

A SHORT FORM OF DEVOTION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. **Amen.**

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,

In the city of our God, the mountain of His holiness.

Walk about Zion, and go all around her; count ye her towers.

Set your heart upon her wall, pass through her palaces, that ye may recount to a generation to follow.

According to Thy name, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth, O God;

Thy right hand is full of righteousness. Mount Zion is glad; the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Thy judgments.

[*Psalm 48:1, 12-13, 10-11*]

Collect for the Church

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, unto Thy Church Thy Holy Spirit and the wisdom which cometh down from above, that Thy Word, as becometh it, may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve Thee and in the confession of Thy name abide to the end; through Jesus Christ... **Amen.**

Lesson

Hymn: The Church's One Foundation

1. The Church's one foundation

Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;

She is His new creation

By water and the Word.

From heaven He came and sought her

To be His holy bride;

With His own blood He bought her,

And for her life He died.

2. Elect from every nation,

Yet one o'er all the earth,

Her charter of salvation

One Lord, one faith, one birth.

One holy name she blesses,

Partakes one holy food,

And to one hope she presses,

With every grace ended.

3. The Church shall never perish!

Her dear Lord, to defend,

To guide, sustain, and cherish,

Is with her to the end.

Though there be those that hate her.

False sons within her pale,

Against both foe and traitor

She ever shall prevail.

4. Though with a scornful wonder

Men see her sore oppressed,

By schisms rent asunder,

By heresies distressed,

Yet saints their watch are keeping;

Their cry goes up, "How long?"

And soon the night of weeping

Shall be the morn of song.

5. Mid toil and tribulation

And tumult of her war

She waits the consummation

Of peace forevermore,

Till with the vision glorious

Her longing eyes are blest

And the great Church victorious

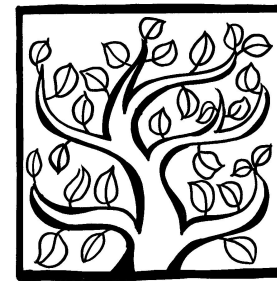
Shall be the Church at rest. Amen.

Closing Prayer

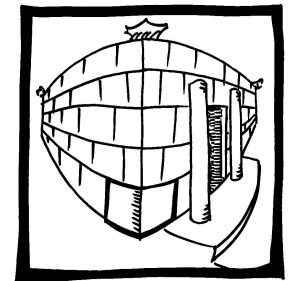
IMAGES OF THE CHURCH



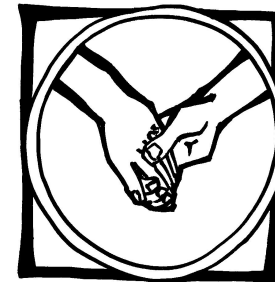
The Good Shepherd and the Sheep



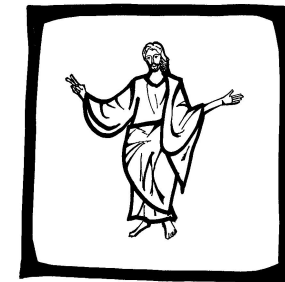
The Vine and the Branches



The Cornerstone and the Temple



The Bridegroom and the Bride



The Head and the Body

Tuesday Morning Bible Study
Hope Lutheran Church
Trinity Season, 2006
Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

Contents

	<i>page</i>
Introduction	2
Christ the Shepherd, We the Sheep	3
Christ the Vine, We the Branches	5
Christ the Cornerstone, We the Temple	7
Christ the Bridegroom, We the Bride	9
Christ the Head, We the Body	11
The Witness of the Confessions	13
A Brief Form of Devotion	15

God, which is the beginning of entering it. For formerly, before we had attained to this, we were altogether of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. 53] Thus, until the last day, the Holy Ghost abides with the holy congregation or Christendom, by means of which He fetches us to Christ and which He employs to teach and preach to us the Word, whereby He works and promotes sanctification, causing it [this community] daily to grow and become strong in the faith and its fruits which He produces

54] We further believe that in this Christian Church we have forgiveness of sin, which is wrought through the holy Sacraments and Absolution, moreover, through all manner of consolatory promises of the entire Gospel. Therefore, whatever is to be preached concerning the Sacraments belongs here, and, in short, the whole Gospel and all the offices of Christianity, which also must be preached and taught without ceasing. For although the grace of God is secured through Christ, and sanctification is wrought by the Holy Ghost through the Word of God in the unity of the Christian Church, yet on account of our flesh which we bear about with us we are never without sin.

55] Everything, therefore, in the Christian Church is ordered to the end that we shall daily obtain there nothing but the forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. Thus, although we have sins, the [grace of the] Holy Ghost does not allow them to injure us, because we are in the Christian Church, where there is nothing but [continuous, uninterrupted] forgiveness of sin, both in that God forgives us, and in that we forgive, bear with, and help each other.

56] But outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no holiness [sanctification]. Therefore all who seek and wish to merit holiness [sanctification], not through the Gospel and forgiveness of sin, but by their works, have expelled and severed themselves [from this Church] 57] Meanwhile, however, while sanctification has begun and is growing daily, we expect that our flesh will be destroyed and buried with all its uncleanness, and will come forth gloriously, and arise to entire and perfect holiness in a new eternal life. 58] For now we are only half pure and holy, so that the Holy Ghost has ever [some reason why] to continue His work in us through the Word, and daily to dispense forgiveness, until we attain to that life where there will be no more forgiveness, but only perfectly pure and holy people, full of godliness and righteousness, removed and free from sin, death, and all evil, in a new, immortal, and glorified body.

59] Behold, all this is to be the office and work of the Holy Ghost, that He begin and daily increase holiness upon earth by means of these two things, the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sin.

The Witness of the Confessions

Augsburg Confession, Article VII: Of the Church

1] Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. 2] And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and 3] the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. 4] As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Ephesians 4:5-6.

Augsburg Confession, Article VIII: What the Church Is.

1] Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: The Scribes and 2] the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, etc. Matthew 23:2. Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men. 3] They condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of none effect.

Smalcald Articles III.XII: Of the Church.

1] We do not concede to them that they are the Church, and [in truth] they are not [the Church]; nor will we listen to those things which, under the name of Church, they enjoin or forbid. 2] For, thank God, [to-day] a child seven years old knows what the Church is, namely, the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd. For the children pray thus: I believe in one holy [catholic or] Christian Church. 3] This holiness does not consist in albs, tonsures, long gowns, and other of their ceremonies devised by them beyond Holy Scripture, but in the Word of God and true faith.

The Large Catechism, The Third Article

47] The Creed denominates the holy Christian Church, *communio sanctorum*, a communion of saints; for both expressions, taken together, are identical..

51] But this is the meaning and substance of this addition: I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Ghost in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with manifold gifts, yet agreeing in love, without sects or schisms. 52] I am also a part and member of the same, a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost by having heard and continuing to hear the Word of

INTRODUCTION

“Thank God, today a seven-year-old child knows what the Church is, namely, the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd. [St John 10:11-16]”

Martin Luther, *Smalcald Articles*

Luther praises God that the knowledge of the Church has reached even to the children. The Church is, very simply, those who believe Jesus' promises of salvation, people called out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation, lambs who hear the call of the Good Shepherd. Lambs alone are not the Church, they must be hearing lambs, lambs whom the Shepherd is calling. This, then, is what creates, builds and sustains the Church: the calling of the Shepherd, the speaking of Jesus.

We will see in our study of five of the images of the Church used in the Scriptures that we are talking as much (if not more) about Jesus as about us, His people. The Church is His Church, and is nothing without Him. Without the Shepherd, the sheep would scatter. Without the vine the branches would wither. Without the Cornerstone, the building would crumble. Without the Bridegroom there is no marriage. Without the Head, the body is simply a corpse. It is as Jesus says, “Apart from Me, you can do nothing.” [St John 15:5] Everything depends on Jesus.

So the Lord's Church draws her life from the life-giving words and gifts of Jesus, especially the promise of the forgiveness of sin for His sake. As we study the Church we will be studying Jesus, and this is right. For it is precisely in the hearing of His words and recognizing His voice that we are brought into His flock, the Church.

The “one, holy, Christian and apostolic church” is an article of faith, not sight. We say “I believe the..Church,” not “I see the Church.” The Scriptures take us beyond our eyes to see what the Lord Jesus sees, that we are holy and one by faith in His promises. We learn about the Lord's Church not by what we see but by what the Lord teaches us in His Word.

May God grant that by studying what He says about His Church in the Scriptures we would rejoice that He has called us to be His Sheep, His Branches, His Temple, His Bride and His Body, that is, His Church. Amen.

Prayer for the Church

Merciful God, we beseech Thee to cast the bright beams of Thy light upon Thy Church that, being instructed by the doctrine of the blessed apostles, she may so walk in the light of Thy truth that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Christ the Good Shepherd, We the Sheep



“I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” [St John 10:11]

Read: *St John 10:1-18; 27-31*

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and we are the “people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.” [Psalm 95:7]

Questions: To whom is Jesus speaking in this passage? “I am the Good Shepherd” is one of the seven “I am” statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John; what does this teach us? What does the Good Shepherd do for the sheep? What does the hireling do? What do the sheep do, and what does this have to do with faith [see *Romans 10:17*]?

Searching the Scriptures

The beautiful image of God as the Shepherd and His people as sheep runs throughout the Scriptures. Consider the following passages:

Psalms 23:1-6 Who is the shepherd and who are the sheep? What, then, is Jesus saying when He claims to be the Good Shepherd? What does the Psalmist say the Shepherd does for His sheep?

Isaiah 40:10-11 Why is there comfort in the strong hands of the shepherd? What does the shepherd do for the sheep?

Ezekiel 34:1-31 Who are the self-serving shepherds of Israel? What will the Lord do to them? Who will take their place as the shepherd? What will the good shepherd do for the sheep?

Jeremiah 23:1-6 Who are the bad shepherds and what do they do wrong? What happens to the sheep when they have bad shepherds? When they have a good shepherd?

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 'Members of Christ' What is the practical application of being a member of Christ's body? What does Paul say we are doing if we commit sexual immorality? Whose temple is our body? What does it mean that we are joined to Christ? Where is the Law in this text? The Gospel?

1 Corinthians 10:14-22 'We are One Bread and One Body' When talking about the Lord's Supper, Paul compares the one bread to the one body. Again the image of the body reflects the unity and diversity of the Church, “we, being many, are one” [10:17]. What does being 'one body' have to do with the Lord's Supper? The bread we break is communion with what? Who is Israel of the flesh? What sacrifices do they partake? What does it mean to partake of the altars of demons? Why can't we do both? What does this mean for our communion practice?

Romans 12:3-8 'Many Members in One Body' The image of the Church as a body provides occasion for St Paul to talk about the unity and the diversity in the Church. What is the unity of the body? What are the different members?

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 'One Body' Like the passage above, the image of the body permits Paul opportunity to talk about the different gifts in the one body [See 12:20,27]. How did we get into the “one body” [12:13]? Who sets the members in the body [12:18]? How does the diversity of gifts serve the unity of the body [12:25]? What does being one body mean for our life together as a Church [12:26]? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

Ephesians 4:1-16 'The Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ' This long text again uses the imagery of the Church as Jesus' body. What is the unity of Spirit [4:3]? What is the bond of peace [4:3]? What are the “one”s Paul mentions in verses 4-6? Verse 13 tells the purpose of the distribution of different gifts, what is this purpose? What is the unity of faith [4:13]? What does it mean to grow up into the Head [4:15]? What causes the growth of the body, and into what does it grow [4:16]?

Conclusion

The image of the the Church as the body of Christ is a beautiful picture of the unity of Jesus and His people. The Lord continues to give His gifts to His Church that we would “grow up into Him,” being perfected in all things. Just as Jesus body suffered and was crucified, so His Church “takes up its cross and follows Him, and just as Jesus is the “firstborn from the dead”, so we have the assurance that in Christ we will enjoy everlasting life with Him.

Christ the Head, We the Body



“He is the head of the body, the Church.” [*Colossians 1:18*]

Read: *Colossians 1:13-29*

The Church, says St Paul, is the body of Christ, and that Christ is the head of the Church. It has been said that *Colossians* is Paul's letter about Christ the Head and *Ephesians* is his letter about His body the Church.

Questions: What (besides the Head) does Paul call Jesus in this text? What is Jesus' relation to God? To creation? To all things? To death? What does this mean for us, His body? How and from what are we delivered and translated [1:13]? How are we reconciled [1:19-21]? What is the result of this reconciliation [1:22-23]? What is the mystery that Paul preaches [1:24-27]? Who does Paul preach [1:28]? How does the imagery of Christ the Head, we the body capture the promise of the forgiveness of sin? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

Searching the Scriptures

The Church, interestingly enough, is never called the body of God in the Old Testament. Why do you think this is the case? This image of the Church as the body of Christ is scattered throughout the New Testament, including some of the passages to follow.

Ephesians 5:23,30 'We Are Members of His Body' The mystery of marriage is that the two become one flesh, one body. So in this text Paul moves between the imagery of marriage and the image of the body. How does the body reflect the unity of bridegroom and bride? What does verse 23 say that Jesus is to the body? What does verse 30 say about the Incarnation [*See Hebrews 2:14,15*]?

Colossians 2:11-23 'Hold Fast to the Head' In the context of this passage, what does it mean to “hold fast to the Head” [*See 2:11-18*]? What gifts come from the Head? How is the body nourished? How does it increase? What are “the commandments and doctrines of men” [2:22]? How is the body “knit together in love” [*Colossians 2:2*]?

St Matthew 7:15-16 How does Jesus use the imagery of sheep to warn about false teaching?

St Luke 15:3-7 What is Jesus teaching in this parable? Who is the shepherd and what does He do for the sheep? Who are the lost sheep? What does this passage teach us about repentance?

1 Peter 2:22-25 St Peter here mixes the imagery of the lamb of slaughter with the shepherd and sheep. Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God who is pleased to die as a sacrifice in our place. By His death He rescues and delivers us from sin, death and the devil. Who, then, are the “sheep going astray”? What happens to these sheep?

St John 21:15-17 The Greek word for “pastor” is the same as the word for “shepherd.” In this passage, Jesus is setting Peter as a pastor over the flock. Whose flock is it? What is Peter to do for the flock? How is this done today?

1 Peter 5:1-4 Peter himself will later reflect on these words of Jesus. Pastors are under-shepherds who serve the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Himself. What are the marks of under-shepherds? What are they to do?

St Matthew 25:31-33 In many of the texts that we have considered the shepherd is tender, but in this passage Jesus pictures the last judgment as the work of a shepherd, dividing the sheep and the goats. Where else have we heard of a shepherd judging? What is this judgment based upon? How do we become sheep?

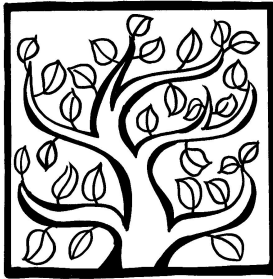
Conclusion

This beautiful picture of the Lord and His Church is woven throughout the Scriptures. In our sinfulness we are like sheep without a shepherd, weary and wandering [*St Matthew 9:36*], and yet the Lord seek us out and finds us, rescues and delivers us; His voice calls us out of darkness and into His glorious light.

The Shepherd speaks of His own great love for us, His laying down His life in our place. This Shepherd is indeed pleased to become a sheep and be sacrificed for us. This is the glorious Gospel. With the image of the Shepherd and the sheep, then, we learn what the Church is: sheep who are hearing the word of their Shepherd's death for them.

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” [*Hebrews 13:20-21*]

Christ the Vine, We the Branches



“I am the vine; you are the branches.” [*St John 15:5*]

Read: *St John 15:1-11*

Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches, His branches.

Questions: What happens if the branch is separated from the vine? How does the branch get connected to the vine? How does the branch remain connected to the vine? What happens if we do remain connected to the vine? What is the source of the vine's life? Who is the husbandman? What does He do? What, then, does He expect of the branches? What fruit do we bear? Who gets the credit for this fruit? Where is the law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

Searching the Scriptures

Like the image of the Shepherd and the sheep, the image of the vine and the vineyard is a common one throughout the Scriptures. Consider the following passages:

Psalm 80 This Psalm begins with the imagery of the Shepherd and the Sheep [1-7], and finishes with the image of the Vine. [8-19] How are these two images related to each other? The entire Psalm is about repentance; who is doing the turning? What has happened to the Lord's vine? What is the Psalmist crying out for God to do?

Isaiah 5:1-7 'The Song of the Vineyard' This beautiful hymn talks of the Lord and His vineyard. In the text who is the Owner and Husbandman of the vineyard? Who is the vineyard? What does the Owner do for the vineyard? What is the expected result? What is the actual result? How do we answer the questions in verse 4? When there is no fruit, how does the Owner respond? Is this response right? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

Jeremiah 16 Another Picture of the Church's Sin and God's Mercy In Jeremiah 16 the Lord again provides a picture of the Church's idolatry and His faithfulness. To what is Israel compared? What does the Lord do? What does Israel do? To what is this passage comparing adultery? How does the Lord react to such sin? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

2 Corinthians 11:1-4 'Betrothed to One Husband' St Paul in this text urges the Church to remain faithful to her one husband, Christ. What is “godly jealousy”? What does it have to do with marriage? With the Church? How is the Church described [11:2]? What destroys the chastity of the Church [11:3]? How did the serpent deceive Eve? Compare the *one* of verse two to the *another* and *different* in verse four. What does this teach about the devotion of the Church to Christ? What is “the simplicity that is in Christ”? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

Ephesians 5:22-33 'This is a Great Mystery: Christ and the Church' In this passage St Paul talks about husbands and wives and Christ and the Church. How does the wife act toward her husband? How does the Church act toward her Jesus? How does the husband act toward his bride? How does Jesus act toward His Church? How does Jesus sanctify and cleanse His bride [5:26]? Paul quotes Genesis 2:24, “The two shall become one flesh.” What does this teach us about marriage? About the Church? Where is the Law in this text? The Gospel?

Conclusion

The Scriptures picture Jesus as the perfect and faithful husband and the church as the cheating bride. But this sinful bride is always welcomed back into the love of her Groom. They are one flesh, and no one shall separate them.

Jesus has made us His perfect and pure bride by “the washing of the water by the word” [*Ephesians 5:26*], that is, by our baptism. Just like a husband gives his name to his bride, so Jesus, in our baptism, has give us His name. (“I now present to you, Mr. and Mrs. Jesus!”) We are bound to Him, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone, because He has graciously bound Himself to us for our salvation.

“As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” [*Isaiah 62:5*] There is great wonder and great joy that the Lord has made us to be His bride, and that rejoices over us and all the gifts that He gives. This is what the image of the Bridegroom and the bride teaches us, that in spite of our sin, the Lord Jesus takes us as His own, washes us and keeps us until He returns, and we will join Him in the great wedding feast of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Christ the Bridegroom, We the Bride



“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.” [Revelation 19:7]

Read: Revelation 19:5-9

Jesus is the Bridegroom and the Church is His bride. In the final chapters of St John's Revelation of Jesus he twice sees the wedding feast of the Lamb. This is a beautiful picture of the last day when to Lord Jesus returns to bring us home to Himself.

Questions: Who is the Lamb? [See Revelation 5:1-7] Who is His wife? How has she made herself ready? What kind of celebration is a marriage feast? What does this image teach us about the Lord's Church?

Search the Scriptures

Revelation 21:9-11 'The Lamb's Bride' This text speaks of the Church both as the temple (as in our last study) and as the bride. What do the images of the temple and the bride have to do with one another [See Revelation 21:3]? Who's bride is the Church? Why is Jesus pictured as a Lamb [See Revelation 5:5-10; St John 1:29; Isaiah 53:4-6]? What are the marks of this bride? Why does the Church shine like jasper and clear crystal [See Revelation 4:1-6]?

St Matthew 19:1-6, Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 'What God has Joined Together' Marriage is a “joining together.” Who does the joining? What is marriage? When and where was marriage instituted? What does the creation of God have to do with it? How does divorce fit into this picture?

Hosea 1:1-2:23 'Adultery and Idolatry' In the Scriptures adultery and idolatry are always related. God calls Hosea the prophet to take a prostitute as his wife. Her unfaithfulness is a picture of Israel's idolatry, but Hosea's patience and forgiveness is a picture of God's mercy. What does the wife do in this text? What does the husband do? Read again Hosea 2:14-23. What does this tell us about how Jesus cares for His church? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

St Matthew 21:33-46 'The Parable of the Vine Dressers' Jesus takes up the imagery of Isaiah 5 as He tells the parable of the wicked vine dressers to the Pharisees. With this parable He contrasts God's faithfulness and the Pharisee's unfaithfulness. What are the similarities of Isaiah 5:1-7 and St Matthew 21:33-46? What are the differences? Who are the vine dressers? Who are the servants? Who is the son and what did they do to them?

Jesus is constantly pointing out the ugly things that happened to all the prophets sent by God. See Matthew 5:11,12 and 23:37-39. Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23 to explain this parable and the actions of the religious rulers. This is one of the most quoted Old Testament texts [See the next chapter, *Christ the Cornerstone, We the Temple*]. How does this text help explain the parable? Who is the stone? Who are the builders?

In Jesus' conclusion He calls the vineyard the “kingdom of God.” What is the kingdom of God? Read through a few of the “kingdom parables” in Matthew 13 to help with the answer. From whom is the kingdom taken, and to whom is it given? Where is the law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

Romans 11:15-28 'Grafted onto the Olive Tree' In this text St Paul is using the imagery of the olive tree to show what has happened to Israel and the Gentiles. There is one tree in the Lord's garden, the cultivated olive tree. Some branches are broken off and others are grafted on. Why are some branches broken off? Why are some grafted on? What does this have to do with being in the Lord's Church? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

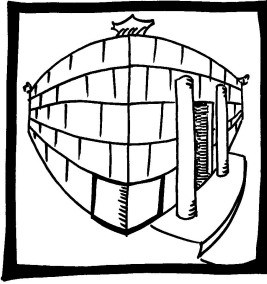
Conclusion

The image of the vineyard in the Scriptures always contains both law and Gospel, the Lord's judgment and the Lord's gifts. Everything that the Lord does is to promote and protect His branches; His vineyard is a picture of His generosity. Every good gift comes from Him, the Owner of the vineyard who holds nothing back. In fact, He is the only one who gives gifts and causes growth; apart from Him we can do nothing.

The branches that are disconnected from the vine, that are apart from Him, do come to nothing, they are cast out and burned, destroyed in God's judgment. The kingdom is taken from those who do not bear fruit. But still the promise remains, “He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit.” [St John 15:5]

We learn for the image of the vine and branches that being a part of the Church means abiding in Christ. We are connected to Him through Holy Baptism and remain in His by continuing to hear His word and believe it, and by being nourished by the forgiveness of sins fed to us in the Lord's Supper. In this way we remain in Him and Him in us, and we bear the fruit of faith and love and live everlasting to the glory of God the Father.

Christ the Cornerstone, We the Temple



“[We] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” [*Ephesians 2:20*]

Read: *Ephesians 2:19-22*

Jesus is the Cornerstone, and we are being built upon Him as a habitation for His Holy Spirit.

Questions: What is a cornerstone? Why is it so important? What does it mean that Jesus is our cornerstone? What is the temple; whose house is it? Who/what is the foundation of the Church? Why is a foundation important [*See St Matthew 7:24-29*]?

Searching the Scriptures

The Temple in the Old Testament

The Tabernacle. After the Lord rescued the people from their bondage in Egypt He called Moses to the top of Mt Sinai. Moses there saw the heavenly temple, and was given instructions concerning the earthly tabernacle [*See Exodus 25:40*]. The earthly tabernacle is a copy or shadow of heavenly reality [*See Hebrews 8:4,5*]. What insight does this give us into the construction of the temple?

The tabernacle is the only place the Israelites were authorized to worship the Lord; it is the place where the Lord put His Name [*See Deuteronomy 12:1-14, also Exodus 20:24*]. What is going on at the temple? [*See Hebrews 10:11*] Of what of what do the services consist? What does the Lord's name have to do with Divine Service? Why did the Lord institute the temple?

Consider Exodus 40:34-38. Whose dwelling place is the temple?

The Temple. King David has a desire to build the temple for the Lord [*See 2 Samuel 7:1-17*]. How does the Lord respond? What does the Lord promise?

King Solomon builds a temple in Jerusalem [*See 1 Kings 5-8, 2 Chronicles 2-7, esp. 5:11-6:2*] as a dwelling place for the Lord. How do we reconcile 2 Chronicles 6:18 with 6:41,42?

Hebrews 9:1-28 'The Earthly and the Heavenly Sanctuary' In Hebrews 9 the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries are compared and contrasted. What is the heavenly tabernacle? Who serves in it? How does He serve? How is this different from the earthly sanctuary? Where is the Law in the text? Where is the Gospel?

1 Peter 2:1-10 'Living Stones' Verse 2 of this text is the traditional Introit for the first Sunday after Easter. How does Peter describe the Lord's people? What are we being built into? For what purpose? Peter contrasts being chosen [2:4,6,9] with being rejected [2:7]. Who is chosen? Who is rejected? In 2:9 Peter expands the image of the temple with more images. What are they and how do they help us understand the Church? Compare 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Deuteronomy 7:6-8. What are the similarities in the text? What does this teach us about the Church? Where is the Law in the Text? Where is the Gospel?

Psalm 118:22-24 'The Stone which the Builders Rejected' This verse is quoted all over the place in the New Testament: 1 Peter 2:7 (see above), St Matthew 21:42 [*also St Mark 12:10-11 and St Luke 20:17*], Acts 4:9-12. Who is the rejected stone? Who are the builders? How is he rejected? What comes of His rejection? Where is the Law in the text? Where is the Gospel?

St Matthew 16:13-20 'The Confession of St Peter' How does Jesus speak of building His Church? Upon what is it built? What tools are the disciples given? Whose Church is it? What promise does Jesus give concerning His Church? Where is the Law in the text? Where is the Gospel?

St John 2:18-22 'Tear down this temple.' The temple built by Solomon was pulled down by the Babylonians in 586 BC. A new temple was built under the supervision of Ezra. This temple was mostly restored by Herod. This is the temple in Jerusalem during Jesus' life. (This temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD.) Of what temple is Jesus speaking? How is it torn down? How is it built back up? When did the disciples understand this? What does this teach us about the Church? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

1 Timothy 3:15,16 How is the Church described in this passage? Whose house is it? What is the truth, and what does it have to do with the Church? Where is the Law in this text? Where is the Gospel?

Conclusion

God describes His tabernacle and temple as the place where He causes His name to dwell. The Lord's Name is His Word, so His Church is the place where the Lord's Name dwells, where His Word is preached in its truth and purity.