

Why the Church!
Matthew 16:13-20
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Maybe you have heard people say that they love Jesus, but don't like the church. These people think they can have a relationship with Jesus apart from his church. There is even a book written entitled "*They like Jesus, but not the church*" by Dan Kimball. There are so many wrong things with claiming to love Jesus and then not loving his church. *If you don't love the church, then you don't love God. IF you don't love your brother and sister, how can the love of God be in you? 1 John 4:20* I understand some of us have been hurt by churches; some have vowed to never set foot in a church building due to the hurt and pain a local church inflicted them. *The church of Jesus is not perfect here on earth, it will have struggles and issues*, but people need to understand that wanting a relationship with Jesus and not with his church is disobedience to his teachings. You cannot love God and hate your brothers and sisters. *Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 John 4:21*

To think you can love Jesus and not his church shows lack of biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity. When we examine Scripture, especially the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, it becomes evident that the church has always been God's idea. The church was established by Jesus himself. It is his!

Matthew 16:13-18

Right after the confession of Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"
Jesus: "On this rock I will build my church" (v.18)

What is the church? Definition!

The word church never refers to a building or business. The word here is *Ekklesia: assembly, (Called out ones), congregation. The biblical definition of church is a gathering, assembly or congregation of those who profess Jesus as Lord.*

The church of Jesus Christ began with the preaching of the apostles in the first century, during the day of Pentecost. With the very words of Peter: "**you are the Christ**" **Acts 2:36-38**

Peter called people to choose Jesus. "*That Jesus whom you crucified, God made him Lord and Christ*"

Those who received Peter's message were baptized and added to the number of disciples. (v.41)

This is how people were joined to Christ church. They believed the message, the gospel, they were baptized and counted as followers (believers, disciples,

Christians). For people to be part of Christ's church they must believe Jesus as Lord and Messiah; once they embrace this belief, they are baptized into Christ; which symbolizes their union with Christ. *Those who believe were baptized and then added to the number of disciples.* Jesus said he would build his church and he began to do this through the preaching of the apostles as many more people became followers.

Christ's church is global, made of many local congregations. The church is made of all those in the world, who believe in Jesus as Lord and Messiah and are baptized in him. *Christ's church functions in this world through local congregations.* We see this in the first century, the church began in Jerusalem among Jews and then expanded to the non-Jewish world. ***There were churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, etc.*** Because whenever Jesus' followers went preaching and people they continued to make disciples in the communities where they traveled, they established churches. (gathering of followers of Jesus). The letters or epistles we have in the New Testament were addressed to local congregations.

The Church belongs to Jesus, he is her founder. Jesus bought the church, he purchased people for God.

Acts 20:28 ...which he purchased by his own blood

Revelation 5:9with your blood you purchased people for God.

1 Peter 1:18-19redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

1 Cor. 6:20 ...honor God with your bodies because you were bought by a price, you belong to the one who purchased you.

The church of Jesus Christ will transcend time. It will live forever. Our history as a nation will one day come to an end. The church will continue. It is promised a kingdom with Christ. The church destiny is eternal. The church of Jesus Christ prevails through obstacles, and even hell won't be able to stop her.

The gates of hell will not overcome it. (Matt.16:18).

If you belong to the Church of Jesus, then your destiny is eternal with him.

Everlasting life. You will reign with him in glory.

The Church was Jesus' idea; he founded it by his own blood. He died for his church and one day will come back for her. Until he comes, the church is here for his purposes.

The church is Jesus' instrument to reconcile the world to God. **2 Cor.5:19-20**

It is God's instrument to reach the lost (those without God). As God's people, we should never neglect the community he established. Everyone who believe that Jesus is the Christ is part of this community. ***You cannot claim to love Jesus and not be part of a local church.***

Coming soon! What does it mean to be part of the church?