

KNOW WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE CHURCH

Matthew 16:18

I. INTRODUCTION

- Today in our series *Know What We Believe*...we will look at the church.
- Today from the Bible... we will explore four key truths about the Church ...
The Master of the Church... The Members of the Church... The Mission of the Church... The Main Priority of the Church

II. THE MASTER OF THE CHURCH

- **Jesus Christ is the Founder... the Lord... the Builder... and Master of the Church...** In Matthew 16:18, Jesus declared, *"I will build My church."*
- The church was not designed or built by man...the church was created, established and built by the Lord Jesus Christ...Jesus is the Lord and Master of the church.
- **Jesus Loves the Church...** Ephesians 5:25: *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."*
- Jesus loves His church... He loves every local church...every congregation ... that makes up His church in the world today.
- Jesus loves His church ... even with all of its imperfections.
- No one is more aware ... and no one has more knowledge ...of the imperfections of the church in this world ...than the Lord Jesus.
- If you don't believe that... read Revelation 2-3 and the letters Jesus wrote to the seven churches of Asia... "I know"
- Even with its imperfections ... Jesus loves His church... and by His Spirit ... by His Word ... and working through the faithful and committed people of each church.
- Jesus is constantly at work in every one of His congregations ... to make every church in this world what it ought to be.
- While no church in this world is perfect... most churches are doing a lot of things that are right and good ...and pleasing to the Lord.
- Our attitude toward the church... should be the one reflected in this poem:

*I think that I shall never see... A Church that's all it ought to be;
A Church whose members never stray... Beyond the Strait and Narrow way;
A Church that has no empty pews... Whose Pastor never has the blues,
A Church whose Deacons always deak..And none is proud, and all are meek.
Where gossips never peddle lies... Or make complaints or criticize;
Where all are always sweet and kind... And all to others' faults are blind.
Such perfect Churches there may be... But none of them are known to me.
But still, I'll work, and pray and plan... to make my church the best I can.*

- **Jesus Defends the Church...** The church is the bride of Christ... and just as a good husband will defend his wife... Jesus will defend His church.
- Because a local church represents the Lord Jesus in its community and in the world... every church should hold itself to the highest standard of Christian conduct and behavior...a church should be Christ-like in all it does.
- When a church fails to be what it should be...it needs to repent and correct.
- Ongoing evaluation of a church by its leaders and members is important and needed... to ensure that the church is what God wants it to be.
- But those on the outside... and those on the inside of the church...who love to attack and criticize every flaw and failure of the church need to be very careful ... Jesus takes attacks on His church very personally.
- Saul of Tarsus... who was persecuting the Christians and the church in Jerusalem... found that when the Lord confronted him... Acts 9:4: "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*"

III. THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

- True believers... true followers of Jesus Christ... will love what Jesus loves.
- Because Jesus loves the church... a true follower of Jesus Christ is born again... with a love for the church.
- *1 John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."*
- God intends for the Christian life to be lived in fellowship with other believers...there is no such thing in the Bible as "Lone Ranger" Christianity.

- God wants every Christian to be active and involved in the life of the local church ... He wants us to love our church... pray for our church... support our church... and be faithful to our church.
- Active church membership, service and involvement... is essential to the growing Christian life.
- While love for the church marks a true believer...the Bible does warn that not everyone on the rolls of a church are true members.
- Jesus said there are tares among the wheat...those who may attend, serve, and give ... but they don't really know Jesus.
- To paraphrase Jesus... many will say to Jesus on the Day of Judgement ... "Lord, Lord...didn't we go to church... didn't we teach Sunday School ... didn't we preach... didn't we teach... didn't we give... didn't we sing in the choir... and Jesus will say to them... depart from Me... I never knew you."
- Church membership alone doesn't save... "churchanity" will save no one... only faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior saves.
- Your name may be on the membership roll of the church... but is it written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

IV. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

- Jesus gave the church its mission in the Great Commission found in Matthew 28... Jesus said our mission is...
 1. **To go** to the lost.
 2. **To make disciples** through evangelism.
 3. **To baptize** new believers into the local church.
 4. **To disciple... to teach** everything Christ commanded.
- This is not optional... this is our mission... our divine assignment.

V. THE MAIN PRIORITY OF THE CHURCH

- The church's highest calling ... our main priority is to **worship God**... worship is the power source for everything else we do.
- If the worship of a church is shallow and weak... then everything else a church does will be shallow and weak.

- Jesus emphasized the importance of worship in *John 4:23* “...*True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*”
- When we worship... we need to... Sing with joy... Pray with sincerity... Give with gratitude... and Preach the Word with conviction
- What does it mean to “preach the Word?”... it means preaching the whole council of God... when it is in season or out of season... when it is convenient or inconvenient... when it makes you popular or makes you unpopular...it is preaching which brings conviction for sin ... preaching which is centered on the person and work of God... preaching which exalts Jesus as the only Lord and Savior... preaching which stirs the hearts of the hearers and causes them desire more of God... preaching which elevates the soul and causes Christians to strive toward holiness... preaching which calls the lost to get saved and calls the saved to reach the lost... it is preaching which keeps the saints in the paths of righteousness...it is preaching which comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable... it is preaching which never compromises the truth just because it's inconvenient ... it is preaching which starts and ends with biblical revelation ... it is preaching which knows nothing of political correctness and is anchored in the Rock of Ages... it is preaching which seeks to expose the truth of God's word to God's people... that is what it means to preach the Word.

VI. CONCLUSION

- Master...Members... Mission... Main Priority
- Jesus loves His church... He loves this church... are we perfect?... no... I know we are not perfect... because we don't have a perfect Pastor.
- But our church has done... and is doing... a lot of good things for the Kingdom of God.
- We have been given a mission ... to evangelize... disciple... baptize... and teach... let us love one another... and work together... to carry out that mission.
- If you're a believer... and a member of this church... would you join me in recommitting today to love, serve, and pray for our church like never before.

- Let me remind you of something very important about the church...in a sense a church is an organization ... so we need to organize ourself in a good and biblical way ... in a sense a church is a business ... so we need to practice good and godly business practices.
- But more importantly... a church is a family made up of brothers and sisters in the Lord... we are a family of faith... we share a common salvation.
- What is important is not how we organize ourselves... or how we do business... what is important is how we love one another.
- *John 13:35 (NKJV) “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*
- It is our love for one another... our love for God... our love for the lost... that God will use to change the world.
- As pastor... I’m going to love you whether you like it or not... I’m going to love you even if I don’t like you... if I keep loving you eventually my “like” will catch up with my love.
- If you are not a believer... today I invite you to come to Christ... it will be my joy to share with you how to be saved... when you give your life to Christ... we will baptize you ... you will be a part of our church family... and we will work together for the Kingdom of God.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of the church—Your bride, Your body, Your people. Thank You for loving us, calling us, and building us together in Christ. Lord Jesus, You are the Master of the church. Help us to honor You by loving what You love, defending what You defend, and serving where You’ve placed us. Forgive us for the times we’ve neglected Your house, criticized Your people, or forgotten our mission. Holy Spirit, stir our hearts to worship in spirit and truth. Make our gatherings full of Your presence, our preaching full of Your power, and our lives full of Your purpose. Sanctify us, cleanse us, and prepare us to be the glorious church You desire. For those unsure of their salvation—draw them today. Let this be the moment they move from death to life, from doubt to faith, from religion to relationship. And for Your church, Lord—make us bold in witness, deep in worship, and faithful in mission. Until the day we see You face to face, may we

be found loving, serving, and worshiping You with all our hearts.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.