

**“Is Church Needed”**

**Matthew 16:18**

Big Idea – Jesus put the church into the world for an eternal purpose.

Intro: Is the church outdated, irrelevant today? Why do we need it?

Note please, these Bible verses:

*Matt. 16:18 “...Jesus said, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Why did Jesus build His church?*

What is the eternal purpose of the church?

1. Reaching people with the good news of eternal life for Heaven.

Mark 16:15 Jesus said, “Go into all the world and give the gospel (good news), to everyone...”

Turn to Acts 2:

*Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show that you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

*40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”*

*41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.*

*46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—*

*47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

Call this: evangelism, outreach, witness, missions

Whose responsibility? - Every Christian

*Corinthians 5:20 So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is as if God is calling to you through us. We speak for Christ when we beg you to be at peace with God.*

*2 Cor 6:1, 2 “...as workers together with Him we plead with you...*

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

Howard Hendricks tell this great, true story: “The greatest witness for Jesus Christ that I know anything about in the city of Dallas is not a preacher. He's an ophthalmologist. He was in the power structure of

an evangelical church for twelve years and never led anybody to Jesus Christ. A group of college kids came along one day and said, "Hey, Doc, are you sharing your faith?"

The doctor said, "No, as a matter of fact, I'm not. I don't even know how to go about it."

They said, "We've got a little training program. How about getting involved in it?"

He said, "Count me in."

They taught him how to share his faith.

This guy leads people to Christ as if it's going out of style.

I was way out in a remote section of India, and I used this story as an illustration, but I didn't use his name, figuring nobody knew Dr. Jack Cooper. When I finished, a doctor came up and said, "You were talking about Jack Cooper weren't you?"

I said, "How did you know?"

He said, "I went to medical school in Dallas. While I was there, I went to see Dr. Cooper about my eyes. He led me to Christ and disciplined me all the way through medical school."

Today that doctor is the only licensed neurosurgeon in that part of India. He has absolutely unbelievable impact for Jesus Christ. He will tell you it started in the office of a Dallas doctor who knew why he was here instead of in heaven."

2. Teaching people how to live on this earth.

Call this: discipleship, Christian education, teaching

*Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Produces spiritual maturity & growth

How? The Word

*2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching, for showing people what is wrong in their lives, for correcting faults, and for teaching how to live right.*

*17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

Pastor's responsibility - teach the Word,

every Christian's responsibility - learn the Word.

Everyone's responsibility – "do the Word"

*James 1: 22 "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves."*

3. Sharing with one another

*Acts 2:44 And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had.*

*45 They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need.*

Church attendance is infected with a malaise of conditional loyalty which has produced an army of ecclesiastical hitchhikers. The hitchhiker's thumb says, "You buy the car, pay for repairs and upkeep and insurance, fill the car with gas--and I'll ride with you. But if you have an accident, you are on your own! And I'll probably sue you."

Here's the unspoken credo of so many of today's church attenders: "You go to the meetings and serve on the boards and committees, you grapple with the issues and do the work of the church and pay the bills--and I'll come along for the ride. But if things do not suit me, I'll complain and probably bail out--my thumb is always out for a better ride."

Call this: giving, stewardship, tithing, benevolence

Whose responsibility? – Every Christian

*Luke 6:38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."*

1 Cor. 16:2

4. Caring for one another.

Hospitality, encouragement, fellowship

A study once disclosed that if both Mom and Dad attend church regularly, 72 percent of their children remain faithful in attendance. If only Dad attends regularly, 55 percent remain faithful. If only Mom attends regularly, 15 percent remain faithful. If neither attend regularly, only 6 percent remain faithful.

*Acts 2:46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—*

Singer John Charles Thomas, who lived from (September 6, 1891 – December 13, 1960) was a popular American opera, operetta and concert baritone. At age sixty-six he wrote to syndicated columnist Abigail Van Buren: "I am presently completing the second year of a three-year survey on the hospitality or lack of it in churches. To date, of the 195 churches I have visited, I was spoken to in only one by someone other than an official greeter and that was to ask me to move my feet."

Whose responsibility? – Every Christian

5. Praying

*Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

*Ephesians 6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers, asking for everything you need. To do this you must always be ready and never give up. Always pray for all God's people.*

*19 Also pray for me that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the secret of the Good News without fear.*

*Philippians 1:3,4 I thank my God every time I remember you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,*

*James 5:16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*

Pray

Until

Something

Happens