

# The Church of Jesus Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Alright, take your Bibles if you would and open them to Matthew chapter 16 and verse 18.

That location in the Bible has always been very special to me. Matthew chapter 16 and verse 18. I can honestly say to you that I am a church man.

I love the church. I can tell you that it is one of the most misunderstood words in English, of English vocabulary. And so over the next few times that I can speak to you on Sunday morning, we're going to talk about the church.

We're going to talk just a little bit about all of it. Kind of do a little study of the doctrine of the church. It's interesting. Most of the time we don't understand this, but in Spanish, if you go to a town, they will say there are many temples in this town.

And temples are where Catholic churches meet. So they have temples for them. And when you say the word church in Spanish, you're really talking about the Catholic church, the universal church is what they would call themselves.

[ 1 : 05 ] And so they understand that term. But over the next 30 minutes or so, I hope you'll get a little bit of an understanding about how the word church is used in your Bible.

I hope you will love the church. I'm not talking about vision here. Though when I use that word, I am talking about vision. Because the church in the Bible is a local assembly.

Obviously, the word's used in more ways. But of the majority of times it's ever used in the Bible, it is a local assembly. But that's for another day. Look at Matthew 16, 18 one more time with me.

And we'll read this. It says, Father, I pray now that you would help your people to grow in their knowledge of your word and help us to mature.

Help us to understand exactly where we are this morning, exactly what we're doing. And bring great honor and great glory to yourself. And we'll give you praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[ 2 : 06 ] First thing I'd like you to mark down somewhere, if you're doing it, is what is the church? What is the church? The Bible says in 1 Timothy 3, verse 15, a good place for you to consider.

Maybe mark a note in the margin of your Bible right here. 1 Timothy 3, verse 15. The Bible says, If I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave in the house of God.

So you're going to learn that. There's a good definition. It's the house of God. We're talking about here in the meeting house where we are, the people of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

And so you have there the house of God, the church, the pillar and the ground of the truth. I hope you'll mark that down and look at it. So let's start off with this.

What a church is not. What the church is not. The church is not a building, an institution, or an association. When you use the word in the Bible, the word church, you're not talking about a building.

[ 3 : 09 ] You're not talking about an institution or an association. The church has a building where it meets. Some people would come in here and they'd say, well, y'all have a very unusual church.

Well, the truth is, if we have a very unusual church, it's because I'm looking at you and you're unusual. In the Bible, church doesn't have buildings. The fact is, in all the New Testament, there are no church buildings mentioned.

We have absolutely no idea where they meet. In a warehouse, where'd they meet? In somebody's home, where'd they meet? Under a tree, where'd they meet? Well, they didn't have places. So when you use the word church, you're not talking about a meeting place.

When I was a boy, my dad would always say, he'd say, somebody would say, how do you get there? And daddy would say, well, go up to the Baptist meeting house and take a right. When you get out of the Catholic meeting house, take a left.

When you get over to the Methodist, take another right. In other words, my daddy always called it the meeting house because that's what it is. This is where we meet. Somebody said to my wife this morning, as the ladies were forming their normal long line in the bathroom.

[ 4 : 11 ] And somebody said, how many stalls are we going to have in the new church building? And Betty said, a bunch. At least that's her dream. Amen. All the ladies of this church.

But this isn't the church. This just happens to be where we meet. Amen. You come by my house and you look at that. I hope you never look at my house and say, well, there's the gardeners. If we're not home, we're not there.

It's just where we live. We say that we've lived in a whole lot of places. The fact is, we have lived at the house we have right now here in Cumming Longer than we've ever lived anywhere in 41 years of marriage.

This is our longest stay in any one house. We've stayed for a long time, but we've changed houses every year or two. So the church is not a building. It's not an institution. It's not an association.

The church is not something nebulous, ethereal, that we do not understand. We can find out what it is in the Bible. But it's not something like, oh, I just don't understand what the church is.

[ 5 : 05 ] I'm going to help you understand that. It's not a social gathering. The church is not a social gathering. The church is not a pep rally. The church is not a getting together for a motivational speech.

Not in the Bible. It's not a concert for people that like Christian music. It's not a meeting of 12-step addictions program that meets at the church. And it's not a bunch of old people hanging on to rituals and traditions.

That's not what a church is. You might say, well, I've been to plenty of churches. That's what was going on. Well, that might be what's going on, but it's not what a church is. It might be what they call a church, but it's not what a church is.

A church is not a political gathering. It's not a political gathering. The church of Jesus Christ has no desire to preach what's popular and avoid the controversial. We're not trying to grow our church by having political speakers in either.

That's not what a church does. The church of Jesus Christ is not trying to get votes or trend on social media. Fact is, the church is not really about improving the moral climate of the country and the world.

[ 6 : 09 ] So I'll just say to you, most people just flat don't understand what a church is. They don't understand what a church is. The church is not a gathering of unbelievers. How about that? The church is not a gathering of unbelievers.

The church will not dumb down its message, its music, and everything to get people to come. The church is not trying to be like the culture so they'll come. The church is preaching a different culture, which is the one the Bible teaches.

By the way, the church is not an evangelistic meeting. The church is not an evangelistic meeting. The church is not in the entertainment business. The church is not trying to get members or people to like them.

The true church is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. So what is the church? That's a whole bunch of what it is not. Just let me say real quickly, most people have no concept of what the church is because of what you see.

So you may drive by one church and they got some Republican speaker coming and you're like, well, that's what the church is. Or you may drive by another one and they're full of Democrats. That's just not what the church is. You may go by another one and it's all about attracting people and having wild music to get them to come or having great speakers or great motivation.

[ 7 : 22 ] You may have a guy standing up and telling everybody to have the best life ever. You can have anything going on you want, but that's not what the Bible says a church is. So what does the Bible say a church is?

Read with me again, 1 Timothy 3, verse 15. But if I tarry long, if I take a while to get there, I'm sending this letter to you so you will know how to act, how to behave in the house of God.

Tim, I'm writing you this letter, buddy, because I may not make it there as quick as I'd like to. I need to sit down with you and help you know how to do the ministry, how to act in the house of God, which is the church, the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth.

So he's writing a letter to Timothy and he said, Timothy, I may not make it as quick as I thought. Read the verse. If I tarry long, I may not be able to get there. I was hoping to get there by January, but maybe I won't make it until April.

And I know you need to know how to act in the church, the house of God. I know you need how to act in that. And so I'm going to send you this letter, which is going to be an explanation of how you do it.

[ 8 : 21 ] So I'm kind of sending you a manual. So what is the church? What is the church? The church is an assembly, a congregation, a group of called out ones.

You should write down church equals assembly. You should write that down. The basic word is assembly. The basic word is assembly. You're called away from your home to get assembled somewhere.

So the word in the Bible for church, the Greek word where the Bible word church comes from, an understanding of what that word means is this. It's an assembly. It is an assembly.

You need to write that down. It is an assembly. It's a called out assembly, meaning that you come into the community and say, hey, everybody, come on down to the assembly meeting. In Peru, we constantly had assemblies.

And what happened is a community of people would go out into a piece of property that they did not own, and they would steal the property. You might own your land today, and you've got this piece of land sitting there.

[ 9 : 21 ] But your title is kind of nebulous because the government is not really good at it. It's kind of like the old West days. Because if you're in certain areas, you could get a real good title. If you're in other areas, you won't. And we had a piece of property like this that got stolen.

You wake up one day, and you just look out there, and last night everything was fine. This morning you wake up, and there's 400 families living on your property. During the night, they've come in. They dropped rocks around, marked off the place, and they've set it up.

And then from then on, they will have assemblies. In fact, it's on the way into the property, there will be a big sign painted like a blackboard. And on the sign, it will say, the assembly is every Sunday at 10 a.m.

And if you don't come to the assembly, you get charged. Because the assembly is when they call out everybody who lives there, and they all have to work. They all have to do a job. It's an assembly. That's exactly what this word is.

It's an assembly. If you are part of the group, you have to assemble. That's what the word church means. It is an assembly. It's an assembly for people that God has called out.

[ 10 : 19 ] We're here today because he saved us. If he saved, you say amen. We're here today, and the church is a group of people that God called out of the world. God has saved out of the world.

And this is a gathering of those who have been saved by the grace of God. The church is a group of believers that are obediently seeking to follow Christ.

That's what a church is. A church is a group of believers that are obediently seeking to follow Christ. The church is a group of people that realize that their former life, their way of thinking, was a selfish response.

They are now born again, and they're living out God's will for their life. And they form a church. The church is people. The church is people.

The church is people. The church is a group of baptized believers that have organized themselves to follow Jesus Christ, to obey God, and to carry out the Great Commission.

[ 11 : 16 ] You ought to write that down somewhere. That's what the church is in biblical terms. The church is a group of baptized believers. You say, what does that mean? They've identified themselves. They didn't just show up.

You see, there's a difference in a crowd and a congregation and a church. You could have a crowd, and a crowd could be a mixed multitude. That's kind of a Bible word from the Old Testament, as we studied through the Bible.

And the mixed multitude would be those that are saved and those that aren't saved, and those that love God and those that don't love God. But they're all together there, and they're all listed. So we could put on a show here. We could do something. They'd get a whole bunch of people that would come, and they wouldn't really be a part.

They'd just be a crowd. You could have a congregation where people congregate and not everybody be there. But the church is a group of people that say, no, sir, I have decided to follow Jesus.

I have trusted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and I have marked myself with the way he wanted me to be marked to say I was his, which is baptism. See, the Bible says in Matthew 28, 19 and 20, the Bible said that we are to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

[ 12 : 22 ] Go find some people. Teach them how to be saved. When you find someone who gets saved, baptize them. Baptize them, because it's the way they stand up and say, I have decided. You're not living together.

You're getting married. You're making a decision. I'm in. Amen? There are couples that live together. You know, I met Betty pushing 42 years ago. I did meet her 42 years ago, and I liked her.

I loved her. I thought she was the most beautiful thing in the world. But we were not a family until we made a decision. And we made that decision, and we went downtown, and it cost \$7 for our marriage license.

She paid \$4, and I paid \$3. She has a higher interest in our marriage than I do. You say, why? Because I was poor, man. Good night. Let the woman take care of it. Amen. But we got married, and then we went to the church on August the 18th, 1973, and in front of everybody, we said publicly what we had said in our hearts.

We have decided to love each other and to be married. And what happened when I got saved on May the 6th, 1962, I said, I love Jesus, and I want to follow Him. And on May the 13th, I sat up in front of everybody in my church and said, I meant it enough to get baptized.

[ 13 : 31 ] I'm in. I'm in. I'm in. I want to be in, and I'm in. So the church is a group of baptized believers, baptized believers that have organized themselves to follow Jesus Christ.

That's what we've done here. Vision Baptist Church is different. We realize fully well that we are organized to say, together, we can do a whole lot more than we can apart.

And so a whole bunch of us people have come together. We have formed a church, and we give money together, and we support missionaries together, and we disciple people together. And we teach Sunday school together, and we work with families together.

We are a group of baptized believers that have organized ourselves to follow Jesus Christ, to obey God, and to carry out the Great Commission. The church is a strange group.

Just so you know, they're weirdos. You're part of the church. You're one of the weirdos. Here's what the Bible says. 1 Peter 2, verse 11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, I ask you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

[ 14 : 39 ] We are not like everybody else. We kind of don't fit in. We reject the world system. We reject doing it your own way. We reject what everybody else says, and we follow Jesus.

And that's what our decision was. We would follow Jesus. We would obey Him. It affects the way we spend our money. It affects the way we love our wives. It affects everything because we have committed to the Lord Jesus to be His followers.

Now, here's some cute sayings that might confuse you about what the church is. How about this? Hang on. One is, let's go be the church. And really a dumb saying. I hear it all the time.

But people say, let's just go be the church. Well, you can't go be an assembly without assembling. What if I said to y'all this morning, guys, we're not going to assemble next week. Let's just go assemble.

You'd be like, Austin, do you understand English? If we're going to assemble, we're going to have to assemble. And so you can go and act like people that go to church ought to act. You can follow what you've been being taught and trained in a church.

[ 15 : 43 ] But when we're a church, we are together. We are together. That's the word. That's the idea that we would assemble together. It's pretty hard to leave the assembly and call yourself an assembly and be honest.

You can go and do what you're learning in the assembly. We can come together and learn the Word of God. But we leave to practice the Word of God. Church is really about our obedience to go out as a group and as individuals in a lost and dying world with the truth.

So we assemble to learn. We come together. We learn truth. We come together. We learn the Bible. We learn what the Word of God says. And we leave and we go into our homes. And so we will go into all the world.

We carry the gospel to everybody. We will live out our faith. But when you go be the church, it's never an excuse to not be in church. A very famous guy who told us that hell, that love won and hell had lost and there wasn't any hell.

He no longer goes to church. He had a large group, an emergent church group, and he was doing great, quote unquote. And he was really having an effect. And he was recently interviewed. And he said, no, we don't go to church anymore.

[ 16 : 48 ] We are the church. We don't assemble anymore. We are the assembly. I guess him and his wife have decided that they're the assembly. But that's not what that means in Bible terms.

That's not what that means. How about this one? Seeker-friendly churches. You probably heard that term. We want to have a seeker-friendly church. Open your Bible to John 3.16. I want to show you something.

That's a term. And I'll show you in just a minute that there's some good points in what they're trying to say. If you understand it from a church background, if you understand it from a Bible background. But you can't really be seeker-friendly.

Let me show you why. Look at what the Bible says in John 3.16. And we're going to read several verses. Get your Bible open. Get your eight-pin underline. Everybody knows this verse. If you know this verse, say amen. You got it memorized?

How many of you got it memorized? Say amen. How many of you got it memorized? You just lied. Say amen. Okay, don't. John 3.16. For God... Say it with me. Ready? For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

[ 17 : 55 ] That's a beautiful verse, isn't it? God loved the world. Jesus died for the world. God sent his son. God didn't want anybody to die and go to hell. Verse 17. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son.

And this is a condemnation that light is coming to the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. I want you to just outline in verse 19.

Men love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil. I want to show you something. How in the world could you get darkness to come to a light meeting? How could you get darkness to come to a light meeting?

You'd have to dim the light. Can't get a lot of darkness in a room where there's a lot of light. Jesus said, you know, they don't want to come. I'm going to read it. We're going to read another verse. But Jesus said, they don't want to come.

[ 18 : 58 ] They don't want to come because they've chosen to reject me. They've chosen not to obey me, and they don't want to come. So when you talk a seeker-friendly church, and that's become the thing now, so churches are not Bible preaching.

You don't have a guy who opens the Bible, reads the Bible. Like here at our church, there's just way too much Bible. Just way too much Bible. A good preacher in a quote-unquote good church, he's going to read one verse, shut the Bible.

He may even stand up and say, this is my Bible. It's the Word of God. I'll do what it says. Now close it and don't read it. But that's not what the Bible's talking about. So look, if you would, and underline, the light has come to the world, and men love darkness rather than light.

Verse 20. For everyone that does evil hates light. Everyone that does evil hates the light. Neither comes the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

But he that doeth truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. The idea has been that we need to make the church where lost people want to come. If the church teaches and preaches the truth, lost people will never be comfortable here.

[ 20 : 05 ] Years ago, a very good friend of mine, I was preaching, and I said, you're not going to get saved unless you admit you're a rebellious, filthy sinner, and you deserve to go to hell. And a friend said to me after church, you ain't never going to get a whole lot of people like that.

He said, people don't want to hear that. You need to change your wording on that. But the problem is, that's really God's wording, isn't it? For all have sinned to come short of the glory of God. For all have sinned, for there's none righteous, none other.

Well, that's God's way of wording it. And so, the idea that you're going to make church where lost people want to come, it's not a biblical idea. The darkness doesn't like the light. It is true that we should change some of the ugly things that church people have done.

Let me just stop your... Because I don't want you to go the wrong way. You know, church has been rude as all get out. Some sanctimonious old church lady, but somebody comes in and ain't dressed like she wants them dressed, and she can be very judgmental about it.

And some sanctimonious old deacon can do that, and some pastor can do that. But see, that's not real. In other words, they need to get that right with God, but you'll never, we never, vision should never have in mind, we're going to change our church so lost people like it.

[ 21 : 17 ] Let me give you a more biblical way of looking at this so you'll understand, I'm putting it in real biblical terms. You see, lost people are like pigs or dogs. A pig, no matter how you clean him up, no matter how much you perfume him, no matter how much you put a ribbon on him, as soon as you let him go, he will go right back to the mud hole.

And a dog, according to the Bible, will go right back to his vomit. But sheep aren't dogs, and sheep aren't pigs. And if you're born again, you've been converted from a dog.

You've been converted from a pig, and God's made you a sheep, and he is a shepherd of the sheep. Can you understand that? If you do, say amen. That's what's going on in the Bible. And we ought to get the message out.

We ought not be a closed-up secret society. We ought not be a clique. But we ought to do what the Bible says about a church, which I hope you'll get before I finish today. The church has failed.

That's another one. The church has failed. Are you ready? The church of Jesus Christ cannot fail. Would you throw Matthew 16, 18 up there for them one more time?

[ 22 : 20 ] Matthew 16, 18. Look what the Bible says in Matthew 16, 18. And I said unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not win. Hell can't win.

Satan can't win. All of his armies can't win. All of that can't win. Jesus Christ wins, if you believe the Bible. If you believe the Bible, Jesus Christ wins. A group that calls itself a church can fail if they turn from the truth and do not preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Regardless, God will be at work in other places that will honor Him. Religion has failed. Denominationalism has failed. But the true church of God has not failed, will not fail, cannot fail, never has failed.

It's the church of Jesus Christ. Look at the verse. I said unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. See, it's what he said. I will build my church.

And then say this with me if you would. Everybody read that last part. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Here's what Jesus said. Let's get something straight. It's my church.

[ 23 : 24 ] My church. And I will build my church. And mark her down, the devil ain't winning. The devil's not winning. How about this one? I am the church.

I don't want any part of organized religion. You can't be an assembly. So the very word church is assembly.

And you can't be an assembly. You got to have at least two or three gathered together. You're a believer. You're a disciple. You're a Christian. But the church is an assembly, a body.

In about 20 minutes, we will all walk out of here. Well, you don't ever leave, but about an hour from now, y'all will leave. Because when y'all assemble, you seem to like to assemble together. Because birds of a feather flock together, you kind of enjoy each other's presence, which is a great thing, by the way.

But when we leave this afternoon, we won't be the church. We won't be at the assembly yet. We'll be back at 5, though. About 4.20, we'll assemble. About 4 o'clock, some of us will start assembling here.

[ 24 : 25 ] And about 4.20, a bunch of us will assemble, usually 40 or 50 people. Then about 5 o'clock, about 100 people will show back up, and we'll all assemble again. And we'll be the assembly. And then Thursday night, we'll assemble again.

And then next Sunday morning, we'll assemble again. But the church in this building, it's when you drive by, and you say, man, no, Vision sure built a weird church. We might be a weird church, but this building ain't us.

And if we were the church, I think we'd put more bathrooms in it. Amen? And if we were the church, we wouldn't have leaks right over there. In my Sunday school class, when it rains outside, it rains inside.

Amen? Amen? We just enjoy, we're kind of like sprinklers on that Sunday. Not just baptizers. So number two, how should you choose a church for your family?

How should you choose a church for your family? Hebrews 10, 24, and 25, if you would. Look that up. Hebrews 10, 24, and 25. So what we try to do is just a broad overview of what is the church, what's not the church, some misconceptions about what the church is.

[ 25 : 29 ] Now, how do you choose a church? If you leave Vision, and you go somewhere else, how do you pick a church? Verse 24, and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.

I want you to underline in verse 24, we're fixing to talk about the assembly, but in verse 24, I want you to underline this. One of the things that goes on in churches is you're thinking about each other. That's why we have prayer requests time.

That's why we share together. That's why you form a part of something, and people think about each other, and there's a whole bunch of one another's in the Bible. There's a whole bunch of one another's in the Bible that can only be done when there's a whole bunch of other people in the place.

Now look at verse 25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. Not forsaking the assembling, the churching together of ourselves. Not failing to get together.

We need to get together. As a matter of sum, it's been exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching. So how do you choose a church? First thing, don't base your choice on superficial things.

[ 26 : 29 ] A study on how people choose churches says that parking is like the number one prerequisite. Where am I going to park my car when I get there? Well, this isn't a mall.



And you know, when you go to Grandmama's for Christmas Day, you might have to park a long ways off and walk in. But that's not a good way to pick it. The nursery is usually the first or second on the list.

Music, style, comfort, and friendliness are always on the list. What does the church offer? I need to know what the church offers. The fact is, if you pastor a smaller church, one of the frustrating things is they call up and say, what do y'all offer there?

What do you got for my kids? Not about where can I come in and where can I serve, but what have you got? Actually, the pastor falls way low on the list. But usually he makes it in the top ten.

But he's usually at least number six or below. So, hey, if we're not growing, don't blame it on me. Say amen. On the list, parking is more important. And getting to the bathroom is a big deal.

[ 27 : 28 ] Amen. Now, the first thing you ought to look at is how they handle the Word of God. The very first, if you want to know how to find a church, how do they handle the book?

How do they handle the book? Read with me, if you would, Psalm 119, 161. Psalm 119, 161, if you would. The Bible says, princes have persecuted me without a cause, but underline this part, but my heart stands in awe of thy word.

So the first thing about a church ought to be that when you come in this room, it ought to be, we're here about the book. We're here about the book. We're here about the Word of God.

And so when you walk into a Sunday school class, what are you wanting? Word of God. When you go to a foundations class or a meeting of discipleship, what do you want? The Word of God. What do you want when you come to church service? The Word of God.

We'll be noted as people that carry our Bibles. We'll come in, there'll be a Bible in our arm because it's about the Word. And a good church is going to be a church about the Word. What do they believe about the Bible?

[ 28 : 33 ] Well, they believe that the Bible teaches. How does the Bible affect their living? Is the Bible preached and talked about or is it preached? Let me explain what I mean by that one. So many churches, everybody's got a Bible.

Every church that met this morning all across the country, they got together, they all had a Bible with them. But much of what's going to happen in most churches is going to be a lot of storytelling. A lot of storytelling.

Maybe read one verse and then go from there and no more verses. But you won't get into the Bible. You won't get into the Bible. Now today, you're getting less verses than you use it, though they're coming, if I get to them in the next 11 minutes.

There's a whole bunch of verses coming. But if you come to our church on a regular service, my outline's usually 10 to 15 pages long and I put all the Bible in red. And if you took all the Bible verses out of the outline, you'd have three pages maybe.

Because it ought to be about the Word. Now help me know what it ought to be about. It ought to be about the Word. It ought to be about the Word. My heart stands in awe of thy Word.

[ 29 : 37 ] They believe that they've been commissioned to take this book and Bible to the whole world. So, second one. So the first thing is, what's their view of the Bible? The second one, what's their view of Christ?

You see, the first thing would be the Bible. Now let me explain something to you. We've gone over this, but the only rule of faith and authority we have is the Bible. I remember I was preaching in my first church that I started.

I started a church when I was 23 years old in 1977. And on a Sunday morning, I was preaching on the authority of the church, which is the Word of God. And there was this older man in the church. He was probably 65.

And I'm 23. And he was a good, strong man. He helped me for many years. And so I was preaching. And I said, I want to talk to you about who's running this church here this morning. I was a young guy trying to get all the fire going.

And I said, there's somebody in charge. Somebody you ought to be looking to. And I think he was going, what's that kid going to say? Is he going to go off on some tangent and talk about how it is? And so I built it up and built it up and built it up. And finally I held up the Bible.

[ 30 : 38 ] I said, this is what ought to be the authority. And he goes, you can see him going, I don't know what that guy was going to pull. But it ought to be the Word of God. Amen? The second most important thing would be, and you say, why would it be most?

Because that's where you learn everything else. Everything you know comes out of the Bible. We don't need theology books. We do need theology books. I'm all for it. Anybody teaches me anything. But what you need is the book.

Not books about the book. And then second is their view of Christ. Go to Matthew 16, 16, if you would, right in the passage that we studied last week, and we'll be studying all along.

In Matthew chapter 16 and verse 16, the Bible says, and Simon Peter asked, Jesus says, do you recall? Do you recall what happened? Jesus said, who do men say that I am? And they said, well, some people say you're a John the Baptist, and some say you're Elijah, and some say you're Jeremiah, and some say you're one of the prophets.

But whatever it is, Jesus said, everybody thinks you're a great guy. And Jesus said, well, I want to know what y'all say. Who do you say that I am? And Peter said in verse 16, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[ 31 : 44 ] Last week, we learned what that Christ is. It's the Messiah, the sent one, the anointed one. It is Jesus, God, and human flesh coming to the earth. That's what Peter said. In Matthew 16, 16.

And in verse 17, Jesus said to him, blessed art now, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood, no human being taught you this. What you know about me, only God could have taught you that. And then in verse 18, he said, I'll say to you something, Peter, that confession you just made, that statement you just made, that's the rock.

That is the rock. And the rock is Jesus and who he is. And that's where we'll build the church. We will build the church on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

We'll prove that to you in the Bible. We'll build the church on the foundation of Jesus Christ. So Jesus said that, and said in verse 18, and I say also unto thee, you are Peter, thou art Peter, and upon this rock, what, what, that confession you just made, that statement you just made, that's the truth.

That's the truth. That is the most foundational, important truth that there ever could be mentioned. He said, and I'll build my church. The church is built on this confusion, on this confession, that Jesus is the son of the living God.

[ 32 : 58 ] It's built on this confession. Jesus is the son of the living God. Jesus is God in the flesh. If a church doesn't believe that Jesus is God, then they are not really a church.

Now listen to me. There's whole big groups. One of them even rewrote their own version of the Bible, and it says, in the beginning was the word, and the word was a God, not the God. So that's not a church.

That's not a church. That's not a church. That's a cult. It's a cult. There's another group of people that says they're the church of Jesus Christ of the latter day, but they kind of believe everybody can be a Jesus if they grow up enough.

Well, that's not what the Bible says about Jesus. So the key, the important thing is, who do you say Jesus is? We believe that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh.

We believe in his virgin birth, his deity, his incarnation, and his holiness. We believe he died on a cross as a substitutionary payment for our sins. We believe that he rose again.

[ 33 : 56 ] He rose again. He is alive, has the keys of death and hell. We don't preach of prosperity, Jesus, because he doesn't ever even mention that. That's foreign to him. He's a salvation Jesus.

He's a rescuing Jesus, but he ain't a making you rich Jesus. And so any church that's preaching a Jesus that makes you rich is not preaching a Jesus of the Bible. He's not a genie you call out of the bottle at your bidding to get him to do what you want.

He's not a sweet, humanistic, sentimental Jesus you hear talked about. He's God in human flesh. He is not some sweet, long-haired, white face.

That's always the funniest thing to me, to me, like he's white. I mean, Jews aren't white. Anyway, just think about that a minute. They're from the Middle East. Look a whole lot more like Arabs than they do us. But he's always blonde hair, blue eyes, oh, good night.

And they go, I love you, just love everybody. That's not the Jesus of the Bible. And you can't put your hand in the hand of a man, and you can't get kicked through the goalposts of life.

[ 35 : 00 ] He is God. He is the God of the Bible. Third thing. Verses coming your way now. The church belongs to Jesus. Look at Matthew 16, 18.

Matthew 16, 18. Jesus, I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. You should put a circle around the word my.

Jesus is the owner of the church. That's the first mention of the church in the New Testament and in the Bible. Here, Jesus clearly says that it is his church.

And here's some Bible verses for you to mark down somewhere in your Bible there in your notes. He is the only foundation you can lay. First Corinthians, chapter 3, and verse 11. And the Apostle Paul is explaining to the Corinthians how you build a church.

And Paul says to the Corinthians, for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid. Which is, say it to me, what's the foundation?

[ 36 : 03 ] Jesus Christ. Not the fathers. Not the theologians. But Jesus Christ. Can you say amen right there? Man, we ought to talk a whole lot about him because he's everything.

He's the foundation. He ought to be mentioned a whole bunch in our church. Not only is he the foundation, he is the chief cornerstone. Look if you would in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 19.

He is the chief cornerstone. He is the piedra angular. He is the cornerstone. He's the God. The whole church rests on this stone. Everything's about this stone.

It's Jesus. The Bible says in Ephesians 2.19, Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and the household of God and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.

Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord in whom also ye are built together for inhabitation of God through the Spirit.

- [ 37 : 07 ] Now he's the foundation. He's the chief cornerstone. When you walk up there the whole building falls down without this rock. There is no building without this rock. He's the foundation and he is everything for this building.
- He is the chief cornerstone. He is the head of the church. He is the head of the church. In Ephesians 1.22 the Bible says and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church.
- Now listen to me. The church. The church is the church of Jesus Christ. He's the head. You know, I don't care what you do to this body. If you keep his head alive the rest of it will probably do pretty good.
- He's the head of the body. He's the head of the church. Jesus is the boss. He is the thinker. He's the motivator. He's the commander. He is the commander in chief. It's Jesus.
- He's the head of the church. We come to church and talk about Jesus. He's our foundation. He's our chief cornerstone. He is our head. He is the body. Look at verse 23.
- [ 38 : 13 ] Ephesians 1.23 It said in 22 and gave him to be the head over all things to the church which is his body. So the church. Let's see.
- He's the. He is the. Watch this. This is what the Bible says about him. He's the foundation. He's a chief cornerstone. He's the head. He's the body. If you'd like to know what Jesus is to the church.
- He's everything. Everything about the church is Jesus. Since the church. Oh, I need to show you one more. And he purchased the church with his own blood. Look if you would in Acts chapter 20 and verse 28.
- Acts chapter 20 and verse 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves and all the flock over which the Holy Spirit over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the church of God.
- Look at this phrase. Which he purchased with his own blood. So. The church. Foundation.
- [ 39 : 13 ] Foundation. Head. Body. Chief cornerstone. And purchased by his blood.
- This whole thing is about Jesus. This whole thing is about Jesus. Everything goes on in this building. It's supposed to be about Jesus. Our preaching is supposed to be about Jesus. By the way, when we're preaching in the Old Testament and we're preaching in the Old Testament we're in the book of Numbers right now and if you'll be honest we're in the book of Numbers and we'll read a chapter and we realize man in the New Testament said that's Jesus.
- That's Jesus. That's just a shout of the real thing and the real thing is Jesus and he is coming. That's what we saw Thursday night. Amen. Church. It's about Jesus. Matthew 16, 18.
- Two more things real quick and I close just finish just kind of give you these two last thoughts. Matthew 16, 18. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church.
- Hang on here. I'm going to really maybe upset some of the young church growth gurus. It's not really about Austin building this church. I can build a crowd. I can build a congregation.
- [ 40 : 25 ] I can get a bunch of people to come here and especially if I could just figure out how to be a lot better speaker. If I could just figure out what it would take better music better sound effects maybe some smoke and some mirrors.
- I mean we could come up with a whole lot of stuff and maybe get a big crowd to come here. But just to be blunt honest Jesus when he first mentioned church said Austin just calm down. I'll build my church. Look at it.

I will build my church. Now I'm all for outreach. We ought to you know we do all that. We can. We send missionaries we do everything. But when it comes down to it we know this.

Jesus will build his church. You know what the Bible says I don't have time to share the verses but the Bible says one sows and another waters but it is God that gives the increase.

I go out and I sow the word. I go out and I water the word. But it's always God who gives the increase. In fact as the apostle Paul said Peter's nothing and Apollos is nothing. These are great men of God.

[ 41 : 22 ] Apollos was like the most dynamic speaker of all. And Paul says Apollos may be a good speaker but all he can do is sow and water. It's all Jesus that gets the job done.

Amen. I will build my church. I will build. Now that means we ought to pray and ask God to work. That means we ought to pray every program we can. Let's get as many people to hear the gospel as we can but we're going to be faithful to him because it's him that will change lives.

I will never be able to do it. The last thing I want you to look at right there is this. And the gates of hell shall not prevail. We'll go over all these again. The gates of hell shall not prevail. There's this nagging fear that the church is dying.

And can I just say to you I think religion is in big trouble. Good. They ought to be in big trouble. Just been a bunch of rules that gave people but the church of Jesus Christ is not in trouble. What's built on him he's the foundation he's the corner he's the head he's the body he bought it with his blood it'll keep going.

We won't have to play tricks and games. It's been going for 2,000 years and it'll keep on going until Jesus comes back. He will take care of his church. You say but nobody understands how powerful the devil is.

[ 42 : 33 ] Jesus did. And he said I will build my church and the devil ain't winning. I mean that's his declaration. First time he mentioned church he said let me give y'all a new word. I'm going to give y'all a new word.

Church. Assembly. Y'all get together. Baptize believers. Organize to carry out my word. And he said this by the way guys if I can get something straight it's my church I'll build it and the devil can't beat it. That's what he said in the passage.

However lots of people can't find salvation. The Bible said there's a broad way and a narrow way there's a wide gate and a narrow gate. And the Bible says a lot of people are seeking it and can't find it but the reason you can't find salvation this morning is because you choose to follow your own opinions and your own ideas.

And you're like don't make me feel bad help me build my self-esteem. The truth of the matter is right now you don't need self-esteem you need to see yourself as a lost sinner. And the last thing we need to do is try to build your self-esteem.

The first thing we need to do is say to you Jesus is the answer. And if you don't have a problem he can't be an answer. So the Bible's real clear. All of sin there is none righteous.

[ 43 : 43 ] There's none righteous. And so Jesus is the answer. And so if you're here this morning and you say well I just don't get it I'm not a part of the church I don't get all this it's not making sense to me.

The fact is you may be just a little bit on the rebellious side against it. You might be rebelling. Well darkness always rebels. But all of us were dark before. Not a person in this room was good at the beginning.

Every one of us came to realize that we had sinned against the Holy God and we deserved to go to hell but that God through Jesus had done everything so that everyone could be saved. And he loves you and he wants you to be saved.

But you are going to have to turn from your sin and follow Jesus Christ. You are going to have to admit I have failed God I have sinned against the Holy God and today I turn and I seek Jesus.

If you're here and you've never accepted Christ as your Savior you don't know that you'd go to heaven if you died I want you to know you can be saved. No one needs to leave here today without knowing for sure they're a Christian born again on their way to heaven. I didn't say a member of the church I didn't say you come down and fill out a card I didn't say you get baptized I mean you realize that Jesus did it all.

[ 44 : 50 ] He is the author and the finisher of our faith and you trust him. Today you can be saved. I challenge you today trust Jesus Christ and we'll help you. We'd like to take the Bible we'll show you from the Bible we'll answer your questions no pressure we'll never push you to make a decision we'll never deceive you manipulate you we just want to help you know him because it's Jesus who will show you your need and bring you to him.

So if you're here and you're not saved in a minute I'll give you an opportunity to talk to somebody it's somebody who's trained and understands the Bible and knows how to use the Bible will sit down with you and answer your questions and show you from the word of God how to be born again how to be saved how to know you go to heaven if you die we want to help you.

Father with every person in this room I pray you would deal with hearts I pray you'd draw them to you I pray you'd make people hungry to trust you today I pray that your name would be glorified and magnified I pray that your word would run and have power today and I pray in every way God that people that don't know you would see their lost condition see their sinfulness see their rebellion and trust you and I will give you praise.

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