**The Church, The Church & The Church**

**Reading – Romans 16:1-16**

From the Greek word **ekklesia**, it means "an assembly"

Which is used most frequently in the New Testament in two senses:

1. The church "universal" - that company of souls redeemed by the blood of Christ

2. The church "local" - Christians in a geographical area that work and worship together as a congregation of God's people.

Other terms which enhance our view of the "church"

1) The "body" of Christ 2) The "household" of God

3) The "temple" of God 4) The "kingdom" of Christ

5) The "bride" of Christ

**THE CHURCH "UNIVERSAL"**

Composed of all Christians... Not Denominations [Matthew 16:18]

There is only "one" church... the "body" of Christ – **Ephesians 1:22-23**

Began on the day of Pentecost... Acts 2:1-47

People cannot "join" the church by their own volition. Rather, they are "added" by the Lord Himself when saved Acts 2:41,47

Enrollment is in heaven; only the Lord knows those who are truly His – Hebrews 12:23; 2 Timothy 2:19

Has no "earthly" organization...is spiritual in nature. Christ is the cornerstone, together with His apostles and prophets as the foundation, and all Christians as "living stones"

There is no earthly headquarters for the church; e.g., no telephone numbers to call to speak with the "head" of the church (for He is in heaven!)

**THE CHURCH "LOCAL"**

A local church is made up of Christians in one geographical area ***(Acts 9:26-28) And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. {27} But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. {28} So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.***

***(3 John 1:5-9) Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, {6} …If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, {7} because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. {8} We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth. {9} I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.***

Consists of both saved and lost... ***(Revelation 3:1-4) "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. {2} "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. {3} "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. {4} "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.***

Has "earthly" organization...has bishops and deacons – Philippians 1:1

Local churches can easily be divided over doctrine or personalities. ***1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3,4.***  We can't divide the universal church.

**Illustrate The Difference:** consider this table...

**The Church "Universal" The Church "Local"**

Composed of all Christians Christians in one location

There is just "one" There are "many"

Began on the "Day of Pentecost" Begins when people join together

Enter only by being added by the Lord Enter by "joining ourselves"

The Lord keeps the books of membership Enrolled by human judgment

Consists of all the saved Consists of both saved and lost

Must be in this to be saved Do not have to be in this

Has no "earthly" organization Has an "earthly" organization

Can't be divided Can be divided

Death doesn't affect membership Death does affect membership