

# What Is the True Church of Jesus Christ

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson emphasizes that the true Church of Jesus Christ is defined by individual devotion to Christ and the corporate expression of that devotion among believers.*

**Duration:** 48:33

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:20, John 20:22, Ephesians 4:32, 2 Timothy 2:16, 2 Timothy 2:21, Hebrews 10:25

**Topics:** "Church Community", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the true Church of Jesus Christ, highlighting the importance of individual believers having a special love relationship with Jesus, being wholly devoted to Him, and gathering with others who share that devotion. It stresses the need for the presence of Jesus in the church, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in changing hearts, and the power of forgiveness and remitting sins against one another as a key aspect of the church. The sermon encourages believers to seek a church where the presence of the Lord is real and to be part of a body of devoted individuals.

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## Transcript

I want to talk to you this morning about his church. I want to talk to you about the true Church of Jesus Christ. What is the true Church of Jesus Christ? We hope after today you'll have no questions on this matter.

I don't have all the answers, but I have enough to convince you, I think, what I believe to be the living Church of Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father, I thank you this morning for the love of Jesus, for your manifestation, Lord, in our presence, in our midst. Lord, without you, we have no church.

We have no meeting. We have no gathering. And I pray, Lord, that you open my understanding so that I can present to this people your heart and your mind on this matter.

Lord Jesus, quicken me. Lord, you gave this to me in prayer. I didn't get it from a book.

I got it, Lord, from your heart. And I pray, Lord, that you minister life through what I speak this morning. Open our eyes to the meaning of your church.

Let us examine our hearts this morning to see if we are really members of your body. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. Now Jesus said, the gates of hell shall not prevail against my church.

He also said that no weapon formed against it should prosper. But you look around now, and you see that the gates of hell are prospering. They're prospering against many churches, the man churches, I call them.

They are prevailing. The weapons of the enemy are prevailing. And the word prevail there means overpower to defeat.

And you see that in a church that is really not acknowledged by God as his own church. The church by no means is a denomination. Now denominations were caused when certain groups of Christians gathered around a pet doctrine.

The Baptists gathered around the Calvinistic doctrine of eternal security. The Pentecostals gathered around the doctrine of an infilling of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The Seventh-day Adventists gathered around a doctrine about the Sabbath being Saturday.

You find the Wesleyan Methodists gathered around the doctrine of entire sanctification, and on and on and on. Until there were divisions because people gathered around not the person of Jesus Christ as much as the doctrine. And they got, they gathered around those doctrines, and then they began to split up and reform.

There's reform movement after reform movement after reform movement having to do with people gathering around the doctrine. And so you have 50 kinds of Baptists now. You've got a hundred kinds of Pentecostals.

You've got all kinds of charismatic and non-denominational churches by the multiplied thousands and division everywhere you look. This was never God's idea from the beginning. Entire denominations now have been overpowered by the weapons of Satan.

The gates of hell have prevailed against entire denominations where pastors no longer believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. They no longer believe in the virgin birth. They don't believe in a heaven or a hell.

They they call evil good and good evil. This is being overpowered. What else can you call it but the gates of hell prevailing when the seminaries of many of these denominations have teachers and professors there who do everything to demean the gospel, everything to discredit the miracles of Jesus Christ, to take away his Godhead, and they're hell-bent, professors that are hell-bent in destroying what little faith that our young people have left.

If that is not being overpowered by the enemy, I don't know what is. But you see God has discounted all of that man calls church. It's never been a part of his church.

Really not been his. It's been man's, but it's never been his. He doesn't acknowledge it.

In his eyes, it doesn't even exist. That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God. Absolutely.

God has never acknowledged it as his own church. But I also believe that many Christians are misinformed about the meaning of the church. They really don't understand what the church of Jesus Christ is.

And I say that because of the way we measure the success of the church today. We have mega churches. We've got super churches.

We've got fastest growing churches. And we look at these beautiful multi-million dollar buildings. We look at the wonderful 30, 40, 50 acre campuses, and we see churches packed with thousands, and we say God must be there.

That must be God's church. Look, their finances. They have money in the bank.

They have multitudes coming. That must be a very successful church. Jesus must be at work in that church.

But folks, I'm so glad to inform you that that is not God's measure of success. You can have multiplied thousands in church. You can have a burgeoning budget.

You can have all of these things and Jesus not be in the building. Jesus not even acknowledge it that it's his. Highly esteemed among men, very successful, popular, accepted, but abomination in the eyes of God.

A minister friend of mine recently told me he was filling out his application for every year you fill out a form to continue your ordination. He was filling out his form and suddenly it hit him like a sword in his heart. He said there's nothing on this application at all that has to do with a spiritual measurement.

The questions were like this. How many are attending your Sunday school? How many attend Sunday night? How many do you have in your prayer meeting? How many Boy Scouts do you have in your boys program? How many women attend your women's auxiliary? And give us the percentage of increase in your numbers and in your finances. What's the per capita giving for each person? There was not one spiritual question in the whole application.

He said, you know, I could have been a reprobate and filled out this question still keep my ordination. Because there's no measure of my spiritual. There wasn't a question about how I was doing with the Lord.

Anything about my burden for the Lord, nothing about my morals, nothing about my family or my vision, nothing at all. And that's typical of almost every denomination. He said there was nothing spiritual about it all.

He said I was I was suddenly shocked at how far we've gone from understanding the true church of Jesus Christ. It's an amazing thing. Now, let me tell you what I believe constitutes his church.

This is what I believe constitutes his church. And there are required features that distinguish his church from every other thing that is called church. Folks, before you leave this service this morning, I hope you understand what the church of Jesus Christ is.

We have the pattern in the 20th chapter of John. Go to John the 20th chapter, if you will, please. Quickly, 20th chapter of John.

I'm going to start reading at verse 18. This is the first gathering of the church that Jesus is going to build. Now, folks, remember that Moses built a house.

Moses had a church, and the Bible said he was faithful in his house. But the Bible, the Lord goes on to say, Jesus said, I will build my house. The church of Jesus Christ did not exist until after his resurrection.

And he said, I will build my house. The scripture is about Christ as a son over his own house. He said, I will build it.

He's starting to build it right here. You're going to see the first meeting of the church of Jesus Christ. You're going to see all the features that should be in what is called his church.

They're all in this first meeting. Remember, these are living stones. He's building a church, and this is the foundation.

These are the foundation stones in this first meeting. Verse 18, Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord. And they had spoken these things unto her.

Then the same day evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace unto you. When he had so said, he showed them his hands in his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you. As my father sent me, even so send I you. When he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

Whosoever sins you remit, they're remitted unto them. And whosoever sins you retain, they're retained. Now look this way, if you will, please.

He's building his church and all the features of the church from now until Jesus comes, you'll find it right here. And I want to go over it with you as simply as I know how. In this first gathering, you have the making and the birth of the true church of Jesus Christ.

And first of all, his church is comprised of individual believers who have a special love relationship with Jesus Christ. Every single one of these who are gathered here have their own special revelation of Christ. He's revealed himself individually to them and every one of them are devoted.

They have given up careers. He is not just first in their life. He's everything in their life.

The church of Jesus Christ is comprised of individuals who are wholly given to Christ. He has become their life. He's not a part of life.

He is their life. He's the focus. He's the center.

Now, that's where the church begins. It's comprised of individuals wholly given to him with their own revelation of who he is. With their own hearts burning for the word of God.

Now, let's consider those that are gathered in this meeting. One of the accounts by John, it says there were 11. Luke's Luke implies that there were many many more in this first meeting.

No doubt, Nicodemus. No doubt, the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. The Bible makes it clear that the two disciples of Emmaus were there.

Remember, they had their own revelation. They were so devoted to him and they had a revelation because Jesus appeared to them and opened up their scriptures regarding himself. Peter was there to whom the Lord had shown himself.

They had all had some kind of revelation of him. They had seen the empty tomb. There was a revelation of the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

Every one of them. Mary of Bethany was probably there. Lazarus.

They're all gathered in every one of these. The thing that identifies them that individually they had their own experience with him. They had their own revelation of Jesus.

They didn't get it from somebody else. It was their own. And Mary Magdalene comes knocking on the door and she said, I've seen him.

And this gathering was not a pastor up there trying to reveal Christ to a congregation. That's not the church. The church says that every member of that congregation came there with revelation.

Their own experience with Christ. They saw him. They talked to him.

They had the word burning in their hearts. And so at this first meeting, it is not Peter standing up admonishing them about what they had seen of Christ. It's first of all the woman who Jesus had cast seven devils out of.

Probably a prostitute at one time. And she is the one that's saying, pastor, I saw him. I talked to him.

The two disciples, unknown disciples. I believe many of the 70 chosen disciples were there. Jesus said, we're also in the meeting.

And they were all excited. Every one of them were telling what they saw and heard of Jesus. This was an excited group.

They came to church not to hear about Christ. They had heard of Christ. They brought Christ with them.

This is the church of Jesus Christ. Individuals who have had their own experience, their own revelation of the reality, their own intimacy with Jesus Christ, the Lord. Hallelujah.

Now, what a wonder that in the midst of apostasy, rejection of Christ and all offers of his grace, that's right in the middle of Jerusalem, in the middle of the darkness, in the middle of the rejection of Christ, the Lord had a body totally devoted to him. And folks, I'm telling you, even now in this day of gross darkness, in this day when Christ is being rejected, when they're trying to throw him out of our society and out of our courts, they don't even want his name mentioned. Thank God, around the world, even in the communist countries, all over the world, Jesus has a body.

He has a devoted people of individuals, their own revelation of Christ. The church is alive and well. Hallelujah.

Now, listen to me closely. It is this devotion, this personal individual devotion of Jesus Christ, which is the bond of the body of Christ. I travel, and when I go to another country, and I walk a street, and I don't understand the language, and somebody will say, hello, thinking, or I must look like an American, so they

give me a little bit of their American language, and they'll be speaking English.

He said, where are you from? I said, New York, New York. Yes, and I'm the pastor there. Oh, you're Christian.

Yes. Uh, what church? Times Square. Oh, I've heard of that place.

I'm a charismatic, just like you. And, and, and you said, well, you met the body of Christ. You met another.

No, no, no, no, not necessarily, because it only takes about 10 minutes before you find out where that man's heart is. That man's heart, he's talking about his exotic vacation. He's talking about everything but Jesus.

The devotion is not there, and suddenly you pull back and say, I'm not one with this man. You can go to Japan, and you can walk around, and you find a little prayer group, and they're, they're, they're praising the Lord, and you walk in and say, I found the church. I found the body.

These people love Jesus, but then the pastor gets up, and you know he's not been alone with God. There's no devotion. It's all flesh, and suddenly, you know, you thought you found the church.

It wasn't the church at all. It wasn't there, because the bond is not there. Folks, you meet the church anywhere on earth, where you find an individual that is totally devoted to Jesus Christ, and if they are, you'll know it very quickly and shortly, and the bond will be there.

We hear talk about the church being united. Let, let, let's unite the church. Let's everybody get together.

Folks, you don't have to. It's already together. It's all in Christ.

He's the head. We're the body. It has always been together.

It's never been divided. Never. If you, if Jesus could come and, and take you on a flying carpet trip over the, the America, around the world, and you say, Jesus, show me the church, and he would take you into the atmosphere, so to speak, and, and you look at the, he takes you to hover over a great church of 5,000 people, and say, Lord, show me your church, and he said, all right, you see the woman over here, and see this one over here, and he'll pick up maybe 10 or 12.

So that's my church. These are my devoted ones, but Lord, what about those thousands there that are singing love songs to you? He said, my heart, they don't have a heart for me. They, I am, I am just a word to them.

It's just deed. It's just word, and it's not indeed. They don't love the truth.

They don't spend any time with me. That is not my church. They don't have the devoted heart.

I wonder how many of you he could point out this morning, and say to his angelic host, see that sister, see that brother, see there's one over here, this one over here. Look how hungry they are for me. I've been teaching them, speaking them to the ears, and they're still hungry.

They give me precious time. They give me quality time, my heart. I am not just something laying easy on the back roads of their mind.

I am the center of their life. I am everything to them. This is my church.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Secondly, his church is comprised of devoted individual believers, whose greatest joy is to assemble with others who share that devotion.

It's called the body of Christ. They don't have to be warned, forsake not this summing yourselves together as the manner of some is, because there is something of the Holy Spirit that draws every devoted believer to the body. Now, let me say this clear and simply, but right to the point and listen to it, please.

The church is not complete without the corporate expression, because God reveals himself, Christ reveals himself in the corporate body in ways he cannot reveal himself individually to you or to me. For example, the gifts. How do you operate the gifts on yourself? What about the love of God that shed abroad, not just on me, but abroad? What about the joy and excitement of watching your brothers and sisters grow in the Lord, and in their growth you get faith and hope? There's a shared revelation in the assembly.

Everyone that was gathered in this first meeting, though they had their own private glorious revelation of who Jesus is, they had seen him, they'd talked to him, they'd been with him three years, but now they're gathered together and they're going to experience a special manifestation of Jesus that could not have come individually to them. Now, keep in mind that just a few days before, these disciples had fled from his presence at the first sign of danger. They all forsook him and fled.

But now, fearlessly, they meet in a clandestine fashion because they are taking literally now something the Holy Spirit has reminded them that Jesus said to them. Jesus said, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. Now, folks, they didn't take that as a promise, but as a consequence.

Now, listen closely, please. God's been speaking so clearly about this. It was not just a promise.

That's a consequence. He said, if you will meet in my name, and you know what needs to meet in his name? Let everyone who names the name of Jesus depart from iniquity. It means these have departed from iniquity.

They're not living in sin, wholly devoted to Jesus Christ, and they're meeting in his name. And the Lord said, you meet under those conditions, and there I am. It doesn't say, I will come.

It doesn't say you have to fast or pray or beg or plead and wait till I come. That is the consequence of you coming in divine order. The consequence of it, the result of it, is that I'm there.

And they thought, well, if he said there are two or three, we better get together. Because we want him to appear. We want to see him again.

So what was, they assembled together, they shut the door, and it was just as they were told. Jesus came and stood in their midst. Verse 19, Jesus came and stood in their midst.

Folks, there is no church. It is not a church unless Jesus is standing in the midst of it. Unless there is a manifestation of his presence.

If in every service Jesus is not there, it's not the church. They're not meeting in his name properly. You say, well, brother, can't we enjoy his presence alone as individuals? Why do I need the church? A lot of people say, well, I just worship alone, just me and Jesus.

Well, he does manifest his presence to those that are shut in with him. The scripture says, he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, it is that loveth me, and I will love him and manifest myself to him as an individual. I'll manifest myself to you.

Because you see, sometimes there is an imposed isolation. Look at Paul in prison. He has isolation imposed upon him.

And say with John and all of Patmos, isolation is imposed upon him. Sometimes you're sick, and by yourself it's imposed upon you. That's a different thing, because in those conditions, when it's imposed, isolation is imposed upon you by conditions or forces outside your control, then the Lord reveals himself in a very unique way.

That's where Paul got his revelation for the church. And same with John and all of Patmos. What a revelation of Jesus, when John said, I saw him standing among the candlesticks.

It was in an isolation along with the Lord. That's only when it's imposed, when it's beyond your power. But folks, when you just stay at home watching TV, there's no imposed isolation upon you.

You are drawing away from the very source of the glory of the Lord. But you see, there's a reason why Jesus manifests himself to us. I want you to listen to this, please.

Jesus comes to manifest himself to us that we may have life and his power. His very life is energy. It is power.

But life is given for a purpose, and that's that we may be useful to him, useful to the body. The Bible said, and the life was light. You can have power without any knowledge of how to use it.

That's the light. The life became the light. In other words, he doesn't give you power just to spin and waste it.

Let me give you an example. You take a 200 amp diesel-fired generator. Now you put diesel in it and you start it up.

It's got 200 amps of power. It's got energy. It's got life.

And if as long as you give it its individual source of energy, if you keep pouring the diesel in it, it'll keep turning. It'll keep putting out energy, but it's of no use. It's not hooked up to any need.

It's just wasting its energy. But then you look at the house, and the house has no energy. It has no light.

The lights aren't working. The stove is not working. There's no heat.

And you hook it up. You hook the generator up, and suddenly the lights go on. Now the generator is useful.

You say, I'm along with Jesus. I'm getting revelation. I'm getting power from the Lord.

I'm getting life. But I'm telling you, if you're not hooked up to the body of Christ, if you're not a part of the body of Jesus Christ, you're that generator that's wasting its energy. You have to be connected.

Pick up this week's Life Magazine, the November issue, and you'll see an incredible sight. There's a man's arm and forearm laying disconnected on the operating table. It's a 13-hour operation that was accomplished by a businessman named Clinton, 1989, in an accident with a chainsaw.

He severed his arm, and now after this time, the doctors severed the arm of a brain-dead man. And they are now hooking this arm to this man, and it's a 13-hour operation. Now that arm is there.

It's still got blood in it, and they've got a pump there, and it's got probably a 13 to 16-hour lifespan. But it's got to be hooked up. The arm is there, but the fingers are not moving.

There are no nerves. It's an arm. It's got blood in it, but it's useless.

But they hooked him up for the, this is the second operation of its kind, and they connected the arm, and yesterday I was listening to the radio, and it said that it's been successful. He feels the nerves and the fingers are moving. Now the arm is what? It's useful.

You see, if you're not connected to the body, I don't care how much revelation you get. I don't care much time you spend alone. You are severed from the body.

And you're going to have to have, you're going to be hooked up to some artificial kind of life, and you're of no use. You're going to lay on that operating table. That's a hand.

It's got blood in it. It's got a form of life, but it's no good to anybody. It's useless.

Folks, that's what the body of Jesus Christ. We are arm of His arm. We are bone of His bone.

We are flesh of His flesh. We are connected to the head. And you can only get that in a corporate experience of the assembly reaching together, worshiping together in Him.

You're beginning to understand it. Now let's go a step further. It's not enough just to be quickened by the presence of Jesus.

It's not enough to be just doing things, being useful. That usefulness has to be subject to His will. You know, you can be hooked up to the arm, but you still have to get your directions from the head.

And in this meeting, I want you to notice this. Jesus comes in, and the first thing is peace. And that's what you get, first of all, when the body of Jesus Christ, when devoted people get together to worship the Lord, is the body.

The first thing you get is the overflowing of the peace of Christ, the peace of God. Folks, I get that every time I walk into this church. I sit down there, peace.

Absolute peace. But folks, He can give you peace, and you not value it or not have an expression of it, not know it in its fullness, and you don't get that until you see the fullness of the body. I'll show it to you in just a minute, how you not only are given the gift of peace from Christ, but you have to have that peace flowing in and through you, and I'll show you in a few minutes how that'll happen.

But you see, Jesus, after He gives peace, He said, as I was sent to the world, so send I you. And this is the first instruction they get, and this is instruction you get in the corporate body of Jesus Christ. The Lord said, you know that I escaped.

You saw me escaping to prayer. You saw me leave you and go to the mountains. You saw that I prayed.

I was getting my instructions from the Heavenly Father. He said, I did not operate on human compassion. Remember the man that came to Him and said, Master, uh, mediate between me and my brother, help cause him, get my brother to share his inheritance rightly with me.

And Jesus said, man, who made me your divider or your lawyer? And what He's saying, I don't do anything except what my Father tells me. That was human need. Jesus had compassion on the man, but He never allowed his compassion to get him out of the parameters of the will of God.

And when you do that, when the presence of Jesus is not in a church, where people are not praying over everything, you get the direction from the Spirit of the Living God. Then you find men running around trying to change the world in their own energy. They sweat, they get tired, and everybody's worn out.

And then they wind up saying, is this all there is to it? Jesus didn't move in the realm of human compassion, though He was moved with compassion everywhere He went. He did not operate in the realm of human compassion. And folks, the Church of Jesus Christ that starts only picketing and demonstrating.

Folks, when the movie opened up, or rather the play opened up here, Corpus Christi, on Tuesday night, this church got a hold of God. That is just six blocks from here. And that's the play where Jesus is called a homo.

Jesus is depicted as a homosexual. And in the play, He plants a kiss on Judas, His lover. And He has an affair with all His twelve disciples.

A homosexual affair. And folks, we prayed in this church. We sought God because our weapons and our quarrel, but mighty through God into pulling down his strongholds.

Then after the service, I went over there, and there were about 2,000 demonstrators. There were statues of the Virgin Mary. There were all kinds of placards, and people were there.

And you know, there was, I said to a brother who was with me, I said, you know, that 15 minutes of prayer at Times Square Church accomplished more against this than all the demonstrating here tonight by the hundreds. I'm not putting that down, but the church does not move in human compassion. It moves to direction of Jesus Christ Himself.

And He said to these gathered in that first meeting, as I was sent, so send I you. Total dependence. Total dependence.

Hallelujah. The church does not operate independent. It does not go out just to meet human need because it's there.

It operates in the parameters, the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah. You can be useful, but not subjected to the will of God.

There has to be total subjection to His will. Hallelujah. Now thirdly, in His church, the Holy Spirit is always at work changing people's hearts, conforming them, convicting them, and conforming them to the nature of the one they're devoted to.

In other words, if Jesus is not there, there's no work of the Holy Spirit in changing lives. Nobody is really changed without the manifest presence of Jesus in the midst. Jesus came into the midst, and He breathed on them, and a very special work of the Holy Spirit was suddenly announced.

Now folks, I want you to fasten your seatbelts, because I'm going to take you on a little trip here. I'm going to show you the heart of the church. Jesus stands in the midst, and in the 20th chapter in verse 22, when He said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

How many see that? Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Folks, look at me, please. He's now building His church.

He's laying the foundation. There's got to be a special breathing of the Holy Spirit for them to accomplish something they can't accomplish in their flesh, and what He's really saying, look, I'm going to be sending you out. I'm going to be sending you out in the world, and you are going to be mocked, and you are going to be scoffed as my witnesses.

You're devoted to me. You want to do my will? Yes, but you're going to be persecuted, misunderstood, and beaten, and stoned, and you're going to be called all kinds of names as the off-scouring of the world. Your flesh will want to retaliate.

You're going to want to fight back. You want to defend yourself. He said, and even your brothers and sisters, those who are supposed to be religious, those are supposed to be devoted, those are supposed to be brothers and sisters in me.

He said, they're going to hurt you. They're going to wound you. You're going to have people trample over you, and He said, I'm going to breathe on you now with an expression of the Holy Ghost you're going to need, because what I'm going to ask of you now, you can't do it in human strength.

You're going to need the breathing of the Holy Spirit. He said, I'm going to ask you to do something that is absolutely impossible. And folks, this is the real heart.

This is the real manifestation of the Church of Jesus Christ. This is what the witness is. This is, you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost comes upon you.

You know, when I was a young preacher, almost all my young preacher friends were just like me. Lord, give me the power. I'd go in hospitals and raise the dead.

I want the power that I can lay hands on every sick person. I'm going to go to the hospital and clear it out. You know, we've had evangelists advertise men of power, and that power was zapping people.

That power was all kinds of demonstrations. That's supposed to be power. No, no, no, no, no.

You shall be witnesses after that you've received the power of the Holy Ghost. Folks, what is the witness? Jesus makes it very clear. There's a scripture here that most of us have just skipped over because we're afraid to face it.

We don't understand. It's in verse 22, and I want you to notice verse 23 is hooked to 22. You go from 22, and that's a continuation of verse 22.

Receiving the Holy Ghost, whosoever sins ye remit, they're remitted unto them, and whosoever sins you retain, they're retained. Do you see it? Are you ready to face it? You want to know what that means? You

know, of course, only God can forgive sins. You know there has to be repentance in faith.

So that's beyond your ability in mind. Now, the Catholic Church has taken that literally as to mean that the priest in the confession booth has the power to remit sins. Not so.

Not so at all. The remitting of the sin referred to is the sin against you. It's the sin against me.

It's my brother, my sister, or any enemy who comes against me and defiles me or tries to tear me down, mocks me, ridicules me, hurts me. He said whosoever sins, he's talking about forgiveness. Jesus wants to be manifested.

He wants to be told by you. He wants the whole world to know that there are witnesses to his loving, forgiving power who is always ready to forgive. Folks, you can go out in the street corner, and you can yell all the scriptures you want.

You can call that fire. You can call that the Holy Ghost. Call it anything you want.

You can stand and have a healing line and thousands of people be touched. But if you've got a grudge in your heart, and you're not remitting somebody's sin against you, you have no power. This is God's call to release the sin of the brother or sister who sinned against you.

And the Lord is saying, now they'll answer for their sin against me. They'll answer for all the sins against grace. But on this one issue, the sin against you, you must release it.

You remit it. Folks, Jesus set the example on the cross. Father, forgive them for they don't know what they do.

He's saying, Father, no matter what they have to answer for, for their own personal sins, or sins against you, or grace, on this one matter against me, I release them. And on the judgment day, not one of those sinners, not one of those soldiers, not one of those priests will answer for that. Because the Father said, I'll remit it.

Now, there are times that you can't remit, because when somebody sins, and the church has said, it's told commanded to take elders, and speak to that individual, and then if they won't listen, bring them to the church. And if those people are set on not being reconciled, there is no repentance. Even though the love of Christ is sold, and the scriptures given to them, then the Bible says, you can't, you can't release that.

Remember Stephen being stoned. He said, Father, lay not this to their charge. He's saying, I remit the sins of these, all that are stoning me now.

What about those that are stoned you? The church of Jesus Christ is a house where there's no vengeance. It's a house where they're every devoted son of Jesus Christ has released from their heart, from the book of life, or rather from the book of sins in heaven, they have asked God to release those sins. Folks, when God began to deal with me on this last few weeks, He's had me on my knees, naming everybody that I felt has hurt me in my lifetime.

Everyone who's ever harmed me, everyone who's trampled on me, everyone said anything about me. I've had to say, Jesus, I forgive them. I remit their sins.

Father in heaven, now you clean it. I released them, and when I released them, He released me, and that's when you know the peace of God. The house of Jesus Christ is a house of people who have forgiven everybody.

There's no grudge. There's no sign of vengeance. There's no hurt left.

Some of you here now have not released somebody who's hurt you, somebody in your family, a former husband, a former wife, somebody that's hurt you, and you're not releasing. You're holding it. You're full of it.

That's not the church. That's not His body. When the Holy Ghost is at work in a church, He's doing just what, He'll do just what He's doing now by His loving power.

He will show you the sin of unforgiveness. If you're going to have the power of the Holy Ghost, there's an evangelist, God bless his heart, he has healing lines and rather well known, and boy, does he preach, but he writes me the vicious letters, hateful letters. I had to release him.

I love the man. I pray for him. I have nothing but love for that man.

But you see, if I let that get in my spirit, I'll lose the peace that Jesus gave me. He said He'd bring peace on me, and I can't enjoy it because I got this in my heart. Folks, if you can have peace all over you, given by God and then gifted by the Holy Ghost, not enjoy a bit of it because of what's in your heart.

The church of Jesus Christ is a church that has remitted the sins. I don't care if on the job your boss has cursed you. I don't care what happens on your job and all those around you, you are to forgive them.

Those who despitefully use you, you're to love them and not only forgive them, pray for them. And the only way you can love your enemies is to be praying for them. Now, give you a Do you see how important it is to have the presence of Jesus in the house? Let me let me wrap this up for you.

Why would you ever stay in a place where Jesus wasn't there? Why would you go to a house where he doesn't show up, where there's no breathing of the Holy Spirit? Paul tells us that the church of man, not the church of Jesus Christ, but the church of man, the church where there's no manifestation of the presence of Jesus, is a house of vain babblings. There's meaningless worship, empty words, and he said, Oh Timothy, avoid profane and vain babblings. Stay away from it.

Paul, the scripture says that when you put leaven in lump, it leavens the whole lump. And if there is leaven, where there's not the presence of the Lord, there is leaven, and you say, I want to go there. I know it's not, I'm not getting fed, and I know the presence of the Lord is really not there, but I've got to go to church.

Be careful, you're not leavened in that lump. Furthermore, Paul goes a step further. He said about these vain babblings, they lead to an increase in ungodliness.

You'll find that in 2nd Timothy 2:16. Because if you sit under a ministry that is not saturated with the presence of Jesus, not according to the mind of God, you're going to have error, and that is going to lead you to ungodliness. You're going to allow things in your life you never thought you would allow, because you don't know, but it's being dripped into your spirit, and it's changing you.

Now folks, I'm not trying, this is not a commercial with Times Square Church, because we don't have any seats left. Folks, it's more serious than that. Paul said very clearly, if a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, and prepared for every good work.

That word purge right there, the only time it's used as it is, is to remove yourself. Remove yourself from this spirit. Remove yourself from that kind of thing.

Remove yourself. Folks, I have hundreds of thousands on my mailing list, as I've told you. And probably the number one complaint of all the Christians who write to us, they say, Pastor, I can't find a church where I feel the presence of the Lord.

My church is dead. What am I going to do? You might be in a place where you say, I can't find a church that's really right. Folks, if you're going to a church that is spiritually dead, and you know Jesus is not there, the Spirit of the Lord is not at work.

There's no breathing of his life. Get out of it. Get out of it.

Leave it. It's that simple. Paul makes it clear.

I'm on good scriptural ground. He said, purge yourself of this, so that you can be useful, sanctified vessel, neat for the master's use. He said, isolate yourself from that foolishness.

But then you say, well, where am I going to find it? Let me give you something the Holy Spirit gave me just last night. The same Spirit that's moving on you, making you disgusted with the death that you see, the same Spirit that's awake and you say, I want more. I need more.

I'm hungry. I'm thirsty. I want to grow in the Lord.

I want to be in an atmosphere where the presence of the Lord is real. The same Spirit that's doing that in you, he never does it in an isolated form. He does that wherever he's working on one.

He's got to work on two or three more. And the same Spirit that's working on you, the Lord told me, is working on people around you. And if you will just seek him with all your heart and pray diligently about this, say, Lord, lead me to that two or three that are feeling like I do and being moved on the Spirit like I am.

Lord Jesus, lead me to them and he will let you be brought miraculously to that body. Because if you're devoted to him, he's going to bring you to the others who are devoted to him. You're going to find the body.

He'll bring the body to you and you to the body. And though it may be only two or three, get together. Get some of our tapes if you want for the preaching.

You can worship and pray. You don't need a preacher. I'm not against having pastors or I wouldn't be one.

But what are you going to be do when you're stuck up someplace in Alaska, in a little village? So, Jesus, surely there's somebody, God, may send one, maybe two, wonderful fellowship and prayer, just talking about Jesus. Somebody told me recently that they were sitting around a dining room table and suddenly everybody just started talking about Jesus. And it was such, they said it was church.

It was church. Jesus came right to the table because they were talking about him. And they were there for an hour just talking about Jesus.

And suddenly they realized one person told me I was in church. That is the church. Hallelujah.

I hope you understand a little better the meaning of the church of Jesus Christ. Will you stand, please?

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