

# THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH



## THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH:

### AN OPENING WORD

#### PART 2

(Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August)

#### FOUNDATION PASSAGES:

**Matthew 16:13-20 (NKJV):** “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some [say] John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you, but My Father who is in heaven. “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. “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.”

**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 Church I See” is the goal and **The Marks of The True Church** are the means.*

#### Introduction:

**Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)** tells us: “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.”

On this **rock** - this represents the **Christ** (the One who would accomplish the will of God) and the **revelation of Christ** in the verse:

- i. Christ is the preached word.
- ii. Christ is revealed in the administration of the sacraments.
- iii. Christ reveals in His word the correct exercising of discipline.

Why is Jesus building His church, you may ask?

The simple answer is that Jesus is doing what pleases the Father.

We agreed that the reason The Church lacks power is because it does not conduct itself rightly before God.

You and I know that if The Church is dear to God's heart, then it cannot be:

- Natural but ... Spiritual
- Temporal but ... Eternal
- Earthly but ... Heavenly

According to **Matthew 16:18**, Jesus Christ is building His church!

Why? Why is Jesus Christ building His Church?

Why is Jesus Christ building His Assembly of "Called out" ones?

Answer: 5 reasons:

Jesus Christ is building The Church because of:

1. ***God's plan for the church,***
2. ***God's hidden mystery which is the church,***
3. ***God's love of the church,***
4. ***God's beginning of the church*** and
5. ***God's establishing the church:***

We must have an appreciation of these reasons.

### **1. God's plan for the Church**

**Ephesians 3:10-11 (NKJV)** tells us: “to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly [places,] according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,”

The church exists because of God’s deep, eternal, and holy **plan** according to His deep, eternal, and holy **desire**.

God has a deep, eternal, and holy desire. This is that He would have a church – a city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

## 2. God’s hidden mystery, which is The Church.

**Ephesians 3:3-5 (NKJV)** says: “How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery ... 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.”

The secrets that a person hides in his heart and does not tell others are often quite precious and important. This is how God views The Church.

*God had a mystery; when Adam and Eve came to the earth, they didn’t understand that they were supposed to be a precursor to the church.*

**Ephesians 3:9 (NKJV)** says: “and to make all see what [is] the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;”

*The church was locked up and hidden in the heart of God.*

## 3. God’s Love for The Church

**John 3:16 (NKJV)** says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

The word ‘so’ can be replaced with ‘in this manner’ and ‘in like manner’ – God has to demonstrate that He loves the world.

Similarly, **Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)**: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,”

This should help us to understand the love that Christ has for the church; in the same way a husband attends to his wife, Christ attended to us and gave everything for us.

*God is building his church because He loves us.*

**Matthew 13:45-46 (NKJV)** says: “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, “who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

In the Lord’s eyes the church is not only a pearl but also a pearl of great value.

**Ephesians 5:29 (NKJV)** says: “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes (**build up**) and cherishes (**tender loving care**) it, just as the Lord [does] the church.”

Nourishing is related to His feeding, and cherishing is related to His caring.

#### The Marks of the True Church Are:

1. The preaching of the word.
2. The administering of the sacraments (ordinance).
3. The exercising of church discipline.

**1. The preaching of the word: - Acts 14:3 (NKJV):** Therefore they stayed there a long time, **speaking (*preaching*)** boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands (***descriptive verse***).

Wherever the word is preaching, the Lord Himself will bear witness to His grace.

**2. The administration of sacraments: - Genesis 17:10-11 (NKJV):** “This [is] My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; “and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a **sign** of the covenant between Me and you.”

**Circumcision and Baptism: -** In the Old Testament, they had to perform physical circumcision as a sign of the covenant, but in the New Testament, we have spiritual circumcision.

The spiritual meaning of circumcision is to put off the flesh, to put off self and the old man, through the crucifixion of Christ. Baptism serves as a reminder of our participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Likewise, baptism and the Lord’s supper are not the reasons that you and I are justified. **Rather, they are the outward sign and confirmation (seal) that God had already justified us.**

This is to remind us that we died, we were buried, and we resurrected in Christ.

**3. The exercise of church discipline: - 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (NKJV):** “For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

a. Those who live in sin and remain in it, refusing to repent are to be judged by the church. (**1 Corinthians 5, NKJV**).

b. To remove such a person is not just to remove a sin from the church but to judge and remove a sinful person so that the church will not be leavened by his presence.

The reason why the church worldwide is not experiencing the power of God is because we have let sin fester.

### Mount Zion and the Heavenly Jerusalem - Spiritual Location, God's Habitation

Whenever you come to church, it is not a physical location, but is a spiritual location. We the church are God's spiritual location.

Whenever we congregate as a church, we are not alone; a company of angels are with us!

Lastly...

Be reminded that:

***"The Church I see"*** is the goal and ***the Marks of the true Church*** are the means.

As we embrace the Marks of the True Church, 'The Church I see' will become a living reality.

This article covered the first 3 reasons why Christ is building the church: God's plan for the church, God's hidden mystery which is the church, and God's love of the church.

To learn more and come into a greater appreciation of 'God's beginning of the church' and 'God's establishing the church', please click on the video below.