

# What is the Church

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 2/16/2019

Brethren, today, there are many substitutes masquerading as God's True Church. It behooves us to be extremely careful when we are looking for the Church that Jesus Christ established.

Too many of our brethren do not understand the concept of "Church." Some believe that if they get the prophecy right they will have it made. Some believe it is all about food, or how a person dresses. God tells us what we can eat – that's good enough.

Paul wrote:

Romans 14:17 The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Some brethren believe that "Church" is satisfied by an hour or two of attendance every week – you show up and you receive all the perks and benefits. It is not about lip service and seat warming – it must be a deep and sincere desire to serve the living God with all our hearts.

Others believe it is finding the key to the Place of Safety and recognizing the man who promises to get you there. Strangely, a few brethren think that "Church" is about being more righteous than everybody else.

"Church," is not about finding the right organization, or one that is comfortable and convenient. Where is the Church Jesus Christ founded, and who is the head of it? Where is the True Church of God?

On the entire face of the earth, Jesus Christ has only one Church – the Church of God. What can we know about the True Church – what does the Bible reveal? Where is it? What is it? What is the purpose of the Church?

When was the Church founded, and how long will it last? The New Testament Church of God came into being on the day of Pentecost following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many brethren 3,000 – 5,000 – were called by the Father and became Children of God on that day, and the days that immediately followed.

We would say that they were, "Church members." But what were they members of? What change took place in them? What change took place in their lives?

God's Spirit was poured out on many for a very special purpose – the establishment of the Church. And God punctuated the inauguration of His Church with many signs and wonders --- so that it would be obvious to all – that something marvelous was happening!

That Church was founded on Jesus Christ. He is the same sure foundation that the Israelites looked to as they escaped from Pagan Egypt.

1Corinthians 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock [*petra*] was Christ.

Today, is anyone looking for the **true foundations** of the Church? Nothing has changed for the Church since that first day. What is the purpose of the Church? What did Jesus teach?

Jesus taught – a way of life, not a religion. Are we seeking and desiring to build on the same foundation – Jesus Christ?

Our forefather in the Faith, Abraham sought to found – to establish - his life, his beliefs, his faith, and that of the future of his family on the True God. That culture that Abraham was founded on the precepts of Babel, Babylon and Nimrod. There was little knowledge of the True God in the land

Idolatry was rampant. How could one come to knowledge of the truth?

Hebrews 11 is the "Faith Chapter"

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Foundations = substructure. Builder = architect, artisan, founder, originator. Maker = the one who did the work, the mechanic, contractor, creator.

Abraham looked for a city, a place where God could be worshiped in sincerity and Truth. Pentecost was not the first time that God gave of His Spirit to men. In the times preceding the earthly ministry of the Jesus, God had poured out His Holy Spirit on a select few so that they could perform His Will and record the Word of God.

Speaking of this, Paul said,

2Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

2Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Church of God is the Spiritual Body of Jesus Christ who endeavor to keep His Commandments in the same way, and to the same extent that Jesus did.

The world is not being called at this time.

The Church of God is made up of all those who have been called by God the Father, repented of their sins, accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior,

been baptized as a demonstration of burying the old man of sin (Romans 6:5), and who have received an earnest God's Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands (2Corinthians 1:22).

It is they who will reign and rule with Jesus Christ in the world tomorrow.

When Jesus Christ surveys His Church from His throne of glory, He sees only one Church, one body of people – it is the Body of Christ – the Lord's Body. All the brethren who are in the Church of God are the "**Body of Christ.**"

There are numerous Biblical examples:

1Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the **body of Christ**, and members in particular.

"You are the **Body of Christ**, and members in particular."

Ephesians 1:22 And has put all things under his feet [Jesus' feet], and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Ephesians 1:23 Which is **His body**, the fullness of him that fills all in all.

"The Church, which is **His body.**"

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in **one body**; and be ye thankful.

"Ye are called in **one body**; and be ye thankful."

Romans 12:4 For as we have many members in **one body**, and all members have not the same office:

Romans 12:5 So we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another.

"We, being many, are **one Body in Christ**, and every one members one of another."

1Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the **body of Christ**?

Notice the emphasis:

1Corinthians 10:17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

"The bread which we break, is it not the [fellowship] of the **Body of Christ**? For we being many are one bread, and **one body**."

Jesus said – this is My body - we will look closer at this understanding and teaching as we approach Passover

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: = Church

"For the perfecting of the saints...for the edifying of the **Body of Christ**."

Jesus founded His Church for the purpose of providing a nurturing home for Christians to be able to develop.

This is what our Faith is about!

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"

None of us are there yet.

Jesus established the Church for the purpose of training up and qualifying a people of spiritual knowledge and Godly character to reign and rule with Him in the Millennium. In order for those in the Church to be able to overcome Satan, they are empowered with a measure of God's Spirit.

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you** [that is speaking of God's Spirit in us], the hope of glory:

The Church is the **body of believers**, and the firstfruits in God's Plan, who have and are being led by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And, the Church provides the opportunity wherein we are able to, "...consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." (Hebrews 10:24)

God's purpose for God's Church is to prepare those who are willing to live His way of righteousness and self-control. God has not called the Church for its Salvation alone.

Too many "Church People" are like Protestants who want to get to heaven – while not being too concerned about everybody else. The responsibility and duty of Church brethren is to function as God's tools and instruments in the dispensation of salvation to humanity.

Luke 11:33 Jesus said: No man, when he has lighted a candle, puts it in a secret place, neither under a bushel basket, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

The responsibility and duty of Church is to demonstrate God's wisdom to His spiritual creation, and ultimately to be in the Kingdom of God. The Love of Christ cannot be achieved without the Love of our fellow man. The Love of Christ, and the Love of our fellow man cannot exist without each other.

It is not only the Church who is to be saved.

Hebrews 2:10 "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons and daughters **unto glory**."

We are to be practicing on real people now – learning for the Millennium and afterward. Those who are converted in Christ will at this time, will - after their salvation and resurrection to eternal life - aid in the conversion of all peoples of the earth.

The Church is only the firstfruits of God's Work and not the end of God's plan of salvation.

The Church's commission is to preach the Gospel (good news) of the coming Kingdom of God, and to warn all nations, and especially the lost tribes of the house of Israel, as God gives us the strength.

It takes the combined effort of the brethren to get the job done.

Matthew 10:23 When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Matthew 24:14 This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

It is God the Father who calls and adds to His Church as He sees fit.

Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44)

"And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (John 6:65)

Notice how it is only God's prerogative to add to the Church.

"Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47)

Those who are a part of the Church, at this time, have the opportunity to be in the **better resurrection** (Hebrews 11:35), that is, resurrected to Spirit God-life, to rule, under the authority of Jesus Christ, as kings and priests throughout the millennium.

Revelation 1:6 [Jesus] has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

Revelation 5:10 ... and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead [all the world] lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

God places each person within the Church **where it pleases Him**; Only a select few people with special gifts that are needed for the purposes of God's Will are being called at this time.

God gives gifts to the individual members for the profit of all the other members of the Church.

1Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1Corinthians 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

1Corinthians 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

1Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

1Corinthians 12:11 But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

1Corinthians 12:12 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.

It is by the Spirit of God the Father that we are all baptized into the Body of Jesus Christ – the Church.

1Corinthians 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.

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

1Corinthians 12:15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

1Corinthians 12:16 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?

1Corinthians 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

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

1Corinthians 12:19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

1Corinthians 12:20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

1Corinthians 12:21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

1Corinthians 12:22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

1Corinthians 12:23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

1Corinthians 12:24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked:

All members should have the same care one for another.

1Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

1Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the **body of Christ**, and members in particular.

We are individually members of the **body of Christ**.

Jesus said that "They shall put you out of the synagogues:

We should not be surprised that when we teach and stand for this concept – that we are put out of the Church – put out of the assemblies

John 16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever kills you will think that he doeth God service.

John 16:3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

John 16:4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

The Church is the Kingdom of God in embryo, and God is reproducing Himself in man.

The Church of God is being taught and trained to teach and rule in the millennium under Christ when He sets His hand to save the rest of mankind – we are to be learning to teach here and now.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

What is the Church to teach? How are we to let our light shine? The answer to these two questions is encompassed by the total life of Christ

What kind of man was He? What did He do? How did He live His life? That is what we teach and that is how we live.

Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

If we are in the True Church that Jesus is the head of, we know that God cares about how much each of us loves the brethren and that we lay your lives down for the brethren as Jesus laid His life down for us. We can have all the knowledge in the world, but if we do not have love of the brethren, we have nothing.

Let's go back to this concept of Jesus being **our foundation**. Like Abraham David was looking for a sure foundation:

Psalm 118:19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD:

There is only one way – David calls it the gate or portal or one access to God.

Psalm 118:20 This gate of the LORD, into which [only] the righteous shall enter.

Psalm 118:21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

There is a **Messianic Prophecy** here – Jesus' principles are rejected.

Psalm 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Psalm 118:23 This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

Psalm 118:24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

The point of the Scriptures is abundantly clear: If we reject the life and principles of Jesus' life – we will be rejected.

Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

Mark 12:11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

Nothing ungodly will stand at the day of the return of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 2:34 Thou saw until that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Daniel 2:45 Forasmuch as thou saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Daniel 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Isaiah 28:17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet:

Everything that Jesus builds is built in righteousness and justice. His Church is built the same way. The Church of God is never built on a false foundation of lies and deceit. Jesus warns us many times of false teachers in this end time - Men who hide behind doctrines of their own invention.

There is only one access to God the Father.

Isaiah 28:17 continuing: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

If we are not being built up in the image of Jesus Christ – His character, mercy, forgiveness, humbly serving one another, laying our lives down as He laid His life down – we too, shall be swept away.

Again, Jesus inspired every word of the Old Testament.

2Timothy 3:16 All scripture [OT at that time] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

In the calling of the disciples, Jesus set the stage for a later revelation.

John 1:40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

John 1:41 He first finds his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

John 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him [Peter], he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas [*kephas* – Aramaic = *petros* in the Greek], which is by interpretation, A stone.

Matthew 16:13 Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Matthew 16:14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Matthew 16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Matthew 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art [the not in text] Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God.

Matthew 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

God the Father revealed to Peter that Jesus was Messiah. Jesus is now going to build upon what the Father has revealed to Peter.

Matthew 16:18 And I say also [in addition to the Father's revelation] unto thee, That thou art Peter [*Petros*], and upon this [Jesus emphatically pointing to Himself] rock [*Petra* – immovable stone mountain – not Peter, but Peter's revelation "Thou art Messiah"] I will build my church [*ekklesia* – community, congregation, assembly, called out ones; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The people of God – that is the Church of God - they will not be destroyed. The Church was not built on Peter – he sleeps in his grave – we have a living head of the Church – Jesus Christ – the Messiah of the Kingdom of God. It is interesting that the only other time the Gospel accounts record that Jesus called him Peter is when Peter was about to deny Jesus three times. Luke 22:34

Contrary to popular belief, Jesus did not establish His Church – His called out assembly of believers, in Peter. Jesus Christ is the Stone upon which His Church is founded.

1Corinthians 3:9 For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

1Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon.

1Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Acts 4:9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

Acts 4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

Acts 4:11 This [Jesus Christ] is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is **none other name / reputation / principle / belief** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Not Buddha, Vishnu, Mohamed (Mohomet) or Krishna – only the name of Jesus Christ. And even the name of Jesus is blasphemed by too many.

Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, **Lord, Lord**, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Matthew 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Trials will come to test and prove us:

Matthew 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Matthew 7:26 And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

There are many Churches of Sand.

Matthew 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Matthew 7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

Matthew 7:29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Stone:

Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building [that is us – the Church] fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord:

Ephesians 2:22 In whom [The Lord] ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

[Even the angels did not know the Plan of God- but because of the Church – they can know]

Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Ephesians 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He [God the Father] purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Ephesians 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Matthew 21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Matthew 21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke of them.

If we are not being built up in the image of Jesus Christ – His character, mercy, forgiveness, humbly serving one another, laying our lives down as He laid His life down – we too, shall be broken and ground to powder. Jesus Christ died because He loved us first and now it is our turn to try and do as Jesus Christ - our Ultimate Example - did, and love one another.

Jesus Christ is the Living Stone.

1Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking.

1Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

1Peter 2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

We look to... We go to Jesus Christ our Living Stone – our Living Foundation

1Peter 2:4 To whom [Jesus] coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

Brethren, you are the Church! We are the Church of lively Stones!

We are built up to be a spiritual house – the Church is not an earthly structure, nor a man formed organization.

1Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

1Peter 2:7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

1Peter 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

1Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

1Peter 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Jesus Christ is the living head of God's Church.

Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

Ephesians 1:23 Which is **His body**, the fullness of him that fills all in all.

End: What is the Church