

The Local Church

Session 1: We Are Called Together

Pastor Dale Campbell

I. Introduction and Scriptures

A. 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.

PASTOR’S NOTE: *Jesus declares that the forces—or gates—of Hell will never gain ascendancy or superiority over THE CHURCH.*

2. Notice it is “THE CHURCH” that the enemy cannot prevail against.

- a. There is **individual** victory.
- b. There is **corporate** victory.
- c. While ONE is victorious in Christ, there is another level of victory released to the Church—the corporate body—of believers.
 - There is a level of victory you cannot enter into on your own.
 - There is a level of victory that is reserved for the body.
 - This is why we must be connected to the Church / His body.

3. Jesus assumes ownership of the Church—“MY CHURCH”.

Jesus declares that He is building HIS CHURCH—He built it. He owns it.

- a. To say that you do not need to be part of the Church is to say you do not need something that Jesus established.
- b. If Jesus established it, it is necessary.
- c. Jesus declares there is a level of victory established for the Church. He knew we would need it. He knew it would be necessary for us.
- d. To say we do not need it is to rebel against—or attack—the institution that Jesus established to be His body in the earth.

II. Understanding the Local Church

A. The Meaning of “Church”

1. The Universal Church

- a. Certain scriptural passages use “the church” to mean the universal church.

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- b. The “universal church” = the body of Christ composed of all born again believers everywhere.
- c. The Church as a whole, yet it cannot be visited (contacted). A group of people identified as Christians, yet it has no reference to a specific local group or assembly.

2. The Local Church

Distinct local bodies that are part of the universal Church.

- a. 90 references in the N.T. that utilize words for “the church” are referring to the **LOCAL** church. Only about 20 references are given in regard to the **universal** church.
- b. We are part of the universal church, but we should also be part of the local church.
- c. Our involvement in the local church is more personal to us and is essential to our discipleship, growth, and future.

3. Scriptures referring to the local church:

a. Romans 16:1-5

NKJV “I commend to you **Phoebe** our sister, who is a **servant of the church in Cenchrea**, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. **Greet Priscilla and Aquila**, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also **all the churches of the Gentiles**. Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of **Achaia** to Christ.”

b. Romans 16:16

NKJV “Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”

PASTOR’S NOTE: *These are all local churches. God not only recognizes the universal church, He also recognizes INDIVIDUAL local churches or distinct bodies. We see the same example in the book of Revelation, as Jesus sent messages to seven distinct churches that were part of the universal church. The message of Jesus was distinct to each church, recognizing that the*

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*issues or needs in every local church may be uniquely different than others. When God called us unto salvation, we became a part of the Body of Christ—the **universal Church**. His calling us into HIS church also included His calling us into the **local church**.*

B. Understanding the Role of the Local Church

1. Matthew 16:18

KJV “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

- a. Church (Greek “ekklesia”) = Called out ones.
- b. “Called out” is an incomplete definition.
- c. We are called out—separated as distinct from others in this world—in words, actions, attitudes, conduct, beliefs, etc. We are distinct in this world as the Church—not blended, not hidden, not silent, etc.
- d. We are not just called OUT; we are called TOGETHER.
- e. The real emphasis of the Church is not so much being called out, but being called together OR summoned together!
- f. The CHURCH is a body of people called or summoned by God to COME TOGETHER to meet with HIM.

C. The Assembling of the Local Church is Essential

The continuing work of God in the earth is connected to His Church COMING TOGETHER in the local church.

- *There are things that will happen while you are at the local church.*
- *There are things that will be released.*
- *There are things that will come through revelation.*
- *There are things that God will do as we COME TOGETHER as His people.*

ONE OF THE FIRST CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD’S NEWLY FORMED CHURCH WAS THAT THEY MET TOGETHER!

1. The church was birthed at the assembling together of believers.

a. Acts 1:4-8

NKJV “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which’ *He said*, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with

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water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth'."

PASTOR'S NOTE: *They are assembled together AND He is with them—He is **included** in the assembly.*

b. **Acts 2:1-4**

NKJV "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

c. **Acts 2:46-47**

NKJV "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

2. The early church believers knew that they needed the strength of meeting together.

- a. However, it wasn't just that they knew they needed to be together, God had SUMMONED them to come together.
- b. Summoned = an urgent call to be present!
- c. The inward call to assemble. WHY? *God was going to meet with them in this assembly.*

- **Matthew 18:20**

NKJV "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

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AMP “For where two or three are gathered in My name [meeting together as My followers], I am there among them.”

- Jesus comes to church.

PASTOR’S NOTE: *In times of assembly, they received direction and instructions that others did not receive. Following His instructions, they assembled in the upper room and received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. What about those that didn’t assemble to hear His instructions? What about those that didn’t assemble in the upper room? They did not receive the same experience that those who SHOWED UP experienced.*

3. There are many things the Lord will do in our spiritual lives individually.

4. However, there are **SOME** things reserved for the corporate setting.

- In this setting we are met by the presence of God in a different way.
- In THIS presence He makes something available to us that doesn’t come through personal individual devotion.
- Come together / assemble together BELIEVING THAT YOU ARE GOING TO RECEIVE!
- In this setting, we are in the atmosphere where supernatural things occur.
 - In **Acts 4** while they prayed together, the Holy Ghost fell, the place where they were assembled together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke the Word with boldness.
 - **Acts 4:23-24**
NKJV “And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: ‘Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them...”
 - **Acts 4:31**
NKJV “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

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D. Things happen when the Church comes together.

1. The Holy Ghost gives direction and sets things into motion.

a. He specifically speaks, directs, and sets ministries into action.

b. Acts 13:1

NKJV “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.”

PASTOR’S NOTE: *As a pastor, I do not pastor because I chose this position. I am called and sent to serve in this five-fold office.*

2. Peter was delivered from prison while the church was assembled together to pray.

a. **Acts 12:5 NKJV** “Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

PASTOR’S NOTE: *An angel delivered Peter that night as the church prayed / were assembled together.*

3. In Acts 14, Paul commanded a man to be healed who was lame.

PASTOR’S NOTE: *This was while people were assembling to hear the Word preached by Paul. While they were ASSEMBLED HEARING THE WORD the SUPERNATURAL showed up. This will happen when you show up to church. As you hear the Word, the supernatural will meet you.*

E. We are CALLED TOGETHER.

1. God calls ministers.

2. God calls people.

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3. Just as God calls a minister to an area or a specific church, God calls people to become part of that local church.

- a. We are summoned together to do ministry together.
- b. People should not shift from church to church no more than pastors should shift from place to place.
- c. A church that changes pastors often is a church that will never stabilize, strengthen, or mature.
- d. A person who changes churches often will never grow, stabilize, or mature.

PASTOR'S NOTE: *There may be a time that God calls you to another congregation. Primarily, this occurs when you need to move up because something is lacking in that house or there is something specific you are supposed to receive from another place.*

God had to move me from my first local church to expose me to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first church had taken me absolutely as far as they could / would ever take me. To go further, God had to summon me to another place.

4. Know where He has called you to attend—and ATTEND!

a. Psalm 92:13

NKJV "Those who are planted in the house of the Lord Shall flourish in the courts of our God."

CEV "They will take root in your house, LORD God, and they will do well"