

Know What You Believe
The Church Of The Lord Jesus Christ
Matthew 16.18-19

[I once met a man who, when asked, claimed to be a born again Christian. He quoted the gospel message, he confessed that Jesus Christ rose physically from the grave, he claimed to have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. From his answers he indeed identified himself as a Child of the one and only living God.]

[However, when asked where he attended Church he quickly and argumentatively said, “I don’t have to go to Church in order to be saved. I happen to think I’m better off if I don’t go to Church. I don’t have to go to Church to worship God.”]

[In our day more and more people are developing this misguided and unscriptural opinion of the Church. Granted a person does not have to go to Church to be saved, but if they know anything about the presence of our Lord and His heart then they should want to go to Church.]

[More and more young adults, many of whom were raised in good Bible preaching Churches are failing to go to and be a part of a local Church. Why? While they have many varying excuses, the most obvious answer can only be that they have failed to read their Bibles and do not understand the heart and will of God concerning their lives and the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.]

[More than ever Christian’s need to Know What They Believe about the Church.]

In Our Text We Discover,

A. The Fortress of the Church (vs 18d) [- 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 - The Church will prevail.] **There are three Biblical pictures of the Church:****

1. The Church As A Building - (Eph 2.19-22; 1 Cor 3.9-17, Isa 59.2; 57.15) - Speaks of Unity [- A building demonstrates structure or organization. The various parts of a building are needed to hold the building up so that the building can fulfill its purpose.]

Eph 2.19

[Ephesians 2:19-22 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, **and of the household of God;²⁰ **And are built upon the foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;²¹ **In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:**²² **In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.]****

[In understanding the idea of the Church as building we should understand that a building demonstrates structure in Christian living – **Note in this text that the building is,**]

- [Fitly Framed Together (Eph 2.19-22 above) – A standing building speaks of its architect and its construction. Someone had to purposefully design the building and someone had to build the various pieces together to construct the building. The materials used and their framing together were purposefully put in place to develop the structure.]

(1) [Fitly Framed – συναρμολογουμένη (gk) – This Greek word is a complex compound word combining,]

a) [“συν” – Together with, in company with]

b) [“αρμο” – A joining, joint. A joint or opening in a tomb made by tearing away the stones.] [classical Greek lexicon]

c) [“λογουμένη” – To put together.]

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A. The Fortress Of The Church

1. The Church As A Building

[The idea is far more than just being a part of the whole structure. The picture is that new Christians are fitted into the existing structure of the Church. Hence, the members being built into the structure of the whole have a highly honored place in the tabernacle of God that already exists. Therefore, Christians should be conscious of the incredible honor and place where they now abide. A Christian added to the building of the tabernacle of God should be careful never to lower the honor and holiness of the whole structure.]

1 Cor 3.9

- [An Holy Temple (1 Cor 3.9-15) – Considering the description of our addition to the building of God and the Church of our Lord we gain new insight into Paul’s inspired warning in 1 Corinthians 3.10,]

[1 Corinthians 3:9-15 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. **But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.** ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.]

[Let us take careful heed of how we build upon God building. God’s temple is meant to be a holy temple. It is meant to be distinctly sacred and divinely sanctified. It is meant to be an .]

1 Cor 3.16

- **[A Habitation for God (1 Cor 3.16; Matt 5.14-16)** – As an holy temple the Church of our Lord has, as its purpose for being, to be the dwelling place of Almighty God. If God is to find a place to live within this structure and the whole world ought to see the glory of the Almighty brilliantly beaming out of its sanctuary.]

[1 Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?]

[This brings deepening insight into the words of our Lord Jesus Christ when He said,]

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[Matthew 5:14-16 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.]

[But is Almighty God dwelling within the tabernacle of His Church? What is demanded of the Church as a building in order for it to indeed be the dwelling place (tabernacle) of God?]

1 Cor 3.17

- **[God's Tabernacle Demands a separation from evil (1 Cor 3.17; Isa 59.2; 57.15)** – If a tabernacle will indeed be the dwelling place of God, then it must needs be sanctified and holy. Why? Because God cannot and will not be in the willful presence of sin and iniquity. The Bible reveals,]

[Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.]

[1 Corinthians 3:17 If any man defile the of , him shall God destroy; for the of is holy, which temple ye are.]

Isa 57.15

*[Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, **with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit**, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.]*

[Churches and church folk desire to know the presence of God in their Worship services. They want to know the presence of God in their Christian service. But all too often good Church going folk try to mingle sin with their Christianity. Then they wonder, “Why does it seem like God is so far from me and my Church?”]

[If the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ will be the Tabernacle of God, then it must be a sanctified building. The building is only as sanctified as its structure, which for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is its members. Is your Church a fit habitation for God? How do you impact your Church and its whole purpose for existing?]

[The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is Pictured as a building, in this picture we discover the organization and structure of the Church as well as its purpose for being built.]

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1 Cor 12.12

2. The Church As A Body (1 Cor 12.12-31) - Speaks of Vitality [- The body adds life and vital purpose to organization. **It is possible to have organization and still lack a vitality or life.**]

[1 Corinthians 12:12-14 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many.]

- **[This body has one head - Jesus Christ (Col 1.12-13, 18).]**

Col 1.18

[Colossians 1:12-13 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:]

*[Colossians 1:18 **And he is the head of the body**, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.]*

[The late Adrian Rogers often said, "A Body with no head is dead, A body with two heads is a freak."]

[The Church Body has one head, the Lord Jesus Christ. What does the head do for a body? It tells everything else what to do and how to function. The rest of the body, every part does what the head wills it to do or the body fails to function.]

[Christian Churches are failing to function because the body has become disconnected from the head. The body of Christ has become diseased and handicapped by parts and members that refuse to hear and heed their head.]

1 Cor 12.13

- **[The Spirit of God unites us to this body (1 Cor 12.13, 18) – How are Christians placed into this body?]**

[1 Corinthians 12:13 **For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.]

[1 Corinthians 12:18 **But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.**]

[Almighty God places us into His body, the Church as He sees fit. You need to learn to hear and heed Almighty God about how you fit into the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.]

(1) [God often places people in the Church where they are fit, skilled, or gifted to work – King David.]

(2) [God often places people in the Church, and His work, where they feel they are least suited to serve – Moses, Gideon, many of the Apostles.]

(3) [God always places people in the Church where He omnisciently knows they will do the most good – Joseph.]

- **[There are many distinct members, yet one body** (1 Cor 12.14-20) – The body consists of many distinct members, working together in harmony under the unifying direction of its head. The Church should embrace diversity in harmony.]

[1 Corinthians 12:14 *For the body is not one member, but many.*]

- **[Every member is needed and is important** (1 Cor 12.15-17; 21-24)]

[1 Corinthians 12:15-17 *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*]

[Each member of the Church has its own purpose and usefulness. One member should not judge the work or usefulness of another member. Every member must do the work and fulfill the purpose God has given it. The eye is not an ear, the mouth is not the nose.]

[However the distinctive work of every part of the body should not be considered a license to sin in the name of ministry. The purpose of every part of the body of our Lord will lend

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itself to the holiness and fitness of the whole Church for the presence of God. The Church is meant to be the tabernacle (dwelling place) of God.]

- **[Every member should care for the other members (1 Cor 12.25-27; Eph 4.16) – The Bible reveals,]**

[1 Corinthians 12:25-27 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.]

Eph 4.16

[Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.]

[How do you care for your body? When you cut yourself do you just go ahead and amputate the injured part of your body? If you cut your finger while cooking, do you cut it off? If you cut your foot while walking barefoot, do you cut it off? If you cut your face while shaving, do you cut your head off? No, you care for the injured part of your body. You go get your mommy or wife to kiss it for you, which somehow makes it feel better. You put a band aid on it. Then you show everyone just how injured you are so they will do your work for you.]

[If you are so willing to care for your physical body, why are we so quick to amputate members of our Lord's body. We are supposed to care for, nurture and even nourish (build up) those who are a part of the living body of our Lord Jesus Christ.]

[Since the picture of the Church as a Body speaks of the vitality or life within the Church, it is important for us to consider who brings life into a Church. Someone might think, "Okay, my church is a dead church, I'm going to go to another Church." You will go to Church after Church and continuously find the same thing, dead Churches. The Church itself cannot bring life and vitality into you, but you can bring life and vitality into any Bible believing Church. If you feel like your Church is a dead Church, then it is likely that your sick and sinful life and attitude have sickened the Church and put it into a deathlike coma. Get your life right with Christ and your Church will come to life. Spiritually sick members make for a spiritual sick and handicapped Church body.]

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[The Church as a Building of our Lord reminds us of the organization or structure of the Church. The Church as the Body reminds us that the church is a living and vital organism caring for and nurturing one another.]

Rev 21.1

3. **The Church As A Bride - Speaks of Purity (Rev 21.1-2; 19.7-16; 2 Cor 11.2; Eph 5.25-32; Matt 25.1-13; 1 John 3.1-3)** [- The Bible speaks of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Bride. In referring to the Church as a Bride the Bible is reminding each of us of our Preparation and Purity as a Church and members of the Church. In the Bible we discover,]

[Revelation 21:1-2 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.]

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- **[Promised Bride - We have been espoused to one husband, Jesus Christ (2 Cor 11.2).]**

[2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.]

- **[Pure Bride - Christ desires to purify and prepare his bride (Eph 5.25-32).]**

[Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.]

- **[Prepared Bride - The bride should anticipate His arrival (Matt 25.1-13)]**

[Matthew 25:1-2 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. ² And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.]

- **[Purposeful Bride - Purity is contingent upon expectation (1 John 3.1-3).]**

[1 John 3:1-3 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him

not. ² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.]

B. The Function of the Church (vs 19) [- And I will give

Matt 16.19

unto thee **the keys of the kingdom of heaven**: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.]

1. The Churches Authority (Luke 12.32, cf. 27-37; Matt 18.18-20) [- The Kingdom Keys speak of stewardship and authority. Our Lord Jesus Christ has given the Keys to the Kingdom to His Church. These keys represent authority, they represent the ability to lock and unlock something. The Bible reveals,]

Keys in the Word of God
 Matt 16.19 – Keys of the Kingdom
 Isa 22.22 Key of the house of David
 Rev 3.7 – The Key of David
 Luke 11.52 – The Key of Knowledge
 Rev 1.18 – Keys of Hell and Death
 Rev 9.1; 20.1 – Key of the bottomless pit

[Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.]

[Our text notes that God wants to give His kingdom to His flock, note here that it is given to the flock or the Church. This adds light to,]

[Matthew 18:18-20 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.]

[There is a kingdom work for the Church and its members to do, and we are to be diligently doing this work. **The members of the Church must work within the Church and the Church must work with its members.** The stewardship of our Lord's kingdom is placed under the stewardship of the Church as a whole. Hence, local Church bodies need to recognize the position they have been given by God within their communities and our world, and the Church's members must understand their importance within the body of Christ. Church member's need to be functioning member's of their Church.]

2. The Churches Adversaries (vs.19; 1 Cor 16.9; 2 Cor 2.12; 4.3) [- Keys are used to open and close doors. The doors of life are closed and locked in order to keep out unwanted individuals. God gave Adam and Eve dominion in the Garden of Eden. Through their rebellion and sin Adam and Eve lawfully gave that dominion to Lucifer or the Devil. Christ regained that

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2 Corinthians 11:13-15 - For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Dominion legally when he redeemed it on 's Cross. That dominion has been returned to the Church so that the Church can do God's kingdom work here on earth.]

[So the doors were and are being locked by Lucifer the god of this world and those who serve him in this world. They are our adversaries and they keep closing and locking doors. With the Keys to the Kingdom, **which is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God** we the Church seek to open those closed doors and win this lost World back to our Lord.]

[Concerning these doors the Bible reveals,]

[1 Corinthians 16:9 For a **great door and effectual is opened** unto me, and **there are many adversaries.**]

[2 Corinthians 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, **and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,**]

[Colossians 4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would **open unto us a door of utterance,** to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:]

3. **The Churches Advocate (Matt 28.18-20; 1 John 4.4-6)** [– We can do nothing in and of our own power, but through our Lord Jesus Christ and **in the context of His Church Body** we find great authority, strength, purpose, and victory. The Bible says,]

Matt 28.18

[Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.]

1 John 4.4

[Our Lord has commissioned and resourced His Church body to reach the World with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.]

[1 John 4:4-6 Ye are of God, **little children,** and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. ⁵ They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. ⁶ **We are of God:** he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.]

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B. The Function Of The Church

1. The Authority of the Church
2. The Adversaries of the Church

[We often use these verses in an individual sense, but could it be that these verses are really speaking of the collective authority and strength of the Church of our Lord. There is incredible strength and confidence that flows from the Church of our Lord. A Christian separated from the Church is a Christian weakened by his individualism. A Christian joined to a Bible Believing Church is fitly framed into the Building and Body of Christ and is positioned to contribute to and draw from the supernatural power poured into the Church by our Lord.]

C. **The Founder of the Church (vs 18c)** [- *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; . . .* – Let every Christian always be reminded that the Church is the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is His Church and He will yield it to no one. Concerning Christ’s absolute authority over the Church the Bible declares,

1. Jesus built his Church (Matt 16.18)

[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.]

2. Jesus is the head of the Church (Col 1.18)

[Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.]

3. Jesus places people into the Church (1 Cor 12.18)

[1 Corinthians 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.]

4. Jesus loves His Church (Eph 5.25-32)

[Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;]

5. Jesus gave himself for the Church (Eph 5.25)

[Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;]

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2. The Adversaries of the Church
3. The Advocate of the Church

6. Jesus will soon come to claim His Church (Rev 19.7-19)

[Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.]

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3. The Advocate of the Church

C. The Founder Of The Church

1. Jesus Built His Church
2. Jesus Is The Head Of The Church
3. Jesus Places People In His Church
4. Jesus Loves His Church
5. Jesus Gave Himself for His Church
6. Jesus will come for His Church