The Church Jesus Built
Matthew 16:15-19

With so many churches that are so different, how can we know which _____ really wants? Today we’re examining the church that Jesus built as it’s __________ in the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus in Matthew 23:34 __________ to send forth prophets, wise men, and scribes, who would teach His will but would suffer persecution. The Lord wasn’t content for His Word merely to be ________. He sent scribes to ________ His words for all time, and His teaching is found in the New Testament.

Occasionally someone asks, “What does your church _______ about…?” and then he mentions a topic. The church Jesus built doesn’t have a board that dictates ________ doctrine. It doesn’t have a hierarchy of men with a ________ written church manual or creed. The Lord never __________ the church to make its own policy or doctrine. The only ________ of the church is Jesus Christ Himself; and He said, “All ________ in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). He instructed His apostles in verse 20 to make disciples and teach “them to ________ all that I have commanded you.” What He taught was for ________ age and the ________ world.

The church that Jesus built ________ its doctrine from the Lord Himself and the Scriptures. The church has no authority to ________ doctrines. No human or group of humans can overrule, edit, or change what the ________ teaches. The church draws its beliefs and practices from the Lord and the ________ teaching found in Scripture. When someone asks what does the church teach, we point them instead to what the Lord ________ in Scripture. The Lord Jesus said that he will judge us by His _____ (John 12:48). Let’s ________ to Him!


If you open the yellow pages, there are churches everywhere; and they have ________ names, beliefs, organizations, and practices. Since churches aren’t all alike, it poses a ________ to those who are searching for an authentic church that follows the Bible. Churches of today differ greatly from the church we ______ about in the New Testament. They _______ in belief, practice, name, organization, worship, and their source of authority.

The Lord Jesus never designed His church to be so ________ or so mixed up with human ideas and ways. He wanted His people to be one and to ________ Him. The _____ belongs only to Jesus; and the church is made up of ________ who belong to Jesus. Since we are His,
we need to _________ Him and Him alone. We must not be trapped by human beliefs or practices that _________ His teaching.

The word "church," (ekklesia) means "a _____ out assembly" (that is, a group of people who have been called together for a purpose). Christians have been called by the ______ to serve Jesus. When the New Testament uses the word church, it never refers to a __________. The word “church” refers to _________. Acts 8:3 describes the church this way, “But Saul began ravaging the ________, entering house after house; and dragging off _____ and ________, he would put them in prison.” The church in the first century was _______ ___ of men and women. The New Testament never speaks of little ________ as members of the church.

God calls people to be __________ of the church through preaching and teaching the gospel. Read what Paul said to the church at Thessalonica in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. People enter the church when they ______ the truth and they put their faith in the Lord.

Sometimes the word “church” is used in a __________ sense, speaking of every person who belongs to the Lord and has his name written in the Lamb’s book of life. Jesus said He would _______ His church (Matthew 16:18). In this sense, every person who is ________ by the blood of Christ has been ________ to the church that He built. The Bible says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the _____ of the church, He Himself being the _______ of the body” (Ephesians 5:23). The church is indeed made up of those whom Jesus has _______. The Lord has added _______ saved person to His church, His body. Used in this universal sense, the word “church” ________ refers to some nebulous collection of denominations and sects. Rather it refers to those who have ________ the Lord according to the _______ of Scripture. The church is ____ denominational or interdenominational; the church Jesus built is actually undenominational. The New Testament has no _________ of the idea of denominationalism that’s so prevalent in our world today. In the New Testament, the church was ________ the church.

Sometimes the word “church” is used in reference to a _______ congregation as in 1 Corinthians 1:2, where Paul writes “To the church of God that is in Corinth.” When Paul speaks of “churches,” he’s not talking about denominations with _________ doctrines and practices, but rather individual congregations in different locations. For instance, in Galatians 1:2, Paul _____ to the “churches of Galatia.” These were local congregations in the various ______ of the province of Galatia. They believed the same ________; they practiced the same things; and they fellowshipped each other as brethren in the universal church.
Sometimes the word “church” has reference to the _________ of a local congregation. Paul spoke of the Corinthians coming _________ as a church in 1 Corinthians 11:18. In 1 Corinthians 14:34 he said to the women that “they are to keep silent in the churches,” referring to that time when the church _________ as a congregation for worship. The very word “church” implies a calling together of people for a _________. Being part of a church means that one assembles together with other Christians for _________.

The Lord Jesus is deeply _____ to His church. Our relationship with the Lord is always in the context of being _____ of His church. The Lord Jesus and His _______ are inseparable.

First, we must realize that the Lord ______ His church (Matthew 16:18). People are not the builder of the church; they are _____ is built. They are the _______ in the building. Read 1 Peter 2:4-5. Our task is to _________ as living stones in what the Lord has built.

Second, Jesus _________ the church. Jesus didn’t purchase the church with gold or silver, but with His own _______ (Acts 20:28). Jesus must love and treasure the church beyond measure to _________ Himself for it. You may not think much of the church, but Jesus laid down His life so He might _________ it.

Third, the Lord is the _____ of His church. Read Ephesians 1:22-23. God likens the relationship of Jesus to the church as a head to its ______. The two are inseparable. Jesus _________ and ________ through His body, the church, in this world today. All _________ resides in Him as the head. If He is to work in your life, you have to _____ and _____ Him.

Fourth, the church is the _____ of Christ. Read Ephesians 5:25-27. The relationship of Christ to His church is like that of a __________ to his wife. Notice that Jesus has but _____ wife; and He has only _____ church. This passage __________ just how much Jesus cherishes the church and how He has made the church holy and blameless by the washing of water with the word. No husband would __________ someone abusing or slandering his wife, and neither will the Lord Jesus tolerate someone slandering or abusing His church.

The Scriptures describe the church Jesus built as a _______ – God is our Father, Jesus is our Lord and our older brother, and you and I are brothers and sisters. Read what Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:14-15. A household in Biblical times was a family that was living together, loving and supporting one another, the older taking care of and training the younger in the ______ of the Lord.

The Scriptures also describe the church as a __________. The Lord’s church is not a democracy; people can’t _____ on Jesus or on His teaching. Jesus is the only King and Lord
of His church. In Acts 20:28 the Bible says Jesus purchased the _______ with His blood; but in Revelation 5:9-10 the Lord purchased _______ to be a kingdom. Paul said in Colossians 1:13-14 that God “rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the _______ of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” The church is the kingdom of God on _______ today. If you wish to go to God’s heavenly kingdom, you must ______ God’s earthly kingdom, the church. We enter that kingdom by being ______ of water and the Spirit according to John 3:5. That new birth takes place when people who ________ and love the Lord ________ and are ________ into Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures also describe the church as God’s dwelling place, the _______ of God. Read Ephesians 2:19-22. God ______ in His people, and He expects them to be His ______ servants. In the New Testament Christians were _______ "Christians." God didn’t _______ of divisions among them. He ______ suggested or permitted man-made names, creeds, practices, or a hierarchy. They simply _________ the Lord and held fast to His teaching. Christians ______ lived holy lives, worshiped according to the teaching of Christ, and served the Lord by preaching the truth and being zealous for good deeds.

The marvelous thing is that you can be a member of the church Jesus built by _______ and _______ the Lord's instructions in the New Testament. If you follow Christ, you’ll _______ every man-made belief or practice. Read what the Lord said in John 8:31-32. Truth and freedom are not _______ in the traditions or commandments of men, or in religious groups established by men. If you want the _______ of the Lord follow His way found in Scripture. The Lord Jesus said, “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the ______ I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). Being in the church Jesus built means _______ _____ every man-made doctrine, idea, practice, name, or organization. It means carefully _________ what Jesus commands.

To be in the church Jesus built is a great ___________! It means His _______ purchased you, and you belong to Him. It means that He has _______ you and made you one of His family. It means that every promise and blessing given in Scripture is a promise that you can _______. We can be true and authentic Christians by returning to the Lord and His teaching. Read 1 John 2:5-6. If you ______ the Lord, keep His commandments, _______ with Jesus!

You can’t ______ the church that Jesus built; the Lord must _____ you to it. If you’ll hear the gospel, ________ with all your heart, turn away from _____, and out of love _______ Jesus as the Christ, then you’re ready to take the step where the Lord adds you to His church. That step is __________ (Acts 2:38). Just as the Lord added the people at Pentecost to the church, He will add you to His church (Acts 2:41, 47).
Just a Christian
1 Corinthians 1:1-10

Did you know that you can be a _________ of the church that Jesus purchased with His own _______ without belonging to any denomination? Today we’re going to explore _____ you can be just a Christian, just a member of the Lord’s church. The Bible is God’s wonderful _________ of faith, truth, hope, and love. God gave us His _______ to teach us, to encourage us, to comfort us, to reprove us, and to give us eternal life. Read John 20:30-31. The more we ________ the Bible, the stronger our faith will become; and that faith leads to life in His name.

If I told you I just bought a car, you would ask, “What _____ of car did you get?” It’s pretty difficult to ______ about cars without talking about some kind of car. We want to ________ the make and the model. If I said, “Well, it’s ____ a car!” we would have no concept of what that meant; but the very first car was simply a car. It was the one and only car.

When you speak of being a member of the church, the first thing people _____ is, “What kind of church is it?” They want to _______ if we go to a community church or a denomination. The idea of being just a __________ and simply being a member of the church Jesus built is foreign to the thinking of most people. But as you _______ the New Testament, the church is simply “the church.” There was no ________ of church. Did you know that you can be a member of that ________ church? That you can be _____ a Christian!

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

When people speak of the church they attend, they usually __________ themselves as denominational or nondenominational. There are _______ kinds of community churches and denominations. Various denominations developed when religious people began holding to their own __________ about God’s teaching to the point that they refused to work with others. They began __________ their peculiar doctrines or practices. In time, they needed a _______ to represent themselves. This name became a sort of brand or trademark for that particular kind of church having its _____ characteristics. It ________ a denomination. Taking up a brand name implies a __________. A denomination is a “named division.” The divided church at Corinth had members lining up behind individuals and __________ themselves from others by following his name. Some ________ Paul and said, “I am of Paul,” some Apollos, and some Peter. Paul was ______________ at that! He said, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:13). Of course, the _________ to these questions is no. No, Christ isn’t _________! No, Paul wasn’t _________ for you! No, you weren’t________ in the name of Paul!
Many denominations ask their members to go ________ faith in Christ and vow to follow the denominational bylaws or official statements. They follow their brand of Christianity; and this commitment to their doctrines and practices ________ them as a certain kind of Christian. Isn’t this ________ the kind of division that Paul was speaking against? Because so many generations have gone by with “brand name” Christianities, people have become satisfied and settled in their ways, never dreaming that the Lord ______________ of the divisions that come from brand names. God has _______ approved of such division.

Have you ever ________ a favorite dish? When it happened, you probably groaned and wished you could put it back together in its _____ and ________ state. Our religious world is __________ broken. We need to leave this brokenness and go back to the ________ church, the one that you _____ about in the New Testament. We seek to _______ _______ the pure and unbroken church, as God meant for it to be, by ___________ to the truth and to the ideals that are found in the New Testament.

In the early 1800s, people who loved God grew _______ of the fighting and division among Christian denominations. They believed the Lord wanted His people to be _________. They realized that all of the bad-mouthing and exclusiveness of the denominations ________ the name of the Lord. Their constant conflicts and divisive ways caused people to _____ _____ from Christ in disbelief. Read what the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23. They believed that the division and animosity came from people holding to ________ opinions, and creeds, and councils, and practices, and names. They believed the only way they could have _________ and unity was to unite on what the Lord commanded.

Many Christians left Europe to find religious _______ in America, but found the same conflicts here. They wanted something ________ – a pure and true Christianity free from the stains of human opinions. They believed that, “If we ________ the human and concentrate on what is truly divine, we can unite.” This unity could only come from following the _______ that’s found in God’s Word. This meant they had to _____ ____ everything that was human and denominational and ________ to the Christianity that was found in the New Testament, a Christianity that knew nothing of denominationalism. They rejected human opinions and human innovations since these things don’t find their ___________ in God’s Word, but in men. They believed that “nothing ought to be ________ upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion; but what is expressly taught, and enjoined upon them, in the word of God.” So they said, “We ______ where the Bible speaks, and we are ______ where the Bible is silent.” They wanted _____ in essentials, _________ in matters of opinion, and ______ in all things. They wanted a pure and true faith in Christ alone found in the New Testament as the ________ of their faith and practice.
It shouldn’t __________ us that people left the pure, inspired teaching and pursued what they wanted. The New Testament __________ that Christians would fall away from the truth of the gospel into error and false religion. God knew the hearts of men would often follow their _____ paths. Read what Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:29-30. Paul, by inspiration, realized that when you ______ the teaching, you cause people to fall away from the truth and from God. Read what Paul warned Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1-3. The devil is a deceiver; he intends to lead people to believe ______ teachings and lies he about certain practices being God’s will. He doesn’t care who he hurts by ___________ people. Paul knew that Christians would be ______ like ancient Israel and would ______ away from God’s teaching. He knew they would rather believe a comforting _____ than to hold to the gospel ______. Read what Paul, inspired of God, predicted in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Once a lie gets perpetuated, later generations become ___________ that this falsehood is true. They don’t even ______ they’ve been deceived.

Many today want salvation, but they don’t want to take up a cross to _______ Jesus. They want a Savior, but not a _____. They’re comfortable believing a lie and will actually _______ the truth. They are so settled in what they believe, they don’t want to _____ it could actually be wrong. For instance, early church history _______ that Christians wandered away from the teaching and practices that were found in the New Testament. The New Testament says absolutely _______ about things like holy water, lent, penance, infant baptism, intercession of the saints, sprinkling for baptism, sacrifice of mass, celibacy of priests, purgatory, priestly absolution, a pope, instrumental music in Christian worship, salvation by faith only, or the doctrine of “once saved, always saved.”

Century by century believers moved ______ away from the simplicity of the New Testament and its Christianity. They no longer followed God’s _______ for the church in the New Testament, but became something different. If we are to please God, we must _______ to what God willed in the New Testament. Returning is necessary, because repentance from _______ is necessary. One cannot remain in error and still _______ God. Read James 5:19-20. By ceasing to follow man-made doctrines and practices, the church could _______ the doctrine, worship, and organization of the New Testament church.

Our intent is to _______ the teaching and the ideals of the New Testament. The Lord Jesus built His church _______ any denomination existed. We want to be in _____ church, the church purchased with His blood. His church is _____ denominational, inter-denominational, or even non-denominational. The church that Jesus built was undenominational. Moreover, it was pre-denominational. Jesus would never approve of unifying the _____ with _____, because Jesus wants the church to remain _____ and ____. Churches of Christ _______ to “do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names.” They believe they must “discard
from their faith and their practice everything that isn’t authorized by the New Testament of the Lord and Savior, and to believe and practice whatever is there enjoined.”

This desire to ________ New Testament Christianity grew out of a conviction that the Bible is the complete and final authority. Therefore, it was and still is sufficient to ________ us all that we need to know for eternal life and for godliness. Just as a ______ will produce only after its own kind, so the seed of God’s Word will produce the same Christianity today that it did in the first century. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 8:11 that the seed of the kingdom is the ______. The Bible gives us _____ of God’s revealed will for life and godliness. Jesus promised His apostles that they would be guided into _____ the truth (John 16:12-13). If men go beyond this Word and begin to preach other things, they will not only _____ their relationship with God, according to 2 John 9, they will also ______ a different product than the church that Jesus built. Who would really want that?

Some believe the primary goal of restoration is to ______ all churches. They believe that Jesus’ prayer for unity in John 17 means all churches should __________ one another on the basis of the most fundamental things. Some feel as long as a person believes in and loves Jesus, he is _____ with God. They seem to ________ everything else that Jesus said and they _________ only what He said about unity. Before Jesus prayed for unity in John 17:20-23, He first prayed for His followers to be sanctified or “set apart” in the _____ (John 17:17). We can’t have unity ______ the truth. We can’t ________ truth with all kinds of error and still have unity. Jesus said, “If you ________ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you ______ ” (John 8:31-32).

Christ didn’t pray for a unity that sacrifices or compromises the ______. Actually, it’s our ______ in the revealed _____ that unites us. Christian unity is not ecumenism, where groups unite but ______ conflicting and contradictory beliefs and practices. Uniting with those who teach or worship in error _____ ____ the truth for compromise. To be faithful and true to the Lord, Christians cannot ignore or tolerate ______ like the ancient churches at Pergamum or Thyatira did (Revelation 2). Jesus called them to __________ and He calls us to repentance as well. When people believe or practice something false, God ______ them to repent.

Calling people ________ to the truth is to save their souls. To follow Christ, we ______ to put away what comes from man and follow what comes from God. Love the Lord, and get involved in the Lord’s church. Place your _____ in Jesus as the Christ; ________ of every sin; ________ Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and be _________ into Christ. Peter told the people at Pentecost, “Repent and be baptized ______ ____ of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Both repentance and baptism are __________.
The church of Christ  
Ephesians 4:1-6

Occasionally people ask me _____ I am a member of the church. Many years ago I became a member of the church Jesus _______, the one you can ______ about in the New Testament. We search the Scriptures because we know God has revealed the ______ in them. God’s Word is pure and holy; it never ______ anything but what is good and acceptable and perfect. When we ______ God’s Word, we show Him our love and our loyalty. The more we ______ His Word, the more we love Him. And, the more we love Him, the more we want to give our _______ to Him. When we ______ Him from the heart, the Lord is pleased.

The church that Jesus built is the one you can read about in the New Testament; it appeared on ______ in identifiable, local congregations. They were like ______ in various locations, meeting each first day of the week to _____________. They ate their meals together; they took care of their needy; and they ______ the Lord. Acts 2:42 says, “They were continually ______ themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” To be the church Jesus built today, congregations must _____ to follow the examples of what God desires. We can ______ what God instructs by examining the New Testament.

The Lord’s teaching was not ______ for the first century. He gave it for _____ time. That teaching is preserved for us in ______ form in the New Testament so that people in every age might know God’s will. What God _______ in the first century, He desires in the twenty-first. If the Lord gave us this _______ in His Word, shouldn’t we follow it? Jesus said, “Why do you _____ me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I _____ you?” (Luke 6:46). Because we call Jesus our Lord, we ______ Him and _____ His words.

Our reading today comes from Ephesians 4:1-6.

As members of the Lord’s church, our heart’s _______ is to believe in and to obey the Lord Jesus. We don’t want to _____ to His words or take ______ from them. We want to believe and practice ____________ He taught and nothing else. When we became Christians, we recognized Jesus Christ as our ______ Lord. Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving _______ to God the Father through him.” We act in His _____ and by His authority. We belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some encyclopedias say that the church of Christ _______ in America in the early 1800s with men such as Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Barton Stone; but Campbell and Stone could not establish something that has ______ been established. I’ve never _______
membership in any church but the church Jesus established at Pentecost in 30 A.D. I wasn’t ________ in the name of Campbell or Stone. Neither of them was ________ for me. I didn’t even ________ of them until years after I was baptized. I believe in the Lord Jesus and was ________ in His name. I’ve taken up my cross to ________ Jesus. He is my Lord and the only _____ of His church. Churches of Christ look to Him _____ as our Savior and Lord.

Today, there are more than 12,000 _______ churches of Christ across the United States. Like the churches of the New Testament, these congregations _____ to Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They don’t have bylaws or a manual that they use in ________ to the New Testament. They don’t have a headquarters or an organization that’s _____ the local congregations. They don’t meet annually to make official __________ of the church or to make binding theological decisions. While these congregations __________ one another as brethren, they are autonomous. Each congregation has its own ________ made up of its elders and deacons, who look to the Bible for their teaching and practice.

Should you visit one of these congregations on a Sunday morning, you’ll find a warm _______. Churches of Christ are families who gather together with a ________ faith, hope, and love. They are brothers and sisters to one another, but there is _______ in their hearts for someone new. They _____ about your soul, your well-being, and your family. Churches of Christ generally have Bible ________ for all ages on Sunday mornings. These classes study the Bible closely to learn the _______ about God and how we should serve Him.

Churches of Christ gather each Lord’s day, which is the first day of the week or Sunday, to _______ the Lord. They look to the Scriptures to see _____ God wants them to worship as a church. They ________ their worship today after the examples and instructions that were given in the New Testament. Worship is a time to draw _____ to God and to express our love, our praise, and our thanksgiving for all that God has done for us. Worshiping God ________ us of how holy God is and how we stand in _______ of His grace and forgiveness. Worship is a time of ________ and of ___________ toward God.

Christian worship to the Lord consists first of ___________. **Read what 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says.** As Christians we pray for everyone in _______. We ________ God for all His blessings and for peace. We pray for strength, courage, and comfort. We even pray for our _________. We pray especially that God will open a door for the ________, so that men may _____ the will of God.

During worship we enjoy the ___________ of the Scripture. Paul told Timothy, “Until I come, give attention to the ________ reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). Scripture nourishes our ________ and builds us up. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to
you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). We need God’s Word in our _______ every day.

Churches of Christ _______ from their hearts, because they want to praise God and to edify one another. Read what Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16 say. The music in Christian worship in the New Testament was by means of _______ singing, and ______ member of the congregation participated. The New Testament gives ____ example or instruction for Christians to worship with instruments of music. We seek to ________ the New Testament teaching in all things, so we simply sing. We know this ________ God, because the early church didn’t use instruments of music in worship for many centuries. Since our worship is to glorify God, our desire is to please Him by following the ____________ of the New Testament for Christian worship. Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of _____ that give thanks to His name.”

Each Lord’s Day, the first day of the week, we commune together in the _______ _______. Read what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. The Lord’s Supper is a _______ memorial meal, and every _______ of the church partakes. Christians ___________ the body and the blood of Jesus sacrificed for them so they might have the forgiveness of sins.

Each first day of the week, Christians ___________ to the Lord for the work of the church. Read what they believe in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Churches of Christ do not send _____ or expect a _____ of ten percent. They urge members to give ___________ as they have been prospered and as they _________ in their hearts.

During worship a preacher or minister will ________ the word of God to build up and to encourage brethren to live faithful and holy lives, to know the Lord and His truth, and to keep on doing good and reaching out to others with the gospel. Paul urged Timothy to “preach the word; to be ready in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2). Preachers have the responsibility of persuading the _____ to come to Jesus and of ___________ the brethren. They must teach the ________ counsel of God, and that means they must speak against what is false and what is immoral. They must call men to ________ of their sins and to _________ the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church is a _______ that’s made up of brothers and sisters. In fact, 1 Peter 2:17 tells us to “_____ the brotherhood.” No one is _____ or _______ than anyone else. Each member of the body is _______ and valued. Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 20:25-28.

The church that Jesus built wasn’t __________ into clergy on one hand and laity on the other. In fact, each congregation had its _____ leadership, and no leader held ________ over several congregations. The idea of an archbishop or a hierarchy over _______ congregations is foreign to the New Testament. It was a development brought about by _____ over the centuries. In the
New Testament a __________ of elders or shepherds oversaw the work of each congregation. They didn’t have one ________ over the elders in a local church. When Diotrephes, in Third John, put himself first and tried to _____ the church, the apostle John ________ him.

The Lord Jesus refused to let His followers assume a _____ that put them above others as some of the Jews did. Read Matthew 23:8-12. For this ________, ministers and others in the church of Christ refuse to be called “Reverend” or “Father.”

In the Lord’s church every member is called a “saint”; there isn’t any ________ class of Christians that are above others. Read what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:2. Every person washed in the blood of Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit is a ________.

In the Lord’s church every member is a ________. Read what Peter said to the whole church in 1 Peter 2:9. Israel had a ________ tribe of priests among the Levites, but the church doesn’t have that! According to 1 Peter 2:5, every Christian is a priest __________ up “spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Every Christian has the _____ as a priest to serve God, to worship, and to teach others about God.

While the church Jesus built, the church of Christ, is not a denomination or a sect, you can ____ it today in identifiable congregations. You can be a _______ of the Lord’s church! The same ________ that made members of the church in the first century makes members of the church today. First Peter 1:23 says Christians are “born again, not of perishable _____ but of imperishable, (that is) through the living and abiding word of God.” If you have the same seed, you have the same _______. If you change up that seed by _________ it with human traditions and doctrines, you have something __________.

Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27. You’re building your religious house; and what you build will determine your ________. Be wise and build your house on the _____. How? By _______ the words of Jesus and _______ them. Go to the New Testament, all of it, and find everything that Jesus _________. Don’t build your house on _________ traditions or doctrines and then expect to have a firm foundation. Go to the Bible _________ to find the rock. In churches of Christ, it’s our passion to ______ to the Lord’s words found in the New Testament and simply to do them. We don’t want to _______ to them or take anything from them.

Become a Christian by putting your ______ in the Lord and obeying Him. If you love Him, turn away from every ____ and serve Him; confess Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God; and be ________, immersed in water. Do it in the name of Jesus Christ for the __________ of your sins. The Bible says when we’re baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His _______. Baptism _________ us with Christ in His death, in His burial, and in His resurrection (Romans 6:3-7). Churches of Christ today are simply made up of people who _________ and _______ the Lord according to His teaching. They believed, repented, confessed, and were baptized.
Membership in the Church
Romans 12:4-8

If you could be a ______ of God and a _________ in the kingdom of God, would you? Today, we’re exploring what it ______ to be a member of the church. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our ________, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” The Bible gives us ______ on every page. Scripture reveals God’s ______ to bless and redeem man from His weaknesses and sins.

Many people today say, “Jesus, yes; but the ______, no.” About 80 percent of Americans believe you can be a “good Christian” __________ ever being a member of any church. Many want to be Christians but not members of an “organized __________”. Some people have decided to be Christians “at large” or to establish small “house churches”; but they hold the organized church today in __________. Can a Christian please the Lord Jesus and _______ to be part of the church He built? Is attending church and being a church member _________?

Some quit worshipping at church because they had a _____ experience, and we’re sorry for that. Some leave the church because they have _______ and are ashamed. Some stop going because they disagree with some __________ of the church. Many in our culture think churches are too “___________” and have quit because they don’t want to hear about sin. Others have simply gotten too _____ for God and don’t have time to worship. We hope you’ll put God ______; and we want to explore the ________ of the church that Jesus built. He purchased His church for a reason, and you will be _________ to be a member.

Our reading today comes from Romans 12:4-8.

I hear people speak about “________ the church”, and they have an important message. We must be the _______ of Christ in the world today. The notion that we can “be the church” but not a _______ of any local congregation, however, is an unscriptural idea. God expects His people to __________ with one another for worship and ministry. Read what the Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 10:24-25. In the New Testament, when a Christian quit assembling with the church, he was _______ _______ from God. He was ______ the faith. He was hurting _______ and hurting the _______ by returning to the world.

Jesus built the church to bless us. Solomon said, “Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). People in the church ______ each other stronger, better, and more faithful and committed. Each Christian needs the _______ of love and faith that his
brothers and sisters give him. Each Christian needs to so _____ and so _____ that he provides an example of commitment to the cause of Christ. Saying, “I love Christ, but I won’t go to church” sends a ______ signal. It says, “I love God, but I’ll _______ which commands I’ll obey and which I won’t.” This person isn’t really obeying _______, but is obeying _________ and his own wishes. Read what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. God knew His people needed the __________ and the _____ that each one could give the other to grow and to remain strong in faith. Two are better than one, __________ they have each other.

Where would we be __________ Bible teachers and godly examples? If you have children, don’t _______ them out of a spiritual education. It’s a shame that nearly 40 percent of the young people in America grow up without any spiritual __________. They need the _____ of God to face the temptations and the pitfalls of life. Your children’s education isn’t complete if it lacks the ______. If you educate their _______ but fail to educate their _______, you haven’t prepared them for the day when Jesus comes again. They won’t know Him, but will be like the five foolish virgins who didn’t have oil for the lamps and found themselves shut out of the __________. Someone converted you to ________, and they were likely faithful members of the church. They not only taught you the _______ but also taught you about the _______. Bible stories are not myths or legends; they are historical accounts of God’s __________ with man. The Bible helps us to make ______ of where we came from, why we’re here, and what will happen to us after we die. We _______ this spiritual education!

The ________ is God’s kingdom in this life, and _________ is God’s kingdom in the next life. We enter the church here so that we may enter the ________ of heaven in the days to come. Read Philippians 3:20-21. People who have this _______ of heaven and want to live for the Lord have a tremendous ___________ by putting their faith there and being active in church.

Read 1 John 3:1-4. Church helps us _______ on the things that matter and to keep ourselves ready and pure for the _________ of our Lord Jesus.

We ask, “What was the church ______ in the New Testament?” The word “church” refers to an assembly, a congregation that was called together for a specific _______. After Paul had established several congregations on his first missionary journey, he _________ to those congregations, strengthening and encouraging them. Acts 14:23 says, “When they had appointed elders for them in ________ church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Later, Paul wrote “to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons” (Philippians 1:1). Did you notice that all the members were called “________” and not a special class? There are no “super saints” in the Lord’s church; _____________ is important and loved.
New Testament churches were ________ with established leaders. They were ________ congregations, meeting at set times and in set locations. Sometimes churches _____ in a family’s house; but in those days a large house could hold a congregation. In some cases, congregations _____ outside or in caves. At that time, the church was _______ persecuted and considered illegal. The earliest church ________ date about 250 A.D. Although they could not openly show themselves, churches assembled to ________ and to encourage each other.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13. In the early church God gave _________. God knew that His people needed training and equipping to do the _______ that He called them to do: to take the gospel to the whole world, and to build up the church, and to render help to the needy.

Salvation is never without _____________. To be a member of the church means we’re ___________ to the Lord and to our brethren. The Lord Jesus said, “Whoever does not _____ his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:27). When you become a Christian, the Lord _____ you to His church. From that day forward, you’re God’s ________ and belong to Christ. You are not your own, and, since you belong to Christ, you must consider how your life ________ on Christ and on His church.

Second Timothy 2:19 says, “Nevertheless, the _____ foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord ______ those who are His,’ and, ‘Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to ______ from wickedness.’” People who live for the Lord should live so as to bring ______ and _______ to the name of Christ. Sadly, some Christians by their ______ language and _______ behavior bring shame on the Lord Jesus and His church. When we become a Christian, we decide to live the moral life that Jesus Christ ________. We must _______ sin behind. Paul asked, “Are we to continue in sin so that ______ may increase? May it never be! How shall we who _______ to sin still _____ in it?” (Romans 6:1-2).

We are obligated to support the church by our ___________. Read Hebrews 10:24-25. When we get involved in the ________ of the church, we influence others to get involved. By attending worship, we get to ______ our brothers and sisters, and we can encourage them to stay ________ to the Lord; we can stimulate them to love God; and we can stimulate them to be kind and to serve others.

God also expects His people to support ____________ the work of the church. Read what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. As Christians, we have an ___________ to one another. Titus 3:14 says, “Our people must also learn to _______ in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.” Read 1 John 3:17-18. We can show our love for God by _______ for others and helping them. The best thing that you can do to _______
another’s life is to _______ him about the Lord. The primary work of the church is to _______ the gospel to every creature. People need _______ than physical food; they need God’s _______ to live spiritually. The Lord Jesus said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not _______ by bread alone, but by _______ word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). We must stay _____ working for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Someone says, “Well, Phil, we had a _____ experience at church and we won’t be going back.” I’m sorry that you had that experience, but was it the _______ church or just an individual that hurt you? The Bible teaches that when a fellow Christian sins against you, you’re to go to that person ___________ and talk to him, trying to restore the relationship (Matthew 18:15). Many times people, rather than following the instructions of the Lord, simply _______ and separate themselves from other godly people that they need in their lives. Don’t quit the church over some _______ brother or sister. Talk to that person and _______ it out.

We will _______ have to deal with rude, selfish, and sometimes immature people; but if the Lord was gracious enough to _______ and put up with us and all our sins, we can be gracious enough to forgive and put up with those who sin only a little against us. We don’t want to _______ our souls because we couldn’t get along with a brother or sister in the church. I would _______ forgive and be forgiven than to hold a grudge and lose my soul.

Some say they want to _______ Jesus, but have no _____ for the church; but if we enter into a relationship with the Lord, we must also embrace the Lord’s _______. The Bible calls the church the household or _______ of God in 1 Timothy 3:15. The church is not only God’s family, but also His _______ (Matthew 16:18). He loved the church so much that He purchased it with His own _______ (Acts 20:28). We must not set the church _______ so quickly. To reject the church is to reject _______ and His will.

We all realize the church is made up of fallible people who sometimes _______ to measure up to the will of God. Before we give up on the church, let’s ___________ that we all “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We all need God’s _______. God’s gracious love moves our _______ to walk in the light and to be in His family.

To become a Christian and be added by the Lord to His church, you must _______ Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Repent of your _______, every one of them, and turn your heart to the Lord. Confess the Lord Jesus before others and be _______ into Christ. Romans 6:3 says we are baptized into His _______, and verse 6 says we are crucified with Christ “in order that our body of _____ might be done away with.” We’re buried with Christ and raised to walk in _______ of life. Nothing, nothing is more important!
Why I am a Member

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

People ask, “Why are you asking us to be members of the church of Christ?” I would like to give you five reasons that matter!

First, I’m a member because Jesus loves the church and died for it. His ___________ should shape our attitudes. (Ephesians 5:25–30)

The New Testament describes the church as God’s __________ (1 Timothy 3:15). Jesus regards the church as His ____________.

Second, I’m a member of the church of Christ, because Jesus is my _______ and I serve Him. Only Jesus has the words of _______________. The only way to the Father, to heaven, is through Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 says, “And there is __________ in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

According to Matthew 7:24 a wise person is one who hears His words and does _______. The foolish person hears His words but does not do _______. Jesus asked, “Why do you call Me, ‘________,_________’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Jesus obeyed His Father out of love and wants us to obey out of love too! “If you keep My commandments, you will _______ in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and _______ in His love” (John 15:10).

This is why in churches of Christ we ___________ penitent believers for the forgiveness of their sins rather than sprinkle infants who don’t know what’s happening.

Third, I’m a member because the Lord adds the ________ to His church (Acts 2:41, 47). The phrase “________ ________” is a reference to the “church.” We need the strength of each other’s faith to keep us spiritually ____________. We also need each other when we fail (Galatians 6:1–2). 1 Peter 2:9–10 describes who we are as Christians and ________ of the church.

Fourth, I’m a member because being “in Christ” means being in His ________, the church (Galatians 3:26–27). The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of _______ and the ________, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
What is this birth of water and spirit? It’s ___________. What is the kingdom of God? It’s the ___________, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). We know the body of Christ is the ___________, because the apostle Paul said so in Ephesians 1:22–23.

If I’m not in the church, I’m not “in ________.” If I’m not “in Christ,” I have no _________ and no hope (Ephesians 2:12). According to Ephesians 2:1, outside of Christ we are _________ in our trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:19 describes what it means to be “____ Christ.”

Fifth, I’m a member of the church of Christ, because membership means being a ___________ of heaven (Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Peter 1:3–5). The way to heaven is through Jesus and His ____________!

The grace of God matters! I wouldn’t want to live ____ day outside the grace of God, not one hour, not one minute, and not even one second without the promises of God! I wish everyone was a member of the church Jesus built. Please don’t think you can _________ the Lord Jesus and at the same time reject His church. You can’t have one without the other.

To enter the Lord’s church, the Lord must ______ you. He will add you when you place your trust in Him and firmly believe in Him and His teaching. Believing the gospel means believing in His death on the cross, His burial, and His resurrection. It means believing you are accountable to Him and that He will one day come again from heaven to judge the world. Your faith in Christ means you must change your heart to turn away from sin and turn to righteousness; that is _____________. It means you’ll have to deny yourself so you can take up your cross daily to follow Jesus.

When faith, love, and repentance unite, it will move you to _________ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and to be _________ into Christ. When you are baptized the Lord will wash away your sins, cause you to be born again, and add you to His church. You will enter the kingdom of heaven and clothe yourself with Christ. God will consider you as one of His children. Baptism is the time God acts upon you and makes you one of His own. I hope and pray you will be baptized and become a member of the church today.