

THE MARKS OF THE  
**TRUE  
CHURCH**



**The Marks of The True Church**

**The Word of God for Structure**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Matthew 18:15-20 (NKJV):** “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ “And if he refuses to hear them, tell [it] to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.””

The last verse of the above scripture assures us that Jesus dwells in the midst of us whenever we are gathered together in His name. The church is a safety net for God’s people.

**2 Corinthians 5:11 (NKJV)** says: “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”

This should be the *raison d'être* of everyone called into ministry. You must know the terror of God, have the fear of God and know that your job is to persuade men.

**Romans 6:17 (NKJV):** “But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”

Your responsibility when you attend any church service is to seek out the teaching that will prick your heart so that you can ask, “Lord, what must I do”? Receive grace to obey from the heart what He tells you to do.

### Introduction

In this text, we will further the discussion on ***‘The Marks of The True Church’*** as we focus on the preaching of the Word of God.

Nonetheless, before we proceed on that topic, let us consider the question: why does God desire to have a church?

This is because of:

1. **God’s plan for the church** – God had a plan for the church in eternity past. (See **Ephesians 3 NKJV**).
2. **God’s hidden mystery, which is the church** – the church is the kingdom of God on earth. God’s hidden mystery is the church.
3. **God’s love for the church** – Christ loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten son. This includes the church!
4. **God’s beginning of the church** – We must understand and appreciate how the church has come into being, and allow that to regulate us as ‘called out’ people.

**Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)** says, “I will build my church”. This is a foretelling.

Christ’s Word in the Old Testament was a foretelling, but Christ’s Word for us now, is a fulfilment of what was foretold.

**Acts 2:47** is about a fulfilling; an event that was never experienced before, being the Day of Pentecost.

Pentecost happened as a result of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Now, He has become the life-giving Spirit. *Church is not about you or me, it is about Jesus.*

Everything we do must:

1. Exalt Christ,
2. Point to the Cross, and be
3. Regulated by the Spirit.

### Christ, the Cross and the Spirit

The reality and practicality of the church depends upon **Christ, the Cross**, and the **Spirit**. These three elements are essential to the existence of the church.

Hence the warning in **Hebrews 10:29 (NKJV)**: “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”

Sometimes our carefree attitude towards Christ and His shed blood shows that we don't appreciate the Cross as much as we should. When we trivialize what Christ did on the Cross, it is as if we step on Christ and use him like a doormat.

*We won't enjoy grace if we insult the spirit of grace.*

Christ wants us to appreciate the church that He purchased with His own blood.

### Structure and Flow

God always operates on the principle of structure and flow.

As born-again Christians, we should build our lives based on the structure of the Word of God.

Equally important, on top of the structure of God's Word, we should walk effectively in the flow of the Spirit.

When God wants to do something, He will first erect a structure and then release a flow.

*Here are some examples:*

**Genesis 2:7 (NKJV)** says: "And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground (**Structure!**) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." (**Flow!**)

In **Genesis 6:14 (NKJV)**, Noah is commanded: "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch." (**Structure!**)

**Genesis 7:17 (NKJV)** says: "Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth..." (**Flow!**)

Our lives as Christians must be based on the principle of structure and flow.

*The Spirit is the flow, and the Word is the structure.*

The flow of the Spirit must be built on the structure of the Word of God.

Our lives must have a strong structure of the Word and an effective flow of the Holy Spirit.

Solomon built an altar to the Lord (**Structure!**), and fire fell from heaven (**Flow!**).

A healthy church is one that has a strong **Structure** and an effective **Flow**!

**Note:**

*In the Bible we read that God is the Word and the Spirit:*

**John 1:1 (NKJV)** says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

In verse 3, we read:

*“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (Structure!)*

The Lord is also the Spirit!

This can be seen in **2 Corinthians 3:17 (NKJV)**, which says: “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and *where the Spirit of the Lord [is,] there [is] liberty. ... “where the Spirit of the Lord is” (Flow!)*

*Jesus, in scripture, has provided us with the Word, which gives us a structure that we stand on, to support the flow of the Spirit.*

Parables

Parables are spiritual truths that need to be decoded. For us that are in the church, we can decode Jesus’ parables, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**Mark 4:34 (NKJV)** says: “But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.”

A time came in Christ’s life where He changed His method of teaching to parables, because people had rejected Him; they compared what He did to the agency of the devil.

An example of this is the parable of dealing with a sinning brother, in **Matthew 18:15-20 (NKJV)**. This parable is expanded below, in the exercise of church discipline – one of the marks of the true church.

### Church Discipline

**Matthew 18:15 (NKJV)** says: “**Moreover** if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.”

This verse starts with *moreover* which means ‘also’ or “in addition to what has been said”.

As the body of Christ, we are meant to resemble unleavened bread in our holiness and intolerance for sin. If we accommodate leaven, in the form of sin, it contaminates and leavens the whole batch, which in this case, is the body of Christ, designed to be a set apart, called-out people.

Therefore, exercising church discipline is necessary for the church structure to remain intact and not fall.

### Lastly...

Everything God does is based on the principle of structure and flow.

For there to be an effective flow of the Holy Spirit, there must be a solid structure of the Word.

“All Word and no Spirit, you dry up. All Spirit and no Word, you blow up, but with the Word and the Spirit, you grow up.” – Christian Proverb, Anonymous.

The key requirement in this season is: Let us grow up!

“The Church I See’ will not happen with a shallow church. It will happen with a church that is deliberate and willing to grow up.” – Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church, Woolwich.

With the Word of God for structure and the flow of the Holy Spirit, we will grow up, and ‘The Church I See’ will become a living reality!