

Have You Heard The Good News About The Church Of Christ? The Gospel Of The Church

*“I will build My church, and the gates
of Hades will not prevail against it.”*
-- Matthew 16:18

Jesus promised to build His church! Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus fulfilled His promise when the church began on the day of Pentecost following His ascension to heaven (**Ac 2:36-47**). Today His church still exists in its simplicity and fullness as revealed in the New Testament.

If you consider yourself a Christian, are you sure that you are a member of His church, and not just some man-made religious organization that is completely foreign to what is found in the Bible?

THE CHURCH DEFINED

The Greek word for “church” is “ekklesia” - It means “an assembly” and is used in the NT even in a nonreligious sense (**Ac 19:32,39,41**).

In a religious sense, church (ekklesia) is used in the New Testament at least three ways:

1. The church universal ~ the entire assembly of all who are saved (**Ep 1:22-23; He 12:22-23**).
2. The church local ~ this is a company of Christians in one area who are worshipping and working together (**Ro 16:16; 1Co 1:2**).
3. The church meeting ~ this is an assembly of Christians gathered for worship (**1Co 14:19,28,35**).

In the most simple of terms, the church is the people of God, not a building or denomination!

THE CHURCH DESCRIBED

Many do not think very highly of the church. Perhaps that is because they don't know how the Bible describes the church of Christ. But consider what is written about the church:

1. The church is the body of Christ (**Ep 1:22-23; Col 1:18**).
2. The church is the temple of God (**Ep 2:19-22; 1Co 3:16-17**).
3. The church is part of God's eternal plan (**Ep 3:10-11**).
4. Christ is the Savior of the church, Who loves and nourishes it (**Ep 5:23,25-27**).
5. Christ is head over all things to the church (**Ep 1:22**).

Clearly the church is precious to Christ, and should be to us as well!

THE CHURCH DEFILED

Unfortunately, even as Jesus and His apostles foretold, there was **a falling away** in which

many changed and defiled the church (despite the warning in **1Co 3:16-17**).

In His parable of the wheat and tares, Jesus foretold there would be an attempt by Satan to destroy His efforts (**Mt 13:24-30,36-43**). The apostasy to come was described in greater detail by the apostles Paul and Peter in their epistles (**1Ti 4:1-3; 2Pe 2:1-3**).

Before the New Testament was even completed, the apostasy had begun to occur in the 1st century A.D. (**Jude 3-4**). It happened just as described, with evil influences from within and from without the churches leading people astray (**Ac 20:29-30**).

The apostasy began gradually. By the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. it increased rapidly. Church leaders began competing for authority over all the local churches. Churches divided over human traditions and false doctrines. Separate churches began to form, and today there are over 38,000 denominations with their various hierarchies controlling local congregations!

As the falling away took place, what happened to true and faithful churches of Christ? As a spiritual entity, the church universal has never ceased to exist (cf. **Mt 16:18; He 12:22-29**). The gates of hell have not prevailed against it!

Wherever faithful Christians humbly submitted to the authority of Christ as revealed in the apostles' doctrine (**Ac 2:42**), and were content to abide in the pattern or ways set down by the apostles in the New Testament (**1Co 4:17; Ph 4:9**), there you would find the Lord's church.

Just as in New Testament times, faithful local churches would assemble however they could,

even in homes if necessary (**Ro 16:5**). They did not make a lot of headlines, and often were simply branded as heretics by those powerful churches that had apostatized.

THE CHURCH TODAY

There are churches today that still proclaim the pure gospel of Jesus Christ (**Mk 16:15-16; Ga 1:6-9**). Wherever the gospel is preached and souls respond, Christians come together as local churches of Christ (**Ro 16:16**).

They honor Jesus' prayer for unity (**Jn 17:20-23**) and take seriously Paul's warning against religious division (**1Co 1:10-13; 3:3-4**). They do this by refusing to use denominational names, or adopt denominational doctrines.

Such churches of Christ number in the tens of thousands and are found throughout the world!

THE CHURCH AND YOU

The gospel (good news) of the church is that today one does not have to belong to a denomination started by men. One can simply become a Christian, a member of that church for which Jesus shed His blood (**Ac 20:28**).

Becoming a member of the Lord's church begins by obeying the gospel of Christ with faith in Jesus, repentance of sins, confession of faith, and baptism (**Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38-41; Ro 10:9-10**). Saved in this way, the Lord Himself adds you to His church (**Ac 2:47**)!

But it does not end with baptism. One must be willing to be a disciple of Jesus, which requires learning what Jesus taught and keeping His commandments (**Mt 28:19-20; Jn 14:15**).

A local church is designed to keep us faithful to Christ, through its frequent assembling (**Ac 2:42; 20:7; He 10:25**). After baptism, one should find a local church where they can simply be a Christian, and by that name honor Christ (**Ac 11:26; 1Pe 4:16**).

If you believe in Jesus, be simply a Christian, serving Him in His church without man-made names and creeds that present a divided "Christendom" to the world contrary to Jesus' prayer for unity (**Jn 17:20-23**) and Paul's condemnation of division (**1Co 1:10-13**)!

To learn more, this is your invitation for you to visit and to investigate this church in your area:

~ Fortune Road Church of Christ ~

2431 Fortune Road
Kissimmee, FL 34744
(407) 348-0300
KissimmeeChurch.org

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:30am
Morning Worship 10:30am
Evening Worship 6:00pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00pm

Mark Copeland

Evangelist
(407) 319-1725

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