

“The Church”

Matthew 16:13-19

What is the church? The church is the bride of Christ, the apple of God’s eye. It is an invisible institution that exceeds time, crosses over into eternity, and exceeds the borders of four walls. The church is not relegated to a building but it is a body of blood washed believers in Jesus Christ. *Ephesians 5:23-26, Revelations 21:2*

There are also several kinds of churches:

The Church of Ichabod-This is the church where the Spirit of the Lord has departed. This church has strayed so far away from God until he has no desire to be a part of this local assembly. As a matter of fact, he refuses to go inside and be in their midst. In other word’s God says I will let you keep the pews, the building, the sign, and the Bibles but I’ll leave.

1 Samuel 4:21

The Church without Love-this is the church that has become distracted by several other things and have forgotten to keep the main thing the main thing. This is the church that functions but the love of God is not evident in what they are doing. They are doing all the right things for the wrong reasons. *Revelations 2:1-7*

The Lukewarm Church-This is the confused church that has compromised with the world and makes God vomit. If they were warm then they could soothe those who were in pain. If they were cold then they could provide healing to those who were broken. But because they are lukewarm they serve no purpose at all. However, this is the also the church that believes that they are in good standing with God although they are drastically missing the mark.

Revelations 3:14-21

In verses *13& 14* Jesus asks his disciples two questions. The first question is “who do men say that I the Son of man am?” The second question Jesus asks “who do you say that I am?” Although several disciples could answer the first question only Simon Peter was able to answer the second question. In Simon Peter answering this question he informs us as to what it takes to be a part of the body of Christ and also who reveals to us the identity of Christ.

To be a part of the church you must:

- 1) Accept Christ- *Romans 10:9*
- 2) Believe in Christ-*Acts 16:31*
- 3) Confess Christ-*Luke 9:26*

Although we accept, believe, and confess Christ it takes the Holy Spirit/Father to give us revelation about who Jesus Christ really is.

Verse 18: It’s in verse 18 that we see Simon’s identity change is noticed by the changing of his **Name** which was symbolic of his change in **Nature**. Simon Barjona means “the fluttering son of a dove” but Peter means “rock”. Whenever we come into a genuine relationship with God our Name is changed in heaven but also our personal Nature changes as well.

Jesus then informs Peter that it is upon this rock that he is going to be build his church. The rock is represents the believer’s faith in God and also Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the ultimate foundation on which the church stands on.

- 1) **The Church is God’s Property**-The church belongs to God and it is also his responsibility to take care of it.
- 2) **The Church has a Purpose**-The purpose of the church is to war with Satan in the earth realm and to ultimately give God glory. When we fail to oppose the things that are not of God and give God glory we cease to fulfill the purpose of the church.
- 3) **The Church will Prevail**-Because of our relationship with Christ and because we are purchased by Christ and belong to Christ we will win and overcome Satan, sin, death, and the grave.

Verse 19: There are also some benefits in being apart of the church but we also have a responsibility.

- 1) **The Believer receives God’s Protection**-God promises us an expected victory as well as an expected end for the enemy. He promises that there will be an attack by Satan on the church but he will not prevail because we are protected.
- 2) **The Believer receives Power from God**-God promises to give unto the one who believes and accepts him the keys to the kingdom. Keys denotes power, access, and authority. The power that Christ speaks of in this text is “Exousia” power which is authoritative power.
- 3) **The Believer has to execute God’s Plan**-God gives the believer authoritative power so that he/she can establish order within the body of Christ. The order that is to be established is a binding agreement that God says he will also approve of it in heaven.

Luke 10:17-18, Revelations 12:7-12

Peter also showed the authority he had with the keys to the kingdom that Christ gave him by letting individuals in the kingdom as well as locking them out. On the Day of Pentecost he opened up the door to allow 3,000 souls to come into the kingdom. But he also used this same power to open up the door to remove Annias and Sapphira from the church when they lied to the Holy Ghost. ***Acts 2:41, Acts 5:1-10***

Lessons Learned to Live By
