



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY ®

*Program  
Study Guides*

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## 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!

### **Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to Matthew 16:15-19.**

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 fellowshiped 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 Diotrefes, 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!