all the laws.

So the number one essential for the Church is to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. So now God is our Heavenly Father, and Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to live with us.

This isn't some static

2: JESUS' FOLLOWERS SHARING LIFE

one off thing, but a living, vibrant daily encounter, as I share life with God in this loving relationship.

The second essential for the church is that we are; "built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (Ephesians 2:22). We are built together, we are the body of Christ, we are adopted as God's children, so we are

family. The second essential for the church is the relationship we now have with each other through Jesus.

Paul here stresses that we are one. We don't have Jews and Gentiles, we are one in Christ Jesus. Jesus ends all forms of racism, or favouritism, or elitism, we are all one in Christ Jesus.

So it is just impossible to be part of the church in isolation. Jesus unites us so that we now can build a community that loves each other, just like Jesus loves us.

How has Jesus loved you? He has died for you. That's the sort of love he has come to empower us to live. So I die for you each time I forgive you