

I. REVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

A. Session One: We Are Called Together

Matthew 16:18 NKJV “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

- 1. Prevail** = To gain ascendancy over through strength or superiority.
- 2. The “Universal Church”** = The church as a whole, including every person that is born again.
- 3. The “Local Church”** = Distinct local bodies that are part of the universal church.

B. Session Two: The Help of the Local Church

There is a supply that comes through the five-fold ministerial offices and other members of the local church that every believer needs.

- 1. God uses people to move us from level to level.**
- 2. Every person in the Body of Christ will need the help of the local church.**
- 3. There are places in the Spirit you will never reach without the help of those who are called to assist you in getting there.**

SUMMARY: *To say we do not need the local church is to say that we do not need the ministry of the pastor and other five-fold offices. To say that we do not need to be part of the local church is to say that we do not need to receive the teaching, fellowship, and strength that is offered through assembling together with other believers.*

To say that we do not need the local church is to say, “I can do it all by myself”. This is deception! The Word is filled with examples of those who needed the assistance of others in their own spiritual growth, maturity, and assignment from God!

II. THE RIGHT FOUNDATION FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

A. One of the top complaints / arguments used by those who are attempting to deconstruct the local church is: “The church is man’s institution, built upon man’s ideas vs God’s.”

- **This argument** diminishes the role of leadership and organization for the local church.
- **This argument** draws people away from a local assembly by presenting the idea that every person is responsible for their own growth and discipleship (i.e. “finding their own TRUTH”) and refusing to allow any MAN / WOMAN to lead them into forming an opinion of what is right or true—“No one should tell me what I should believe. I have a right to my own opinion.”
- **This argument** says: “The church has no right to direct my life. The church has no right to tell me what is true. I have a right to decide my own path and determine what is true for me.”

B. While men are not perfect and certainly have veered off course with the direction of the Church throughout the years, God always brings His Church back on course.

God’s plan will never be to abolish the Church. When the church veers too far off course, He will always have a remnant that will come back into alignment with His plan according to HIS WORD!

1. The Church has a foundation.

a. Ephesians 2:19-22

NKJV “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ** Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, **in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**”

- ##### **b. We are members of the household of God—the FAMILY—and God takes the FAMILY seriously.**

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- c. **Vs. 22:** We—as the family—are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. GFC is being BUILT TOGETHER as a dwelling place for God in the Spirit—in LONDON, LAUREL COUNTY, and the REGION.
- d. **THE FOUNDATION—Vs. 20:** Having been built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus being the chief cornerstone.

PASTOR'S NOTE: Notice Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone, but He isn't the only stone in the foundation. The foundation also includes the APOSTLES and PROPHETS.

2. The role of the Apostles and Prophets:

- a. These were human beings (men / mankind). God uses people to accomplish His business. Although people are imperfect, He still uses them!
 - To say that we cannot be part of the Church because it is led by human beings (men) is in error.
 - The Apostles and Prophets were men.

PASTOR'S NOTE: Yes, there will always be men and women who veer off course into error. However, there are others who will stay on course and do what is right. Choose to look at those people vs. the ones who did wrong.

- b. The function of the Apostles and Prophets:
 - The **primary function** of the **Prophets** was to bring God's Word in the earth realm.
 - The **primary function** of the **Apostles** was to establish the Word as doctrine and to establish divine order for the local church.
 - The teachings and doctrine of the local church must be established on the foundation of the WORD / REVELATION that came through God's Apostles and Prophets.
 - **Ephesians 3:1-7**
NKJV "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made

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known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, **of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.”**

PASTOR’S NOTE: *Notice when God released revelation to the earth regarding the Gentiles being included in His plan, He revealed this BY THE SPIRIT to His Holy Apostles and Prophets. The foundational truths are revealed to the Apostles and Prophets for the purpose of establishing these as sacred doctrinal truths as the foundation of the Church.*

To say that we do not need anything offered by the Apostles or Prophets because they were human is to deny the SACRED CALLING of these leaders, as well as to deny the ABSOLUTE TRUTH of the revelation they carried.

When this occurs in a church, that assembly ceases to be a biblical church (one established on biblical truth) and becomes an assembly of humankind that has established their own system of truth mostly based upon the changing trends of society.

- **1 Corinthians 4:1 NKJV** “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

3. Wise Master Builders:

- a. God uses **people** as “wise master builders” to build His Church in the earth.
 - **1 Corinthians 3:9-17**
NKJV “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field; **you are God’s building.** According to the grace of God which was given to me, **as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation,** and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. **For no**

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other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. **Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."**

- b. God is building a **"building"**:
 - The Church is His spiritual building for His presence, just as the temple was a building for His presence in the Old Testament.
- c. Paul states: "As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation." God used PAUL to lay the foundation.
 - God still uses men to establish the foundation of the local church based upon the Holy Truths revealed to His original Prophets and Apostles.
- d. **Vs. 11:** Paul makes it clear that every wise builder is building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.
 - The chief foundational truth that must be established in the local church is the person of Jesus Christ: His purpose, mission, death, resurrection, and who we are in Him.
- e. God considers the spiritual temple / dwelling place / Body of Christ so important that **He makes a strong declaration of judgement against anyone who attempts to destroy it.**
 - **Vs. 16:** "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

AMP "Do you not know *and* understand that you [the church] are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells [permanently] in you [collectively and individually]?"

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- **Vs. 17:** “If anyone destroys the temple of God [corrupting it with false doctrine], God will destroy the destroyer; for the temple of God is holy (sacred), and that is what you are.”

NIV “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.”

NLT “Don’t you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”

MSG “You realize, don’t you, that you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you? No one will get by with vandalizing God’s temple, you can be sure of that. God’s temple is sacred—and you, remember, *are* the temple.”

PASTOR’S NOTE: *Paul was speaking primarily of those who were attempting to deconstruct the Church through FALSE DOCTRINE—doctrine that did not agree or harmonize with the Word of the PROPHETS and APOSTLES.*

Be GUARDED against those who spread doctrinal error. God takes it personally when someone is carrying a message that is destructive. That person is in danger of quick, swift judgment. The CHURCH / BODY belongs to God, and He protects it at all costs.

4. True ministers will always point back to the spiritual fathers.

a. 1 Corinthians 4:14-17

NKJV “I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, **yet you do not have many fathers**; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. **Therefore I urge you, imitate me.** For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son

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in the Lord, **who will remind you of my ways in Christ**, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

PASTOR’S NOTE: *As a young minister, Timothy pointed people back to the message of the Apostle Paul who was a spiritual father. Spiritual sons should always reference their spiritual fathers.*

C. The local church must always stay put on the foundation of the Word of God that was delivered to us through the Apostles and Prophets in Bible times.

D. The local church must continue to move forward with vision, direction, and revelation that flows from God’s ministers today.

- The direction for today will always add to and advance upon the foundation of those who came before.