

4. What might be some of the unintended consequences of neglecting fellowship with other Christians?

5. What do you think are some additional causes of the disconnection from the church of so many Christians (besides the ones listed in the sermon)?

6. How can you help build a church community that helps others and you recapture the wonder that is the church?

**Recapturing the Wonder that is the Church
(A BLESS Series)**

“The Wonder of Belonging”

1 Peter 2:9-10

No one becomes a Christian apart from the _____, but many (if not most) walk away from their faith because of their disappointment with the church.

To be the church God called us to be, believers need to recapture the wonder of what the church is and what the church _____ be. When we do...

- We stop _____.
- We live in awe and gratefulness, and lean even more into God’s _____.
- We can _____ what God has called us to be.

What does the Bible say about the church that should capture our wonder?

- 1 Peter 2: ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
- 1 Timothy 3: ¹⁵ ...God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.
- Acts 20: ²⁵ ...the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

As grand as the descriptions are of the church in the New Testament, it doesn’t hide the deep flaws and failures of the flesh and blood _____.

4 Realizations that Recapture the Wonder (Part 1)

1. We get to belong to _____ church.
1 Peter 2:9-10

There is an _____ connection between becoming a Christian and belonging to the church.

“Just as we are born into a family, we are born again into the family of God. And just as being part of an earthly family involves a matrix of relationships and obligations, being part of God’s family means we do not enter the Christian life, nor do we grow as Christians, without being encumbered in some way.” (Trevin Wax)

“This is a ragtag family made up of all kinds of people with all kinds of pasts and all kinds of circumstances. When we see the church as a whole, it looks like a patchwork quilt, with different shapes, patterns, colors, and designs all sewn together by the threads of faith and the King’s steady hand.” (J. Ryan Lister, Emblems of the Infinite King)

What are some of the causes of the disconnection from the church for so many Christians?

- Experiences of _____ or extreme dysfunction
- Social _____
- An individualistic and/or _____ spirit

Funny thing happens when we carefully _____ our Christian attachments –we end up surrounded by people just like us. The old or infirm, the person from a different political party, people of different ethnicities and races, and so many others are almost always automatically underrepresented or excluded.

- Idealism and/or _____

“Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than they love the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30)

“And above all else, keep him from thinking, ‘If I, being what I am, can consider that I am in some sense of Christian, why should the disappointing nature of these other Christians surprise me, and why should their failures prove that their religion is mere hypocrisy.’” (C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters)

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week’s sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read 1 Peter 1:9-10. How is the wonder that is the church described in these verses? (Consider the meaning of the descriptions of who we are.)
3. How has disappointment with or hurt inflicted by Christians or a church impacted your experience of the wonder that is the church?