



Sermon Series: Why I believe part 6

Sermon Title: Why I believe – The Church

Date: February 6, 2022

Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:25-27, 32

The Apostles Creed puts belief in the church right up there with belief in God. Jesus says in, **Matthew 16:18** I will build my church.

The problem is that “church” – the people, not a building -- tends to be a messy place. Most people give up on church leave because of relational issues. In **Ephesians 5:25** we read, “**Christ loves the church.**”

Big Idea: If you love Jesus, you will love His Church.

To do so, requires us to answer 2 questions.

Question #1. What Defines the Church Jesus Loves

Jesus says in **Matthew 16:18** “I will build my church.” The word “church” can refer to all believers everywhere but the New Testament frequently uses it of organized gatherings which we call “local churches” (**1 Corinthians 1:1–2**). A local church is a gathering of professing believers in Jesus Christ, led by qualified leaders, that engages in certain identifiable activities.

1st Distinctive - Believers in Jesus. People who not only attend, but profess faith in Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 1:2**

2nd Distinctive- Led by qualified / recognized leaders. Jesus identifies the types of leaders that he gave to the church. **Ephesians 4:11–12**

Pastor-teachers – people equipped to lead and teach a congregation. Synonymous with “Elder” and “Overseer.”

Evangelists – People who are gifted at and engaged in sharing the Good News of Jesus’ saving work.

Prophets – This term refers primarily to those who are gifted to apply God’s Word to specific situations

Apostle simply means a “sent one.” Not used in the same authoritative sense as the original 12. They don’t author scripture. Rather, they are

ones who are sent to pioneer or oversee a range of ministries. Often in other lands. .

3rd Distinctive - Engages in Certain Activities

Acts 2:42 describes what the early church regularly did.

The apostles' teaching – which we now have in the NT.

The fellowship– means “sharing” – they shared their lives and their goods; they were accountable to one another.

The observance of ordinances / sacraments– “Communion” or “the Lord’s Table.” They baptized new believers.

To prayer - The church is to be a prayer center.

Question #2. How Should We Love the Church Jesus Loves

7 action points for us.

- 1. Commit to a Local Body** - The New Testament teaches, we are to commit and actively participate in a local church (**Ephesians 4:12**). Each believer is to cultivate his/her God-given gifts and abilities in a manner that glorifies God and strengthens the church. The result - **Acts 2:47**
- 2. Support Your Church Financially** - Your offerings make ministry happen. Giving is as an act of worship. **2 Corinthians 9:7-8**
- 3. Support your Church in Prayer** - When any important ministry was under consideration, the church prayed. (**Acts 14:23, Ephesians 6:18, Acts 2:42**)
- 4. Trust Your Leaders** - Your church works hard to train and place into leadership the best qualified people. If a leader is wounded or incapacitated in the battle, we don’t shoot our wounded, but seek to “gently restore” them (**Gal 6:1**) and to honor God in the process. **Hebrews 13:17**
- 5. Gather Regularly for Worship** The last two years have presented unique challenges. There have been times when it was unwise for you and your family to gather in a large group. Online worship technology has helped us stay on the same page. Online can be a helpful necessity. But if it’s just a convenient preference, the helpful necessity has become an unhealthy habit. **Hebrews 10:25 (NIV84) — Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**
- 6. Be a Bringer and Includer** - One of the most effective ways to love Christ’s Church is to invite others to become part of it. Simply share the invitation to “come and see” (**John 1:46**) It often requires five or more personal invitations before someone will accept your invitation.
- 7. Love One Another** - **John 13:35 (NIV) — By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”**

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **What is the difference between “the Church”, “the church”, and church?**
- **What does Christ mean when he says that He will build His church?**
- **What characteristics are vital to Christ’s church?**
- **What are ways in which people can commit to the church?**
- **How have you committed to the church?**
- **What benefits does meeting in person for church have over watching online?**