

CHERISHING THE CHURCH

The church is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the Head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). *“He is the Savior of the body”* (5:23). The body of Christ is composed of many members – individual Christians, but they are one body in Christ (I Corinthians 12:27).

Jesus gave Himself for the church, purchasing it with His own blood (Acts 20:28), because He loved the church. *“When we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:6, 8). Jesus redeems us from lawlessness and purifies for Himself His own special people (Titus 2:14), a people *“who were once not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy”* (I Peter 2:10).

Jesus gave Himself for the church in order *“that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church”* (Ephesians 5:26-27). Obviously, the church is important to the Lord. Its members have been redeemed from their sins by His precious blood, and He has set the church apart that she should be holy and without blemish in this world.

Jesus cherishes the church (Ephesians 5:29). A man does not hate his own flesh but cares for his body. The church is Christ’s body, and He treasures it because she is precious to Him. He feeds and strengthens the church through the inspired word of God. He constantly watches over her.

When we consider the special relationship between Christ and the church, we ought to be filled with praise and thanksgiving. A Christian is a blessed member of the blood-bought church of Christ. As members of Christ’s body, we should likewise cherish her as the Lord does. If we cherish the church, then we, too, will nourish and take care of the church. Love for the body of Christ will motivate us to work at building up the church in love (Ephesians 4:16). If we are truly putting on the mind of Christ, will we not cherish those things which our Lord and Savior cherishes?