



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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We Are the Church!

Truth About God: God is building His church.

Truth For My Life: I will be a faithful, active member of Jesus' church through my local church.

Lesson Text: Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 5:1-11

Key Passage: Matthew 16:18 - 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.

When God came in flesh to the earth, He could have saved the world by Himself. But He chose to marshal a team. He chose to invest Himself into twelve inexperienced young men He called as disciples to follow Him. They were unlike a dream team of experts; Jesus' team included a handful of fishermen with little-to-no experience leading people. Yet Jesus was willing to pour into them, invest in them, and build His church with them as the leaders.

Although naysayers in Acts 4 considered them "ignorant and unlearned," Jesus considered them the perfect candidates to succeed Him in making disciples who make disciples, who make disciples, all the way until Jesus returns. The church Jesus began building in the Gospels continues to help bridge the gap between God and humanity. **As the church, we point our broken world to the one who will heal them, our sinful world to the one who will forgive them, and our lost world to the one who will save them.** This is our calling. We are called to be His ambassadors of the only kingdom that will never fade away and evangelists of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We point our world to the answer they are looking for. We are the community of the Cross, the fellowship of the redeemed—we are the church.

Jesus asked a personal question, "*But whom say ye that I am?*" (Matthew 16:15). Peter excitedly provided the revelatory answer: "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (v. 16). Building on the significance of the confession, Jesus proclaimed, "*Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (v. 18). With those words, Jesus defined His mission.

The mission of Jesus involved seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). He came seeking ordinary men and women who were caught in the grip of sin. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, He broke the bondage of sin and made a way for the lost to be found. Jesus invites sinners to become part of His church—the community of disciples living as His ambassadors to a lost world. The church continues to this day. **The church is more than an organization more than the grand buildings where it worships; it is the community that continues Jesus' mission of reaching others and inviting them into fellowship with Him.**

Jesus established the fact that He is and always will be the **Rock** upon which His church is built. We are His church that is bought with His own blood and empowered by His Spirit (Acts 1:8; 20:28). The church that is built on the revelation of Jesus Christ is the most powerful force in the world. Jesus declared that the gates of Hell would not prevail against it, and He assured Peter that He endued His church with the power to bind and loose in Heaven and on earth (Matthew 16:18-19). In a world where organized religion is villainized by many, we must recognize that the church is not a human creation; God envisioned the church from the beginning, and Jesus built the church on the firm foundation of Himself as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19-22).

The church is people, not a building. It is more than the sum of what it does as an organization or the benefits it brings to those who identify with it. The word church appears over a hundred times in the New Testament. The church is the community of the Cross. **The church is a living, breathing organism composed of Spirit-filled believers like you and me.** God has a purpose and plan for each member of His church. He works through each life individually to accomplish the larger purpose of the church collectively. Each of us is called to be a faithful, active part of His church through our participation in a local congregation. **Let us be faithful to our local church in our serving, giving, attending, worshipping, discipling, and helping one another get from here to Heaven.** Together, we are the church.