

This is His Church!”

Matthew 16:13-18

Intro. –

“I love Thy Church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand.
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

Yes, our text today speaks of a possessive case! It was our Lord who said, “*I will build MY Church...*” We know that Christ was not speaking of a building and we also know Christ was referring to this local congregation. The Church of Christ at Eaton is the Lord’s church, isn’t she?

What I’m about to say I would ask that you listen carefully. The whole time we have worked with the Lord’s church here, we have heard the following: “Our church...” or “My church...” etc. Again, a possessive case is being used. I know what people mean when they say such things. In most cases they mean nothing more than being thankful and involved with the Lord’s Church right here. But what do our neighbors, friends and family members conclude when we use such terminology?

Now, certainly I don’t always use the right terms, but when it comes to referring to the church of which I am apart, I make a conscientious effort to refer to it as *The Lord’s Church*. Isn’t such the case and isn’t it a good thing to use biblical terms in referring to the Body of Christ as His? Since this is HIS CHURCH it would be good of us to know all that we can concerning His Church – her purpose, her plan, and her proposal.

Purpose: to better understand the meaning behind THIS IS HIS CHURCH

I What is the CHURCH?

- In quick summation this is what Christ meant by *My Church*

A. A Company of Learners

1. Soon after Christ began His ministry He gathered an inner circle of twelve men – *disciples...*
2. Term “disciples” means “learner or student” = these twelve men were pupils in the school of Jesus. They were learners under the tutelage of Christ.
3. And learn they eventually did – they learned what He taught and learned Who Jesus was/is...
4. In learning from Christ they realized the imperfections in their life in comparison..., but the flip side is they also learned of their amazing possibilities.
5. Parallel thought – as members of His Church, we are *disciples* – every lesson, message, program, happening should be geared as an effort to teach and learn of Christ!
6. You and I are part of His Church only because of His grace/mercy. We realize our tragic lack but recognize more and more the thrilling potential/possibilities with His Spirit in us!

B. A Brotherhood

1. Certainly not a perfect brotherhood – composed of imperfect people like you and me:
 - a. First Church in Acts 6 = “...*there arose a murmuring...*”
 - b. always has been and always will be those who refuse to surrender themselves wholly to X!
 - c. always has been and always will be those with a fighting interest...
2. In spite of this... the Lord’s Church approaches nearest to any organization to perfection...
 - a. the spirit of brotherliness amazed/charmed the world – How Xtians love one another!
 - b. that same spirit amazes and attracts people today.
 - c. people want to love and be loved – faithful, growing churches are result of this attitude.

3. Say this again, our brotherhood is not perfect... but, is better than any other org. in world!

C. The Body of Christ

1. Christ speaks through our lips, He ministers through our hands, takes Gospel thru our feet...
2. The Church is a *living body* through whom Christ uses to express Himself.
3. Remember, you are the *called out ones* to represent Christ in this area!!

II What is the Church's PURPOSE?

A. Popular Purposes for the Church

1. Church is a "take it place"
 - a. many *join* church like many get married – "What am I going to get out of this?"
 - b. when expectations are not met – they hit the road or divorce themselves from each other...
 - c. far too many come to the Lord's Church with little intentions of giving – it's a take it place!
2. Church is a "social club"
 - a. place where one comes to maintain the right image...
 - b. place to come to check up on each other....
 - c. place to marry/bury/feed – Illus. – received call in one ministry about a meal at feed mill...

These obviously miss the mark or the purpose of the Church!

B. Her Purpose is Two-Fold

1. Win the lost – "upon this rock" – Christ came for one reason = to seek/save the lost!
 - any local church that doesn't have this as her sole reason to exist is destined to fail!
2. Build the won
 - a. people need a sense of God – we live in a world of the seen – easy to forget the unseen...
 - b. Church is to instill this sense that we live and work in the very presence of Christ our Lord!

Taking this two-fold purpose – I challenge anyone to give an institution/organization with a higher more worthy purpose than the Lord's Church!

III What is Our ATTITUDE Toward the Church?

A. Some Are Antagonistic

1. These are the ones who never mention church without a snarl/criticism... sarcasm is the rule...
2. Always bring up the bad experiences... More times than not it is a smoke screen for not being willing to take up one's cross and follow Jesus!

B. Some are indifferent (two groups)

1. There are those who know little if anything concerning the church – they go by rumor/hearsay...
 - preconceived notion that if money is involved it is automatically held in suspect...
2. Then, there are those who know enough of church to be dangerous – often drop out/reel back:
 - a. these are the ones telling the world, "I gave it chance..."Til I get my way I'm holding back"
 - b. in doing so the purpose and the Head of the Church is being dishonored.
3. How can anyone who loves the Lord, be indifferent and dishonoring to His Church?

C. Some are Lukewarm

1. These are the ones who say they are "members" but obviously don't work at it.
2. Seldom give, help, work or volunteer in any capacity – they *play* church rather than *be* the church
3. Note: the church through history progressed not because of these but in spite of these!

D. Some are Avowed Friends

1. Those belonging to this group recognize this is their means of expressing faith provided by God!
2. Those who are true friends of the church have but one regret – that they are not truer friends!

IV What are We DOING to Build the Church?

A. He Builds Through Us

1. Christ limited Himself by building His Church through humans – you and me!
2. Anything to be done in building a stronger/more on purpose church here going to involve YOU!
3. Note: you and I are totally dependent upon Christ... and He now is dependent upon us.
4. A growing/fruitful local church = men/women/young people willing do things His way for His purposes alone!

B. He Builds in the Face of Opposition

1. I'll build MY Church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it!
 - a. Illus. – building (growing) always costs – e.g. Quinton Hogg – “What did it cost to build the Polytechnic Institute of London?” He responded, “One man’s life!”
 - b. note: it has taken one’s life to build the church here in Eaton...
2. Cheapest thing anyone can do is tear something down. A monkey with a match can destroy more in a minute than a thousand wise individuals can build in years.
3. Our Lord will build His Church and you and I can be a part of it! That should be the best news!

C. He Builds in Spite of Opposition

1. How daring: “*I will build MY CHURCH!*” – Our Lord will do this in spite of all the evil forces!
2. How each of us need this bracing reassurance – that as members of HIS Church, we belong to a “sure thing!”

Conclusion: Is this church, the Church of Christ in Eaton, His Church? We do have a functional building... many in the community that are lost and need the Lord... faithful saints in the past...

His Church is not built on these facts. It can't be built on a preacher... or the fact that your family attended here. His Church is built on one fact: Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God!

Here then are my parting words to you: Faithfully upholding Christ as your Head, this is not my church, it is not your church – this is the Lord's Church. I appeal to all of you – always, always treat her accordingly.