

# How to Build a Church

by Denny Kenaston

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of building the church on the right foundation, which is Jesus Christ Himself, and following the right methodology, which is building our lives on Christ and relying on the Spirit of God.*

**Duration:** 1:15:29

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:33, 1 John 2:1, 2 John 1:1

**Topics:** "Church"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a passionate and compassionate heart for God and for others. He challenges the audience to examine their own lives and question if they have truly been effective in leading others to Christ. The speaker also highlights the significance of fellowship with God and how it should motivate believers to share the same fellowship with others. He emphasizes that Christianity is about building relationships and encourages everyone to play a part in building the church. The sermon is based on the book of 1 John and references various sermons preached by Jesus, emphasizing the message of joy and the sum total of everything John heard from Jesus during his time with him.

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## Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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In the name of the Lord Jesus, this evening, it's been a joy to be here already. My heart has been stirred by the singing, the worship of God that does that, you know, worship inflames the heart to want to serve God. And so, I get to preach tonight after all that wonderful singing.

And I want to thank you this evening for singing with all of your heart. It's all part of the service of God, isn't it? And we all have a part in that, every one of us. So, God bless you if you came with a heart that was in tune to sing God's praise.

God bless you for that. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to share the word of God tonight. I'd like us to begin this evening with a text that we will probably look at, at least briefly, in every session.

Unless the Lord leads a little differently, but I'd like us to begin in Matthew chapter 16. Matthew chapter 16. The title of my message this evening is a very simple one.

How to build a church. How to build a church. Now, if you've been to the Christian bookstores, you know there's probably about ten books like that on the shelf.

It seems like everybody has a new way to build a church. I'm not sure if this sermon tonight will fit in there on the bookshelf with the rest of those books. But I do believe it will fit in on God's bookshelf.

How to build a church. I believe it was announced, you know, in the little flyers that were sent out that we planned to speak about church through these meetings this weekend. And so I'm going to follow that theme a little bit here through the weekend.

That's not hard to do, by the way. You could easily preach twenty sermons and you wouldn't get done on that if you spoke about the church twenty times. It is one of the clearest and fullest revelations of God's heart in the New Testament.

The church. So it behooves us this evening that we get God's heart on how to build that thing called the church. Amen? Since God has so much to say about it, we better make sure that we're doing it the right way.

How to build a church. Reading from the text here in Matthew chapter sixteen, starting in verse thirteen. When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist.

That's an honorable name to be given. Some, Elias, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Good question, Lord Jesus.

Who do you say that I, the Son of Man, am? You know, that question could be asked today, couldn't it? That could be asked in this modern day Christianity that we have here in the United States of America. Whom say ye that I, the Son of Man, am? I believe that every one of us needs to answer that question in our hearts, even this evening as we sit here. What think ye of Christ? Who is He? Whom say ye that I, the Son of Man, am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Now, there are many, many verses in the Bible that are beautiful verses, and I have many favorite verses in the Bible. And if you look at my Bible sometime, you'll see them. I've got them all marked up and circled and outlined in notes written beside them.

This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. Peter's words. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

What was Peter saying when he said those words? What a revelation, quite a revelation that came out of that man's mouth. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. What Peter was saying is, you are the one that we've been looking for.

You are the Messiah. You are the anointed one. You are the blessed one.

You are the one we've been dreaming about. You are the one we've been waiting for. You are the one that all the prophets spoke about.

You are the one we've been waiting for. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Hallelujah! Yes! Hallelujah! And Jesus blessed Peter for saying those words and reminded Peter in the words to follow.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. Now, Jesus was reminding Peter that that wasn't just some good idea that he got. That wasn't some word that he picked up along the way.

But that came as a fresh revelation from his Father in heaven into the heart of Peter. And he said to Peter, O Peter, you are blessed that inside your heart you can say words like that. And oh, let me tell you something, brothers and sisters tonight.

It's no difference whether it's you or I or it's Peter tonight. If that is in the depths of your soul this evening, if your heart can say He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, hallelujah! Then blessed art thou also tonight, for flesh and blood did not reveal it unto thee, but our Father which is in heaven revealed that thing to your heart. Brothers and sisters, there are millions, multiplied millions and even billions of people who do not know that, who cannot say those words.

And you and I can say them tonight if we've been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Praise God! That's worth shouting about, isn't it? That's worth being glad about, Brother Kenny. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee as you sit here this evening, my friend.

And sometimes I think we take that revelation far, far too much for granted. That that is setting inside of us that God has deposited such a revelation inside of my soul is an awesome thing. And I think sometimes, you know, we just, you know, man, it's nice to be a Christian and God's been good to me.

Come on! Let's wake up a bit! Don't you realize what God has deposited inside of you? He's the Christ, the Son of the Living God! Hallelujah! Thank you, Lord Jesus. And then Jesus goes on from there, and this is somewhat of our text this evening. He said, And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, little rock.

Peter, a stone. Thou art Peter, a stone. And upon this rock, a big rock.

And they're different words. You know, some people say, oh, the church was built on Peter. You know, Catholics say the church was built on Peter.

The church was not built on Peter! It was built on Christ! There's a big difference between Peter and Christ, even though, blessed be Peter, he's a wonderful apostle. The church was not built on Peter. It was built on Christ.

Thou art Peter, a stone. Amen! A stone, rock, strong, all that. And upon this rock, a huge rock like the rock of Gibraltar.

That's the difference in those two words. Jesus said, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Now, I believe what Jesus was saying there is this.

That confession that you just made, Peter, that revelation that flowed out of your heart, that was deposited in your heart by the Father. On that revelation, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That's what Jesus was saying.

He was speaking prophetically in these words. Jesus was a prophet, you know. A priest and a king.

But here he is prophesying. He's speaking forth the mind and will of God into the future. And he's saying, there's coming a day when I'm going to build a church.

And I'm going to build my church upon that revelation that you just got, Peter, that just came out of your mouth. And when I build a church on that revelation, the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And I'm here to tell you tonight that if you were to open up a church history book and look down through the annals of history for the last two thousand years, you would find example after example of men and women who put these verses to the test.

And Jesus has proved himself time and time again to be just like he was right there. The master builder of the most powerful assembly that the gates of hell cannot prevail against. That's what Jesus promised he would do.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Upon this rock, what does he mean upon this rock? I believe he means upon the doctrine of Christ. That is the good news of a transformed life by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Upon this rock, meaning the life of Christ, we have an example of a Spirit-filled man that we can watch and see how God, through his Spirit, worked in the life of Jesus and know that God, through the same Spirit, will work the same kind of a life in you and I. Hallelujah! We have an example upon this rock. What does that rock mean? It's speaking about the doctrines of Christ, the teachings of Christ, all the way through the New Testament. We'll say more about it later.

And lastly, it's speaking about the reality of the Christ life. You see, brothers and sisters, it is by the life of Christ in you and I that church gets built upon this earth. There's no other way.

It's not by might and it's not by power. It's by my Spirit, saith the Lord. God said that to Zechariah and to the children of Israel in the Old Testament.

But that is not just an Old Testament prophecy. That is a New Testament reality. It is not by might and it's not by power.

It's not by your money. It's not by your big building. It's not by your new innovative ways to motivate people to come to church.

It's not by building the biggest gymnasium that anybody ever saw in this state. It's by my Spirit, saith the Lord. That's the only way that Jesus' church gets built.

It hasn't changed. His methods haven't changed. Not in two thousand years they haven't changed, brothers and sisters.

How to build a church is a good, good question to be answered in this day that we live in. How do you build a church with all the innovations, in quotes, that we have around today? So tonight we want to start with first things first. We know that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church.

As Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Hallelujah! And in another place it speaks about Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone of the church. Think about that for a moment, brothers and sisters.

Jesus Christ Himself, He's the chief cornerstone of the church. Not His name, not His teachings, not the doctrine, although all those things are good and right and beautiful, but it's not His teachings and it's not His name and it's not the doctrines. It's Jesus Christ Himself.

He is the chief cornerstone of the church. And so if we're going to start with first things first, we've got to get that major foundation clearly laid here this evening. I believe what Jesus is saying here in Matthew chapter 16 is simply this.

You build your life on Me and I will build a church. Well, that sounds like real simple theology and real simple methodology, doesn't it? Only thing is, it's maybe not as simple as you might think. It means everything.

It means it'll cost you everything. Everything, every moment of every day from here on out. And if you'll follow that very principle, I promise you a church.

I promise you a church. Christ's methodology. You build your life on Me and I, Jesus, the master builder, I will build my church, He said.

Now, I'd like us to turn at this time over to the book of 1 John. There are many places where we could define what Jesus means by building our lives upon Him. But I've chosen 1 John chapter 1 to do that this evening.

You build your lives on Me and I will build my church. We're going to look to the apostle John to give us a bit of a definition of what it means to build our lives on the Lord Jesus Christ. And there are many ways that we could approach this chapter.

We could put a title in the top of this chapter. What is a true Christian? And we could go down through every one of these points. We could change the title and say, What is a true Christian experience? And we could go right down through this chapter here in 1 John chapter 1. What is true Christianity? There are many ways that we could do it.

But this evening, what I'd like to do is use this chapter in 1 John 1 to define what it means to build your lives on the Lord Jesus. And I think when we get done looking at this chapter, you will be thoroughly convinced that anywhere where there's a group of people who will build their lives on Christ like this, a church will just grow. It will grow.

And it's very important when we think and consider the subject of church and of having a church and desiring there to be a church. It's very important that we understand God's methodology for building that church. See, there's lots of ways.

I mean, people get a crowd together. I mean, they do ice cream socials. They've got... What is it? I don't know the name.

They have a coffee shop out there in the front, you know. That's in the vestibule of the church. You have to have a coffee shop.

And there's a youth rock band going on over here. And they get all the people together. And hey, you can get 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 people together in a place like that.

But that's not building the church of Jesus Christ. I guarantee it. Listen, the day's going to come when God's going to pull back the facade on all of that nonsense.

And the truth will be revealed. But for now, they go happily on their way singing, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, I love you. Drinking their... whatever kind of coffee it is.

Listening to their rock bands and doing everything they can and building their biggest gymnasiums and seeker-friendly churches. Wow! What a statement. A seeker-friendly church.

You know what that means? Lower the temperature down so much that all the sinners feel at home in your midst. Wow! Guess what you're going to get. Go and look.

Go and look. So, we want to just go down through this chapter here, 1 John, as we look at what it means to build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ. John begins by saying these words.

And by the way, John is giving this very definition in a day and an age when it was needed. It's about 90 A.D. when John is writing this. 90 A.D. That's 60 years since the resurrection and Pentecost and Christ going back to the Father.

It's been 60 years and John is now about 90 years old. He's been walking with Jesus, not with the eyes in his head, but with the eyes in his heart. He's been walking with Jesus for 60 years.

And he's going to define to these struggling Christians upon whom false teachings are creeping in among them, he's going to define to them what it really means to be a Christian, what it means to build your life on the Lord Jesus. You see, we live in a day and an age and in a country where everybody loves Jesus today, you know. 60 million, I just read it two days ago.

There are now, quote, 60 million born-againers in America. If we had 60 million born-againers like what John is talking about here in this chapter, I guarantee you they would have shaken this country long ago. We don't have 60 million truly born-again Christians in America.

I'm sorry. Throw stones at me if they want. There are not 60 million born-again Christians in America.

John, let's hear what he has to say. He's been walking with this Jesus for 60 years. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life.

For the life was manifested and we have seen it. John, in these opening verses here in this chapter, is speaking about Jesus. That, my dear friend, is what it means to build your life on the Lord Jesus.

If you do, your life will be all wrapped up in Jesus. Jesus will not be a name that you use on Sunday morning when you go to church and sing the songs and say the right words. Jesus will be your all in all.

Remember when you got born again? Remember when you first knew the Lord? Remember the sweet fragrance of that beautiful name? Remember how it was? You know that God never planned for that sweet fragrance to leave you ever. God never planned for that. It seems very evident to me that that sweet fragrance has not left the Apostle John.

John is excited about Jesus Christ. That is what it means to build your life on the Lord Jesus. Oh, my dear people, if we could just grasp it.

There are many, many things in our Christian life and they are right and we believe in them. And I agree with my brother Emmanuel. Holiness, that is what God is after.

And oh, my dear people, true holiness only comes through Jesus Christ our Lord. That is the only way you will ever get the holiness that God is after. It must flow out of Christ.

John was in love with Jesus. I think about John and you know, I get a little jealous when I think about John. You know, he is speaking from his own personal experiences.

That which was from the beginning, you know. John, he knew this. Just like he said in John chapter 1. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

All things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made. John knew this is He who was from the beginning.

Wow. And then he goes on to say, I heard Him. Wouldn't you like to be able to say that? I heard Him.

I listened to His sermons. I sat at His feet. I saw Him.

I watched Him when He laid His hands upon that man whose eyes were blind. I saw that man open up His eyes and jump around. I saw that man with a withered hand.

I was there that day when Jesus said, Stretch forth thine hand. And the man with his struggling faith stretched forth his withered hand and it became whole again. John said, I was there.

I saw Him. And not only that, he says, my hands handled Him. In fact, if he could go on further, he would say, I laid my head on His breast.

Bless God. Jesus. Precious Jesus.

Oh, dear people, that's what it's all about. You want a church? It's about Jesus. It's not about us.

It's not about you. It's not about great preaching. It's not about great leaders.

It's about Jesus. Jesus. Only Jesus.

And I know. I understand. Everybody's talking about Jesus in America today.

I know that. But we can't overreact to that, my dear people. It's not a lifestyle.

It's Jesus. It's a personal relationship with Jesus. And I know they throw those words around everywhere in this land of ours.

But, dear people, it's still in the Bible. That's how a church gets built. It's through Jesus.

Jesus. That's what it's all about. And I wonder this evening where you're at with Him.

I know you're here. I know you sang the songs. Maybe even said amen.

But I wonder where you're at with Him. Do the heart strings in your heart still ring with love for Jesus? Or is there something between my soul and the Savior tonight? See? We have to ask ourselves that. Jesus.

Precious Jesus. Is He your altogether lovely one? Is He your lily of the valley? Bright and morning star. All I want to do is meet with Him.

All I want to do is have fellowship. I can't wait to get up in the morning to get along with Jesus. That's the way it was with John.

Anyway, he hasn't got tired of Him yet. And he's 60 years doing this. 60 years.

Well, let's go on a little bit further and find out what it means to build our lives on the Lord Jesus. It's important for us to know that because Jesus promised He'll build a church. We'll build our lives upon Him.

So the second point I'd like us to look at is in the second part of verse 2. John goes on and says, For the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. What does it mean to build your life on the Lord Jesus? It means confessing Jesus.

See? You know, I studied that a little bit further in 1 John. He speaks again about confessing Jesus. And I studied that, you know, because, you know, again, everybody will say, Yeah, I believe in Jesus.

That's not what confessing Jesus means. Confessing Jesus means I'm confessing Him and confessing Him and I'm confessing Him again. And I'm confessing Him in the grocery store.

And I'm confessing Him at the barber shop. And I'm confessing Him when I'm at the sale. And I'm confessing Him when I'm getting my gasoline.

I'm confessing Jesus. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, John says. You see what I'm saying? A true life that is built on Jesus Christ is a life that is speaking about Him.

Ooh, that's pretty strong. Do you know that in the days of revival in South Korea, there were some churches that you could not join the church until you had led a soul to Jesus Christ. Did you know that? They put a question mark on your salvation experience unless they saw that you were reproducing yourself in somebody else.

Wow. I wonder what they'd do to the communion tables. No soul in the last five years? No communion for you, my friend.

You know, we smile at that, but hey, that's kind of sad when you think about it. I'll never forget the meeting that I was in a few years ago where a brother stood up at the end of the meeting after a message was preached about evangelism and he stood up to make a confession. But he couldn't talk.

They gave him a microphone and he went to talk, but he couldn't talk. And he tried to talk and he just wept and he got control of himself. And then he tried again and he just wept.

And he did this like three or four times. Finally, he got a hold of himself and got the words out. He knew what the words were.

Here are the words. I've been a Christian for ten years and I've never led a soul to Jesus. And he just wept again and sat down in his seat.

I honor that brother for that kind of a burden over his own heart. I've been a Christian for ten years and I've never led a soul to Jesus. It ought to bother us if there's no more fire in our bones than that.

If there's no more compassion, if there's no more of a clear vision of the lostness of humanity that in ten years we haven't led a soul to Christ. It's about Him, my friend. It's about Him.

Number three. In the last part of verse three, we find the third point of what it means to build your life on the Lord Jesus. That which we have seen and heard declare unto you.

Why, John? That ye also may have fellowship with us. And truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. He's talking about having fellowship with God.

He's talking about a motivation in his own heart. A motivation to tell others about Christ that many of us have never known. And that is, my sweet fellowship with Christ motivates me to want to bring you into the same fellowship that I'm having.

And truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Fellowship. Christianity is relationship, brothers and sisters.

It is first and foremost relationship. Now it is many other things. There are many things we do because we're Christians.

And there are many things we don't do because we're Christians. But it's not about that first. It's about fellowship with God.

If you could just, you know, turn the clock back a ways and remember again when you first met the Lord. As you repented before God, there were still things in your life that God needed to deal with. I mean, I remember when I got converted.

You know, it was about two months before I got rid of my long hair. But you know what kept moving me forward day after day after day? It was this fellowship. This fellowship that I found with the living God.

And it is word. I couldn't stop reading the Bible. That's the way it was in my heart.

I can remember reading the Bible two and three hours a day. There were times when I read the Bible so long that my heart literally burned on the inside. I wondered, what is this fire that's burning in my breast? Realizing this comes from reading the Word of God.

Have you ever read the Bible till the fire burned your breast? Fellowship. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. Why, John? That you may have fellowship with us.

We want to bring you in. Oh, and listen. John is not just speaking about himself.

He's speaking about the church. The church is a place where fellowship with Christ is real. It's reality.

It's active. It's sweet. It's powerful.

It's life changing. And then the church says, oh, let's go and get some others and bring them into this sweet fellowship. This life changing fellowship.

This fellowship that puts a spring in your step every day. Let's bring some others into the fellowship of the Father and the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ. Think about it, my friends.

That's what Christianity is. I don't know how you look at it. Maybe you look at it differently.

Maybe you're one of those who said, oh, OK, I'm, you know, I'm 15 years old and it's time to join the church, you know. And so you listen and they gave you some instructions and you said, OK, and yes, and yeah, I agree with that. And yes, I believe that.

And they baptize you and you join the church. But there's no reality in your heart. If there's no reality of Christ, if you don't know what it is to have fellowship with the living God, then that's not Christianity.

It's just religion. Just religion. People do it all the time.

I'll tell you who really does it many times. Children who grow up in a Christian home. And so they start thinking, hey, I know what Christianity is, you know.

I've learned it all my life. I've heard it. I've heard all the sermons.

I've been going to church all my life. Christianity is this, you know. And I'm willing to do it and I'll do this and I'll do this and I'll teach a Sunday school class.

And who knows what else you may put on your list? And you jump in there and you go with that. Only one problem. Nothing on the inside.

Nothing on the inside. Like one man said recently, Brother Denny, nobody knows how it really is with me, he said. Nobody knows.

He said, I've got all my clothes straight. I've got all my doctrines straight. I can teach the Sunday school class.

I can please all the preachers by the way that I act. But, Brother Denny, there's nothing on the inside. What's wrong with me, Brother Denny? What do you think I should have told him? I told him, you need to get born again.

That's what you need. Praise God that you have your theology right. And praise God you ought to if you grew up in a Christian home.

But it's not theology, my friend. It's the reality of the life of Christ. And in the believer, it's that fellowship with God.

And listen, the blood of Jesus Christ is there. It interposes between God and man. It's the intercessor that comes in between God and man.

And it's through the blood of Christ that God and man get back together again to have fellowship. That was the prime thing that God set out for all the way back in Genesis chapter 3. When man lost his fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden, God set His paths on the track to bring redemption to man. And what is redemption to man? A ticket to heaven? No way! It's not a ticket to heaven.

It's bringing man back into a right relationship with a holy God so that God can fellowship with man, like God said to the children of Israel, that you may be mine. That's what God wants. Are you ready for God to get possessive with you? That you may be mine.

All mine. Only mine. And nobody else's.

Are you ready for God to get possessive with you like that? That's what God is after. That's why Jesus sent His Son into the world. He didn't send His Son into the world just so you could have a one-way ticket to heaven someday.

No way! God sent His Son into the world to transform our lives and turn us into holy creatures walking around in this unholy world having fellowship with a holy God. Hallelujah! That's good! That's what God wants. That's what it means to build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you may say, Brother, you're pretty radical tonight. I'm telling you, you study your church history books and you'll find out this is how the church has always been built down through the centuries. And it hasn't changed.

See, we've been reading an American Bible way too long. We read everything in this book with American eyes. And I'll tell you what, us American Christians have eye disease.

We have eye disease. That's what John said to the church of Laodicea. Your eyes are sick.

Anoint your eyes with eye salve so you can get them healed so you can see again. We've got eye disease. And so we read the Bible as an American book, you know.

I don't want to get off on that. Keep on my subject here tonight. Fellowship.

The reality of fellowship with a living God. That's Christianity. Amen? And number four.

Then he goes on to say, These things write we unto you that your joy may be full. There's that word joy. Now look at what he's giving.

He's giving his motivations. John is explaining his way down through the text. And what he's saying so far is I've told you these things.

Point one, point two and point three of this message. I've told you these things because I want your joy to be full. Full and running over.

Joy that is full runs over. Amen? A cup that is half full usually doesn't. But joy that is full runs over.

What does it mean to build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ? It is a life of joy. Peter said joy, unspeakable and full of glory. Hear those words? And you know, I studied this word joy many times.

By the way, it's in the Bible, I think, four or five hundred times. Do you think the Lord's trying to tell us something? Joy! God's people! Full of joy! Excited! Happy! You know, as I studied this word, it's a pretty deep word. You know, sometimes, you know, we kind of count it superficial joy.

And, you know, us Americans, we're good at laughing, you know. You know, I think America is laughing her way to hell, personally. But everybody's good for jokes and everybody's got lots of things to laugh about.

And we think somehow that's joy. Or we think, well, joy is praising God. So we say, praise God! Oh, I have joy.

That's not what this word joy means. This word joy is a deep word. It is a deep word.

It's like the verse there in the Psalms. In thy presence is fullness of joy. And at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Boy, if that verse doesn't fit what John is saying here, I don't know what is. In thy presence there's fellowship. There is fullness of joy.

And at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. You know what God is talking about here? God is simply saying this. True Christianity has a joy that is deeper than a feeling.

It's a joy. It's when man gets his joy and satisfaction out of God and God alone. That's it.

Man gets his joy and satisfaction out of God and God alone. Do you? Do I get my joy and my satisfaction out of God and God alone? Now, I believe as you study the book of Acts, and we'll be looking at the book of Acts before the weekend is out, but as you look in the book of Acts, I believe this is one of the magnets that caused the church to grow so fast there in the book of Acts. The people were exuberantly full of joy.

They were excited. They were overflowing with joy. And you know, when you're overflowing with joy, it's contagious and it affects other people, and people notice it, and people look on longingly in the sadness of their own hearts.

They look on and say, that guy has something that I don't have. Joy. Joy that's deeper than a feeling.

Joy that's so much deeper than the laughter and the humor of this American age that we live in. Joy. Fullness of joy.

Joy that's full runs over, doesn't it? To others. And that's what God has in mind. Number five.

What does it mean to build your life on the Lord Jesus? Remember, we could have went many, many places to define this this evening. I mean, we could have taken the words of Jesus and defined it just as clearly, couldn't we? We could have went to John chapter 15. We could have went to Luke chapter 14 and given you the radical words of the Lord Jesus.

But we went to 1 John chapter 1 to hear the old apostle John, being 90 years old, talking about what true Christianity really is. Number five. It's purity.

Listen to the word of John here in chapter 1 and verse 5. This then is the message which we have heard of him. Now, when I read that a few years ago, I thought, now, what does John mean? This is the message. John heard many messages.

He heard Jesus preach many sermons. He heard him preach the sermon on the mount. He heard him preach the sermon on the plain.

He heard him preach the sermon there in Matthew 23. He heard him preach Matthew chapter 25, the parable of the virgin, the ten virgins. He heard many, many sermons.

And as I meditated upon that, I came to understand that what John is saying here is, I'm going to give you the sum total of everything that I heard as I heard my Lord Jesus preach all those three and a half years that I sat at His feet. This is the summation of the message that I heard from Him. Now, that'll make you sit up on the edge of your seat and read the rest of the verse.

Amen. I want to find out what that is. You know, you could take that and go back into the whole Bible, couldn't you? What is the message? This then is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Look at that verse. Ah! God is light, pure light, holy light, unapproachable light. God is light.

It's part of His nature. And in Him is no darkness at all. So, here's my point.

If this God becomes my God, if this God comes to dwell inside of this vessel, which He has, then this God who is light and in Him is no darkness at all, He's going to be doing something inside of me. He is going to be changing me. He is going to be purifying my life.

There's no way that you can get away from that. If you hang around this holy God, He's going to make you holy. I mean, come on! Two plus two is four.

We all can add. If you hang around a holy God, that holy God is going to make you holy. He's going to purify you.

He's not going to leave you the way you are. He's going to purify your motives. He's going to purify your heart.

He's going to purify your eyes. He's going to purify what you do. He's going to purify where you go.

He's going to purify your words and your mouth. He's going to purify you. He's going to touch your life and make you different.

Amen? That's part of being a Christian. He's going to change you. You can't be a Christian if you don't change.

You know, today they say, well, he got born again, but you know, he's not growing very fast. Give him a couple years. Oh, come on! Paul, he didn't wait two years.

He was on the firing line from the get-go. As soon as he got his eyes back in his head, he was moving. But today now, we have to wait two, three, four years.

Maybe they'll get a little grow here and there. I'm telling you, that is not the new birth. I'm telling you, it's not.

It's a miscarriage. And it doesn't come out right. A holy God will make people holy.

You know, people today, it's a big thing today. Everybody's shouting, oh, I got the Holy Ghost. Oh, I got the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost. And they live the most unholy lives. You can't imagine some of the stuff they do.

But they got the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost. I'm telling you, they don't got the Holy Ghost.

Excuse my English. They don't got the Holy Ghost. You don't have the Holy Ghost in you.

You don't have the power of the Holy Ghost burning inside of you for five, ten years and live a fleshly, carnal life and be filled with the world. There's no way. That's a misnomer.

Those two don't go together. When you build your lives on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ is going to make you like Himself. He that saith He abideth in Him ought Himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

Chapter 2. It's purity. You know, God doesn't just leave us where we are. And my dear friends, that doesn't change.

You know, I've been a Christian now for 30 years. And God just keeps on going. He just keeps on putting His finger on something, dealing with an issue in my life, revealing a motive in my heart that isn't right.

And I have a choice to make. Am I going to go on with God? Am I going to let God put His finger on me? Or am I just going to say no? God is going to purify us. That's why He sent His Son into the world.

That He could be a Savior. His name is Jesus. And He will save His people.

No, it doesn't say from hell. It says from sin. His name is Jesus.

And He will save His people from their sin. That's good preaching, isn't it? Nextly, what does it mean to build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ? It means honesty. Real honesty.

In this day and age, we need a baptism of honesty. You know? And that would be a good prayer for you to pray, even as we go through this weekend. Lord, give me an honest heart.

You know, maybe one step in the right direction would just to be honest with yourself. You know, sometimes we don't even want to get honest with ourselves. You know, as heart talks with heart in our inner being, we don't even want to get honest with ourselves and really admit, you know, just in the quiet of our heart, I'm not what I'm supposed to be.

I lost my way. The fire doesn't burn anymore. But we don't want to even think those things.

Lord, help me to be honest. Verse 6 says, If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. Verse 8, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Verse 10, If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. What is John talking about there? He's talking about transparent honesty. Just being honest.

Let me say it like it is. Let's be real. Quit being a fake.

Quit hiding. You know, like one dear brother came to a prayer room in a revival meeting a couple of years ago and he came in there and there was a circle. I don't know, maybe there was about 10 people in a circle and we were all just opening our hearts with one another, getting honest, you know? You know what he said? He said these words, I am sick and tired of living this life and I am going to get honest for the first time in a long time.

And he opened up his life and just said how it really was. I haven't been fellowshiping with God. There's sin in my life.

There's immorality in my life. And he just dumped his bucket in a circle of men. You know, we could use some of that.

Just some old-fashioned honesty. Opening up your life and being honest and saying, I'm not doing well. I'm not who everybody thinks I am.

I'm really struggling. I am living in sin but nobody knows it. Boy, you're getting personal here.

Yes, I know. I am. Remember, we're talking about how to build a church.

And all the methods out there, we've seen what that produces and we're not wanting that. So we're going to have to do it God's way and this is God's way, I'm telling you. When the channel stays open, then heaven is open.

When heaven is open, heaven comes down. And when heaven comes down, heaven builds a church upon the earth. So we want to do it God's way.

God's way is honesty. Have you been honest lately? Maybe you just need to find a friend and just go to that friend and say, I need a friend. I need somebody that I can open my life up to and just let them know where I am really at.

Maybe you need a friend. Maybe you need to do it here. Maybe you need to hit the altar at the end of this meeting and go back into a prayer room somewhere and open your heart to somebody and say, here's who I really am.

I want to get it clear. Imagine. Just take a few of these out of the way and try to build a church.

You know, no wonder they run to all the methods, you know. Gymnasiums and all of that. I heard just recently of some big church in Ohio and they built the largest gymnasium complex in the city and it's a large city.

And all the gymnasiums are talking about this gymnasium that the church built. There are ten basketball, what do you call them? Court. Yeah, court.

Ten basketball courts all in one big building. Imagine that. In the name of the lowly son of God, they built the biggest gymnasium in the whole city.

And guess what? They're even proud of it. You know what they need? They need some old-fashioned honesty. Old-fashioned honesty will open up heaven over your life again, I'm telling you.

It'll open up heaven over your life. The next one. What does it mean to build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ? In verse seven, John tells us that this true Christian life is a walk.

It's a walk. That's different. You know, it's a walk.

But it's not just a walk to church or a walk to carry your Bible or a walk to read your Bible. It's not just that kind of a walk. It's deeper than that.

It's a walk in the light. Light? That light we read back there a couple of verses back. Walking in the light which reveals who I am.

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship, there's the word again, one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. And if you study that word cleanseth there, it's not just talking about once getting a cleansing, it's a present continuous word.

The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us and keeps on cleansing us and keeps on cleansing us and keeps on cleansing us. And you don't have to live in sin anymore. It keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

How? You've got to walk in the light. You've got to walk in the light. Are you willing to walk in the light tonight, my friend? You know, God requires that of every one of us.

It doesn't matter who it is, you know. It's not just us hippies that have to walk in the light. You know what I'm talking about? You know, there was a day when my hair was down here and I sat in the church service, you know.

And the preacher got up there and preached on 1 Corinthians 11. You know those verses? How that it's a shame for a man to have long hair and I was sitting there. I was about two months old in the Lord.

Listening to this Baptist preacher and he gave his sermon. And you know, Baptists are pretty strong about men and their hair. So he gave his sermon and I listened and I thought, I'm not getting my hair cut.

I got up when the service was over and went out the door. But you know, things weren't the same. You know, something was different in my life and I, you know, I was just two months old in the Lord and I hadn't figured all these things out yet, but something was different in my life.

And I got up the next morning to read my Bible, you know, and that same book that was a fire burning in my soul, I read it and I just, I didn't get anything out of it. I read, you know, because I knew it's right to read and I just kept reading and reading and nothing, you know. What's wrong? You know, so I thought, well, I'm going to pray.

And you know, I tried to pray and you know, just boom, just bouncing right off the ceiling. And what is wrong? And I went like this for a couple days. And then finally, in desperation, I did what I should have did back there two days ago.

I got on my knees and I said, Lord, what's wrong? Just like that. God told me what was wrong. He's been waiting for me to ask that question for two days.

He said, it's your hair, boy. It's your hair. I want you to cut that long hair.

I said, okay, Lord. I will. I'll go get my hair cut.

And I went to the barber and I got my hair cut. When I walked out of that barber's office, all of a sudden, the atmosphere was different. That's called walking in the light, my friend.

And that's just a simple little illustration of it. But none of us are exempt from that. Maybe you're sitting here tonight and you could track back six months ago when God said, I want this in your life.

I want you to deal with this. I want you to face this. And you know, until we face it, it's just like this.

Hey, we all know what it is, don't we? God takes us down through things and we're not ready yet. We're not willing to deal with it. We're not willing to face it.

And so, yeah, this is how it is, you know. Life with a guilty conscience. Things just aren't right anymore.

And things are not going to be right until you come face to face with what the voice of God through the Spirit of God in this book is saying to your heart. When you do, it clears up again. Listen, my friend.

To build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ is to walk in the light. It's a walk. And none of us are exempt.

None of us. Say, well, I've been a Christian many years. I grew up in a Christian home.

And I don't have that many things to deal with like you did. I've got news for you, my friend. There may be more things for you to deal with than you realize.

God is light. He is light, unapproachable. He is holy light.

He is righteous light. He is light that blinds the eyes of our heart. He is light.

And there may be many things that He would like to deal with you about if only you would let Him. The next one. This Christian life that we're speaking about has to do with confession.

Confession. 1 John 1.9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Glory! What a beautiful verse that is.

Confession. Confession. Sometimes that's confession before God.

Sometimes that's confession before men. Confession. Opening up your mouth and agreeing with God.

That's what that word confession means. It's way, way more than the way the American Christianity is using it. You know? You know, it's just like, you know, they carry this thing around in their back pocket.

1 John 1.9 I've got it in my back pocket and I'm just going to keep it there. And because I'm going to need it today, I know. Because I'm going to sin today, I know I am.

So I'm going to just keep 1 John in my back pocket so that as soon as I do, I can do something about it. My friend, that's not what it's talking about. This is not just a simple, Lord, I sinned.

Forgive me. Then go on. No.

It's agreeing with God about the issue in my life. Confession. Sometimes, it has to do with confessing in public.

I don't know if you believe in public confession, but I'll tell you if you study the history of revivals, again, all the way back down through there, it just pops up right there in the midst of revival. In fact, you can even have a theology against public confession, but in the heat of revival, men get honest, so honest, they want to be so honest, they just start emptying their heart out and confessing where they're really at. Confession.

And lastly here, it's victory. It's a victorious life, my friend. Verse 7 says, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Verse 9 says, He's faithful and just and forgives of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And what I see in those verses, my friend, is I see a victorious Christian life here. We're not talking about a Christian life that is plagued with failure on every hand, but rather it is charted with victory after victory after victory.

I don't know who you are. Many of you, I don't know. I don't know where you're at.

I don't know where your heart is at tonight. But maybe you're one of those who have just kind of given up. You know, you say, okay, I'm angry.

I'm an angry man. Dad was an angry man. Grandpa was an angry man.

I guess I'm going to be an angry man. And I guess my boy's going to be an angry man. And guess what? You're right.

You will be, unless you're willing to deal with it. But I'm here to tell you tonight, you can deal with that anger and you don't have to be an angry man even though great-grandpa was angry and grandpa was angry and dad was angry. And many times it comes down the lineage just like that, from one generation to the next.

But I'm telling you tonight, you can break that chain of anger in your life through Jesus Christ our Lord. You do not have to live with that. You do not have to put up with that.

Maybe your struggle is lust. Maybe you're struggling with lust. Maybe you've struggled with it for the last ten years.

I'm here to tell you tonight, God's emancipation proclamation is out. There's victory in Jesus. You don't have to live with that lust.

God can deal with that lust. Take it out of your heart. Give you a new heart.

Change the way you look at women. God can do that. There's victory in Jesus.

And I'm not talking about a sinless perfection that you never sin again. But I'm telling you what, we need to get over on the other side of that thing. People have swung so far over there.

I mean, they just walk around with a theology. I'm going to sin, I'm going to sin, I'm going to sin. Guess what? They do.

They do. They sin all the time. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

Let's look at chapter 2, verse 1. And then we'll bring this to a close. Dear old John, he's been defining what it means to build your life on the Lord Jesus. He's been defining what a true Christian is, what true Christianity is.

Because of the day and the age that he lived in, he felt led of the Spirit of God to define it for the sake of the Christians that were there because they were getting confused. If ever we need to hear the Apostle John's definitions, which are all the way through this book, by the way, it's this day that we live in because John is black and white. There's no gray.

It's real clear. But listen to the old man. Just listen to him now.

Picture him, if you would, for a moment. Ninety years old. Gray hair.

Gray beard. Maybe he's even cricked over a bit. Maybe he can't even walk.

I don't know how it was by the time he wrote this, but he's an old, old man. He's been walking with Jesus for a long, long time. And hear his words in chapter 2, verse 1. He says, My little children, these things write I unto you.

What things, my friend? What things is John referring to? He's referring to all the things that we've been looking at in this chapter. These things write I unto you, little children. Why? Why, John? That ye sin not.

I have given you a beautiful, clear direction on what it means to walk in the grace of God and I've given it to you so that you won't sin. We need to get a hold of that, brothers and sisters. John's attitude is you won't sin.

American Christianity's attitude today is I will. I'm gonna. I have to.

All the time. I mean, I've heard men say you can't go 30 seconds without sinning. What? John said, I wrote these things unto you that you sin not.

Again, I'm not talking about sinless perfection. You'll never sin again because he goes right on and says, but if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. So there is a way to deal with it.

But I believe that the normal, standard pattern of the Christian is victory over sin. And yes, maybe occasionally, maybe you're gonna sin. And when you do, I guarantee you, you won't just flip 1 John 1.9 out of your back pocket and say, Lord, forgive me, and go on from there.

You will fall on your face and say, Oh my God, I have sinned. Please forgive me, God. I have broken fellowship with you, Lord.

Would you please wash me from that? I don't want to go there. And you're not gonna wait four months until you do it either. You're not gonna wait for the next hot revival meeting to get you down to the altar to face your need.

You're gonna get on your knees right away because you've been walking in fellowship with God. And you'll break your heart and you'll confess it and praise God. We do have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, who was made a propitiation for our sins and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.

We thank God for that propitiation. I wonder where you're at tonight. I wonder how things are between you and the Lord.

You know, this is not supposed to be a revival meeting. This is supposed to be instructions and meditations on church. But you know what? Real church is full of revival, my friend.

It's full of revival. In fact, if you don't have it, you won't have a real church. You just won't.

So we may as well get right down to the basics right from the beginning and realize this is how Christ builds His church. Just like this. Whoever you are, whatever your dreams are, whatever your longings are,

or whatever kind of church you want, you take this basic foundational message and the truth that is in it and live it out with a group of other believers who are willing to do the same.

Ha! A church is a byproduct. It'll just be there. It'll just grow.

Somehow people will find you. Somehow you'll find people. I call them divine collisions, you know.

We just happened to run into each other at the grocery store. No, you didn't. God brought A in contact with B because A was right with God and B wasn't.

And God knew that He could trust B to A because He was right with the Lord. And that's how it's supposed to be, my friend. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Peter, my sin blood has not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. Thou art Peter and upon this rock, this confession, the reality of this confession, I am going to build my church, Jesus said. It's not a matter of whether it's going to be done.

It's a matter of who then is willing to walk this way. I promise you a New Testament church. I promise you that.

Let's bow our heads for prayer. Let's just quiet our hearts for a moment. Can we do that? Just be still and know that I am God, says the Scriptures.

Father in heaven, we love you tonight. Oh, God. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you for saving my soul. Thirty precious years, Lord. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Father. Unworthy, unworthy, yet worthy in Christ. Thank you, Father.

Oh, God. Would you do a work in our midst even tonight, God? Would you come, Lord? Would you convict us of our hearts, Lord? Would you convict us of our evil ways? Would you baptize us with some transparent honesty, Lord? God, these are things that man can't do. I pray that you'll do them, God.

I pray that you'll do them. Father, I think there's some needy souls in this room tonight, Lord. I pray in Jesus' name that you'll meet those needy souls.

Meet their need. For only you can do that, Father. Thank you for that beloved Apostle John, Lord, tonight.

What an inspiration he is to us, that dear old man. Our brother. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Father. Lord, you've blessed this invitation now, God. If you want to meet a need in this room, I pray, bring him down the aisle, God.

I trust you for that. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

I think we're going to sing a song of invitation and just give you an opportunity if you need to respond. What is the song this evening, Kenny? 6-0? Number 60, if you have a songbook. We're going to sing a couple verses.

If you need to do business with God, you can just come up here. There's a couple of steps. You can kneel up here and make an altar out of these steps.

And if you need help, if you want to come up here and get right, you can. If you need help, we'd also be glad to provide you with somebody who can counsel with you and encourage you along the way. So, if you have a need, you just get up out of your seat and come to the front while we sing number 60.

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