

Life & Times of Jesus #11

by Jack Hibbs

The church is a living, breathing organism, a supernatural entity that is universal in fellowship and comprised of Gentiles who are grafted into the tree of salvation.

Duration: 51:38

Scripture: Malachi 3:16, Matthew 6:33, John 1:12, John 16:13-14, Romans 16:25, Colossians 2:9

Topics: "Church Mission", "Faith In God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the church and its mission in the lives of believers. He encourages the congregation to have faith and trust in God, rather than relying on their own efforts. The preacher highlights three divisions of believers throughout history: the Old Testament saints, the church, and the future believers. He also mentions the mystery of the church, which has been revealed through the prophetic scriptures and is a source of hope for every believer. The sermon emphasizes the blessings and significance of Christ, the church, and history in the lives of believers.

Transcript

I want you to grab your Bibles this morning and turn if you would to John's Gospel. This morning we'll touch on John's Gospel Chapter 1. John's Gospel Chapter 1, and while you're turning there, we'll give you the, of course, theme verse of the entire series. There, Colossians 2.9, you can jot that down later.

But while you're going to John Chapter 1, I want you to look there at verse 12. You're very familiar with John Chapter 1, but look at verse 12 for a moment. It says, But as many as received Him, you see the capital H on Him, that's Christ, Jesus.

To as many as received Him, to them, those that received Him, He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, that is not of this world, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. That is a great verse that sums up the theme that we're in this morning, Christ and the Church. We're looking this morning at Jesus Christ as we come now to part 11 of our 16-part series of Christ and the Church, and what does it mean? What is your concept of church? Do you realize that this morning that most of us as Christians have a wrong view about the church? We somehow think that maybe it's a building, it's a structure.

We somehow might think that it is an institution, but the church is a living, breathing organism, according to the Word of God. The church, Christ and the church, throughout history among both Christian and

non-Christian alike, misunderstandings have existed about what the church really is. You don't have to go too far to figure out that this view or this misunderstanding is prevalent in churches and in the world today.

I mean, look at some of the magazines that try to make mention. Isn't it a crack-up? Actually, it's pathetic. I say crack-up with my tongue-in-cheek because the Wall Street Journal often makes comments about the church, which, by the way, they're more conservative than most.

New York Times will make a comment about the church, Los Angeles Times, U.S. News & World Report, Time Magazine, Newsweek. By the way, if you are getting your theology from any of those things listed above, you're a mess. If you're letting Newsweek dictate to you what Christianity is or isn't, you're going to be very, very messed up because they don't even know what Christianity is.

Ask them to define it. We'll talk about that a little bit more and we'll see some examples today. But you can ask people in the church, what is the church? And even in this church, where we make it a point not to put pomp and glory on the aesthetics of a place, on my wardrobe.

I mean, we go out of our way to make sure that you have brown carpet, brown walls. I mean, you know why? We want to look at Jesus. It's not the building.

It's not the aesthetics. Christ in the church, what is it about? What is it really? Well, Paul the Apostle, as we'll see in a moment, he's going to tell us it's a mystery. It's an amazing thing.

In fact, we'll see also that the marriage relationship between a husband and wife is first of all, all based upon and predicated upon something that precedes it. And that is the relationship between God the Father and Israel. Are you listening? The Bible says in the book of Jeremiah that God the Father is married to Israel.

I said married. He's married to her, Israel. That's what he says in the Old Testament.

But also, and for us more importantly, the Bible says that Jesus is engaged to who? Yeah, us, we, the church. And a lot of people today, even in Christianity, don't understand what this amazing, strange, mysterious relationship is with God, with Jesus and the church. But the Bible makes it very, very clear what that church or what the church ought to be.

In fact, Jesus and the seven letters to the seven churches, and I don't know why, in my Bible it's not this way. I think it's a grave mistake. In my Bible, in the book of Revelation to the letters of the seven churches, Jesus is speaking.

Did you know that? It's his last writing. Did you know that? It's found in the book of Revelation. He addresses seven churches, which by the way comprises any one of us at any given time, both as individual people, of course it's a historical and prophetic announcement, but for us individually.

At any moment I can be a Philadelphian. At any moment I can be a Laodicean. Do you ever go through those seasons of your Christian experience, where you're like one of those at the church at Ephesus? You're an Ephesian.

You're fighting the enemy with the sword of the Spirit, and you're so moving on in Christ, and you're sealed with the Holy Spirit, and you know it. And then Jesus says, well that's great, but you left your first love. We can go through that.

In my Bible, the letters to the seven churches, the red letters don't appear. In some of your Bibles they do. It should be in red, you know.

Jesus spoke it in Revelation to the church and churches. And what would he speak to us? Do you know Jesus, according to Malachi 3.16, that God right now is writing a commentary about this church generally, that's from this side of the wall to the other side of the wall, which contains you, the church. He's writing a commentary about it, and not only about it, us, as a congregation of people, but as individuals.

He's writing a commentary. Malachi 3.16. Very interesting passage of Scripture to keep in mind. The church, and this is an introduction, don't panic.

It's a huge introduction this morning. Are you ready? You guys okay today? Okay. The church.

The word in Greek is ekklesia, for church. The word means the ones who have been called out of, meaning from something, called out of something. Gee, what do you think that something is? We know it's the world.

Called out of something but placed into something else. It's not that we've been called out of the world and we've been abandoned. We've been called out of the world by Christ into the fellowship of His wonderful light and relationship.

The called out ones, a group placed together. The word can also be translated the meeting. I like that.

That's a neat name for a church, huh? The meeting. It's a meeting, a congregation, a community, members of the church both on earth. I like this.

The ekklesia is both the members of the church in the world and those in heaven. Now all of a sudden the verse comes to your mind as it does mine that the book of Hebrews tells us that in heaven there's a great cloud of witnesses. Where are they? They're in heaven.

They're part of the body of Christ. That's exciting to know. In our thinking we must be careful that we do not Americanize or Westernize or Easternize this concept of the church because denominations have done that and you're very aware of that.

Don't raise your hand. Do not raise your hand. This is a Calvary chapel.

Do you know what that means? That means we're all a bunch of mixed up group of people. Oh, it's true. Don't raise your hand but how many of you come from the Catholic church? How many of you come from the Methodist church? How many of you come from the Lutheran church? How many of you come from the Baptist? And you say, well, you know, that's one of the questions I wanted to ask.

What's the division all about? You know what? That's a great question. Paul the Apostle in the book of Corinthians condemns those divisions. Did you know that? Do you think Jesus is a Lutheran? Do you think Jesus is a Catholic? Do you think Jesus is a Baptist? We all know he goes to Calvary.

No, I'm kidding. I'm joking. Does Jesus, is Jesus from Calvary Chapel? No.

Oh gosh, no. Where do these divisions come from? From people hobby-horsing a doctrine or a view and making it an issue. And factions and arguments and opinions that are not yielded to the authority of the Bible.

That's where we get these spin-offs. It's unfortunate. It wasn't so in the mind of God.

He didn't want it that way. That's why Jesus, or excuse me, Paul, in the first few chapters of 1 Corinthians condemns the division. Some people say, well, I'm of Paul.

Well, I'm of Apollos. They're all boasting. I'm a Cephas, that is Peter.

I'm, I was converted under Peter's preaching. I'm something. Well, that's nothing.

I was converted under Paul's teaching. We're the Paulites. Well, we're the Peterites.

Well, we're the Apolloites. And then the real spiritual knuckleheads showed up and said, we're of Christ. They were the real one.

They were like, oh, you guys, we, you came to, to the Lord through Paul. We came to the Lord at one of Jesus's outreaches. They were the most spiritually snubbed or snobby.

Divisions offend God. That's not the church. You can't drive down the street and say, there's the church.

Now, if you see the people going into the church, then you can say, there goes the church. You see the church is a group of people. It's a living organism.

It's an amazing thing. It's mysterious. And yet it's so, so much misunderstood.

Jot this down by way of introduction. It's supernatural. The church is, this is why so many people have a hard time with it.

It's supernatural. A real church is, his church. It's universal in fellowship.

That is the work of God. The church of God enjoys what is called in the Greek, the koinonia, the fellowship of brothers and sisters here in Chino Hills and in Africa. The true fellowship is universal.

That is that those who are born again in South America, though you may meet them in a moment, though they be born again, there's an immediate bonding in the spirit. Some of you know what I'm talking about. It's a supernatural thing where you meet somebody and they've been born again in Canada.

They've never been here at all. They show up, you meet them and you talk with them. And there's an amazing connection.

You want to be with them. You know what I'm talking about? You want to be with them. How long have you known them? 45, 55 seconds.

You want to be with them. Can't explain it. You just enjoy their company.

There's this koinonia of the spirit. It's a supernatural thing. The church is.

It was an Old Testament mystery, though. In first Peter chapter one, verse 10, it says of this salvation, the prophets have inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that would come to you. Searching what or by what manner of time the spirit of Christ who was in them, that is in the prophets, was indicating when he testified beforehand concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow.

The prophets, Isaiah specifically, prophesied that the Gentiles would come to know God. And yet he didn't even understand what he was talking about. The Holy Spirit would project that word through Isaiah, and Isaiah had to be wondering how in the world are the Gentiles going to get saved? Did you know the church is basically comprised of Gentiles? How many of you in here are Gentiles? That means you're a non-Jew.

You're not Jewish. Yeah, most of us are Gentiles. There's some Jews.

And that's part of the beauty of this thing. And we'll see in a moment how God has brought both Jew and Gentile together in the fellowship of the church. But it's an Old Testament mystery.

But it's a New Testament reality. Old Testament mystery, New Testament reality. Revelation 5, 9. Revelation chapter 5 verse 9 says, And they sang, whoever they are, listen up, they sang a new song.

And they said this, You are worthy to take the scroll and to open the seals, for you were the one who was slain. And you've redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. That's everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, a mysterious reality.

Isaiah again speaks, Isaiah 11 verse 10. Isaiah 11, 10, he says, And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse that comes forth. Guess who that is? The root of Jesse.

Jesus, who shall stand as a banner to all the nations, for the Gentiles shall seek after him. Isn't that beautiful? Isaiah 11 verse 10. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 11.

Ephesians 2, 11 says, Remember that you once were Gentiles in the flesh who are called the uncircumcised by what is called the circumcised. He says that at that time you were without Christ in the world, being in the flesh and being alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. And we were strangers from the covenants of his promise, having no hope without God in the world.

But now through Christ Jesus, you who were once far away from God, he has brought you near by the blood of Christ, for he himself is our peace. And he has made both Jew and Gentile one, and he has broken down the middle wall of separation. If you're Jewish, your jaw kind of hangs open, because the word that's being implied here is that the Temple Mount had the area of the court of the Gentiles where they could come.

They were the proselytes. They had been converted to Judaism, but they could only go so far. They couldn't go any further.

What this passage in Ephesians is talking about is that God has torn down that wall, that the Jew and the Gentile come together and listen. Not only is that wall torn down, but the Bible tells us that Jesus, when he died in the Temple in Jerusalem, the veil was torn from the top to the bottom, exposing the Holy of Holies, signifying that both Jew and Gentile can come into the presence of God together. How so? By virtue of Christ's death on the cross, by virtue of this wonderful creation called the church.

I think like never before, and I'm a little bit intense about what I'm going to say next, we need to get our eyes on Jesus first if we're ever going to understand what a church is. Can somebody say amen? We need to look at Jesus first before we'll ever understand what a church is or what it ought to be. Because if you reverse that, you're going to run around like a lot of millions of people have, and they don't like what they see in a church, and they project that activity or poor witness or misrepresentation onto who? Jesus.

And they'll say, you know what? That church burned me. That church hurt me, so I'm not going to become a Christian. That's spiritual suicide.

The church never died for you on the cross, my friend. The church never raised anybody from the dead. The church never did anything.

It's Jesus. Look to him. The concept of the church simply means those who have been called out of this world.

Romans 11.25. Romans 11.25 says, For I do not want you, brethren, to be ignorant of this very mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceit, that blindness has happened to the Jews in part until the completion of the Gentiles has come in. Did you know that God is blinded, not Satan? You ought to listen to this carefully. Boy, we're going to have a terrible day today.

I haven't even started on my notes yet. Did you know that the Bible says that Satan has blinded the minds of those in this world who do not believe? But the Bible says that God has blinded the eyes of the Jews who don't believe, not Satan. Did you hear me? If you're sitting here this morning saying, I don't believe you, that's because Satan has blinded your eyes.

But if you're Jewish, like the nation of Israel, the Jew, as Ezekiel said, many of them would come back into their land in unbelief. They are blinded. Did Satan blind them according to the Bible? No.

The Bible says God has blinded them so that the Gentiles can be brought into the family, grafted into the tree of salvation, the church. Isn't that amazing? And Paul says in Romans 11, don't get cocky about it, you Gentile. God's blinded the Jew.

He's focused on you to get saved, which is called the church because the Bible says Jesus, his son, is going to marry a Gentile bride. Isn't that interesting? Just like Isaac and Rebecca, just like Boaz and Ruth. Interesting.

Though there'll be a little bit Jewish blood on her. That's neat. The Jew for the last 2,000 years has been banished to the nations of the world.

But now in the end, they've been brought back in. Why? Because God's getting ready to work with them again. That ought to be a wake-up call to you this morning.

Very, very important. Romans 16, verse 25. Still the introduction.

Romans 16, 25 says, Now to him was able to establish you according to my gospel, Paul says, by the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret since the world began, but now has been made revealed or manifested by the prophetic scriptures, having been made known to all nations according to the commandment of the everlasting God. That mystery, my friend, is the anti-hell device for every believer, the church. And so let's look this morning at our first point, and that is Christ, the church, and history.

Can you jot that down for a moment? Christ, the church, and history. There's three things I want to mention about this right up front regarding Christ, the church, and history. Three things.

There's three divisions of believers throughout all of God's work. I'm not just talking about the church, though that is the heading right now, Christ, the church, and history. Throughout all of history, you can

summarize all believers.

In fact, you can do it for all history. Listen, all history, all currently, and all futuristically. Watch this.

There's only three. There are the Old Testament saints. King David's one of them.

John the Baptist is another one. Old Testament saints. Are they saints? Yep.

Are they believers? Yep. Did they die looking forward to Christ coming? Yep. Noah was one of them, and on and on it goes.

Three divisions. The second division, and I'm going to give these in a strange order. The second division are the Tribulation saints.

You've got the Old Testament saints. I hope you see this in your heads. Very important.

In a moment, you're going to go, I get it. There's the Old Testament saints. Most of them died of old age.

Really? Then there's the Tribulation saints. Does anybody know how they're going to die? The Bible tells us how the believers during the Tribulation period is going to die. They're going to get their heads cut off.

Yeah, I don't believe it. Well, stick around. You'll see.

They're going to get their heads cut off. Those who believe in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation period will have to give their life for their faith. In the middle of those two sets of saints, guess what exists? Ecclesia, the church, the saints, the scripture says, who believe in Jesus Christ, to the saints who are at Ephesus, to the saints who are at Rome, to the saints who are at Colossae, to the saints who are at Galatia, to the saints who are at Chino, to the saints who are at Chino Hills, Corona, Norco, you name it.

In the middle is this Gentile, as the Bible says, bride of Christ. Three divisions. First thing I want you to see, Act 1, so to speak, I'll put it that way.

Being born again, Christ, the church, and history. And the first thing is, is that Jesus came that we would be born again. Born again.

It's the conversion of the sinner that is lost in their condition. They're lost in their sin. They're converted by being born again and redeemed.

And the position that they now enjoy, that you and I enjoy, is that we are now children of God. That's being born again. Christ, the church, and history.

When Jesus came, He's the one who said, unless a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of heaven. It came from Jesus. John chapter 20.

This is my opinion. I want you to just jot this down. This is his opinion.

I believe in John chapter 20, beginning at verse 19, is when the first believers became born again. This is kind of fun. You might get tested on this in your Bible class someday, and you might want to offer this up as a definition.

When did people first get born again? You might say at the day of Pentecost. That's wrong. That's when they were first filled with the power for ministry.

When did the first of the disciples, or when did the first believers get born again? I believe it was in John chapter 20, beginning at verse 19. It says, then on that same day at evening, being the first day of the week, the doors being shut and the disciples being assembled together, ecclesia, church, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them miraculously. And He said to them, peace be to you.

Why? Because they didn't have any peace. Now when they, or when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Hey, look, you guys, calm down.

It's me. Look at my hands. Look at my side.

It's me. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, peace be to you.

As the Father has sent me, I also send you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit. They were born again in that moment.

Because we know later on at the day of Pentecost, power came upon them to go out into the world, don't we? Paul taught this. First Corinthians chapter 12, verse 12 says, for as the body is one and has many members. I mean, look around you right here today.

But all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ. What a strange thing to say. Jesus is one, yet Jesus lives His life out through many members.

You, me. He says, for by one Spirit we were all baptized into the body, whether we be Jew or Greek, whether slave or free, having been made to drink of one Spirit, being born again. This is theology.

Am I born, y'all? Okay. Act 2, the birth of the church, day of Pentecost. Act 2 is this.

When the church was born, the world knew about it. Those born again ones, those sinners converted to Christ and made holy by the decree of God and by the sacrifice of Christ, they received the power of the Spirit. The person of the Holy Spirit had already come inside them.

But on that wonderful day in the book of Acts, Jesus in fact told them, you go and wait in Jerusalem. Why? You wait. In John chapter 20, He said, I'm going to send you out.

But He didn't say, I send you out, I'm breathing on you, now go. He said, I'm going to send you out, I'm breathing on you, receive the Holy Spirit. Then He turns around and says, wait.

Wait. Go to Jerusalem and wait. Why? Wait for the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church, not the birthday of the believer, the birthday of the church.

When it says there, He said, you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit, what, comes inside you? No. He's talking to born again ones, called out ones, the church. He says, when the Holy Spirit does what? Comes upon you.

E-P-I in Greek, to come upon you, to propel you. Isn't that neat? When Jesus has received the Holy Spirit, the word in the Greek is E-N, inside you. The Holy Spirit dwells inside you, but He's also come, or He also

comes upon you for service.

That's why you see in the book of Acts that the apostles laid hands on many of those that were to be sent out and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to preach the word of God with boldness or they had gifts imparted to them or whatever the case may be. Acts chapter 2 verse 1 concerning this birthing of the church. He says, now in the day of Pentecost, when it had fully come, there were about a hundred and twenty of them gathered together in one place, in one accord, and suddenly there came the sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house.

That and there appeared unto them divided tongues as of fire. One sat upon each of them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The church was born on the day of Pentecost and the church has a lifespan.

Did you know that? It has a birth on earth and it has a day of its removal on earth. The birthday of the church is Pentecost and the graduation day of the church, meaning it goes into heaven, it leaves this earth, is the day of the rapture. It was born on Pentecost, it has its end on earth, that is at the time of the rapture.

What we see here this morning is that Christ, the church in history, is that He made, that is Jesus, the ultimate commitment. Simply this, we've covered this in previous studies, Jesus came draped in humanity to forever be a man. Wait a minute, Jack, I was told He was a God.

He's not a God, He's the God. Jesus is God, come out of heaven, draped in human flesh of His own will, lived among us, died on the cross for our sins, rose again from the dead, and by doing so... Now don't think for a moment He thought, well, you know, comparing 33 and a quarter years to eternity, what's the big deal? I'll go down there, do my deal, put my time in. Oh no, when Jesus came as a man, it was for time and eternity.

Did you know that? The Bible tells us that there's a man seated at the right hand of God the Father right now, the man Christ Jesus. That's awesome, that is incredibly awesome to me. He made the ultimate commitment by taking upon Him humanity.

He became both a lamb, the Lamb of God, and the Son of Man forever and for eternity. What did we read a moment ago in Revelation 5? John saw a man in heaven as though he were a lamb who had been slain. And that is an eternal view.

It bothers a lot of people. It shouldn't, but it does. According to the book of Zechariah, the Bible teaches us that Jesus will bear the scars of His crucifixion and of His beating forever.

That's amazing. The Lamb as though He had been slain. He made the ultimate commitment.

Secondly, we see that He paid an impossible debt. Jesus paid for our sins' debt. Did you know this? That in Titus chapter 2 verse 14, the Bible says, and He, that is Jesus, He gave Himself for us.

That means He gave Himself in our place. Well, what's that all about? I wasn't going anywhere. Oh yeah, you were.

Yes, I was. You and I were headed to hell in a hen basket. It was a greased pole.

We were walking on thin ice. We had a hole in our glove. I mean, put it any way you like it.

We were going to hell. The Bible says Jesus gave Himself for us. Why did He have to give Himself for us? Because we were going to Hades, buddy.

We were on our way to the pit. Jesus steps in. He pays the debt that you and I couldn't pay.

Isn't that funny? Why did He do that? Because you and I are such sinners. He paid the debt so you and I could be such saints. I heard this morning on KNX News, driving down here, that the Pope had an address to India.

Yeah, it was in India yesterday, wasn't it? And everyone's pressuring him to declare Mother Teresa a saint. And so he's launching an investigation to find out if she's done at least two miracles. They're investigating that right now.

Did you know, and I don't want to upset you, but did you know that's not biblical? Did you know that if you believe in Jesus Christ and you're trusting in Him to have sacrificed Himself for your sins and you're trusting in His shed blood on the cross, the Bible calls you a saint? Did you know that? I'm not worthy. Of course you're not worthy. That's the cool part about it.

So they're searching for two miracles. I'll give you a hint. You can go outside today and lead somebody to Jesus Christ and perform the greatest miracle of all.

Jesus says, because I go to the Father, you'll do greater works than I've done. Well, I haven't raised anybody from the dead, but I have had the humble opportunity to lead someone to Jesus. Could that have been what He meant? I think so.

Wow. He paid the debt that you and I couldn't pay. He paid for our sins.

Prior to you and I coming to Christ, there was like our own personal sin-o-meter in heaven. Man, He was just keeping record. You know this from the Bible, the book of Revelation.

To those who do not come to Christ, they will be judged according to their sins, according to what's going on in their life. And there's a joke. You've heard this joke.

And I can tell this joke. I didn't make it up. Pastor Romain made it up at Costa Mesa, so you can blame him if you don't like it.

He said that in heaven, Billy Graham got up there and saw a vision of heaven. Billy Graham saw a vision of heaven, and Chuck Smith saw a vision of heaven, and Raul Reese saw this vision of heaven. And there's this room, and the angels are going in and out of the room, and they're like, you know, got hard hats on.

They're checking, recording things down. And they look, and it's a sin-o-meter. And they go in there, and Billy Graham's meter is barely moving.

In fact, it looks like it's stuck. It's just sitting there. Chuck Smith's is moving a tiny bit.

And Raul Reese says, Man, where's mine? Where's my sin-o-meter? And they said, It's downstairs. We're using it for a fan. Isn't that great? Now, don't go tell Raul I said that.

But that is a cute joke. I think that's really good. Now, you might laugh about that, but the thing is, before we come to Jesus Christ, everything we think, imagine, with the wrong motive we do, it's wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin.

And it's like, oh, I don't want to hear this at church. You know what? That meter's running. But there's a way to stop it.

Come to Christ. Listen. Step into the church.

Not this church. Step into that supernatural body that Jesus holds dear and true to His heart, the church. Why? He paid an impossible debt for her.

There's no other way to heaven. It's through Him alone. He gave a sure guarantee.

What do we mean by that? Well, He gave a sure guarantee, meaning this. The Bible says now, He who establishes us with you is Christ, and He has anointed us in God. And also, He has sealed us by giving us His Holy Spirit in our hearts.

We are sealed. A lot of people bicker about losing your salvation. Can you lose it? Let me tell you something.

When God gives something, He never takes it back. Can you lose it? You don't lose it if you have it. If you have it, you got it.

The question is, do you have it? Well, you know, I knew somebody who believed for a while, or they were born again. They were Christians for a while. That's impossible.

They might have believed for a while, but gave up on their belief. But they never had the faith in Christ and became born again. I don't know why there's confusion about this.

If you are born again, you are not aborted. The question is, we need to start asking the right questions. Are you born again? Well, I believe.

I don't care if you believe. Are you born again? Well, I go to church. I don't care if you go to church.

Are you born again? Well, I'm in the choir. Well, so is Satan. He was in the choir.

That's not the answer. The sure guarantee is that the Holy Spirit has been sealed in our hearts. Our salvation is secure in Him.

The church. Secondly, let's look to this. The second point is this.

Christ and the church presently. Right now, we're going to run through these quickly because of time. First thing that we see right here is that Jesus comforts the church.

Well, you might say, well, I wish you would comfort me. Yeah, He is comforting you. You're maybe just not listening.

I wish you would comfort me. You might be asking, are you clinging to His promises? I don't understand it, people. Don't ask me to explain it.

I can't. But how can the written word of God, how can this Bible, how can this book of black and white pages here bring peace into your life? I don't understand it. I just enjoy it.

Well, I want more than that. Well, you know, enter into the church and have it all. But that's the best I can do by way of explanation.

Christ and the church presently, He not only comforts us, He directs the church. He directs the church. John 16, verse 3. I love this.

He says, however, when He, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority. But whatever He hears, He will speak and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it unto you.

You want to have direction as a church and as an individual within the church. Read your Bible. It's God ordained.

It's holy anointed. You have a decision coming up about a job. You have a decision coming up about a move.

You have a decision coming up about a ministry. You have a decision coming up. The answer is in the Bible.

It's in the book. The answer is in the Bible. I didn't have a chance to show this to you this morning.

I'll simply quote some things to you. It's U.S. News and World Report, October 25, 1999. The title of it on the front page.

You saw Adam and Eve maybe on the cover. Have you seen them? In this U.S. News and World Report magazine on the newsstands. It says, Is the Bible true? And I love this because they just put out one a couple weeks ago on evolution.

How true it is. And they spent the whole book trying to convince themselves how true it is. And it's a hilarious joke.

Now this week, because we're getting close to the holidays, Is the Bible true? Let's go to Adam and Eve on the cover. Well, listen to this. It said there's amazing scientific discoveries that speak of the Bible's truth.

You know what? Somebody in those magazines have got to put their head on right. Pick one or the other. You know, I think I know which way they're going, don't you? They want to do, they want to have a theistic evolution, don't they? Cover all the bases.

God refuses that option. But anyway, this is fun. Listen to this.

In that article, if you read it, I'm going to give you this quote, Yigal Yedim, Israeli archaeologist, stated this. He's not a Christian. He says, We went about discovering the gates of Solomon with the Bible in one hand and a spade in our other hand.

That article went on to talk about how incredibly accurate the Bible is to archaeological science. You know what they did? Listen, did you know that until recently there was no physical documented fact that King

David existed? Did you know that? None. Until now, they have found inscriptions regarding King David, not only the King of Israel, but being a great warrior, dating back to his time.

Do we believe in that because the science now has confirmed it? Or did we always believe it and science finally caught up to it? Isn't that fun? Well, you might say, well, that's one instance. I'll give you another one. Did you know that there was literally no record that Pontius Pilate was the governor of or in the region of Judea? Pontius Pilate, a Roman official.

But did you know that in Caesarea, there was unearthed there a tablet? We've got to see it with our own eyes and hands and everything. On one of our tours, there's a temple, I mean, a tablet there that has his name and his position. Did you know Caiaphas? You've read about Caiaphas.

Remember, he was the clown that had the kangaroo court that had Jesus tried illegally. Caiaphas, no evidence of him ever existing, physical evidence. Guess what? Until they dug a little deeper and found documentation and artifacts of his writing about him being real.

Do you believe that now because science has revealed it? Or did the book tell you in advance before the spade, the shovel caught up in the scientific community? Isn't that neat? So now US News and World Report's got to grapple with the fact that the Bible is true. What are about the claims when Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and nobody comes to the Father but through me. Did you know that there was no evidence, physical evidence found of actual, though they have depictions, actual crucified bodies? Until in the last couple of years, they found in Israel excavations of preserved human bone with stakes pierced through them.

And yet we've always believed in crucifixion, and we heard about it in not only Christian writing, but in non-Christian writing, but now the science has revealed it. It's exciting. Jesus directs the church.

He's in absolute control. You don't have to worry about anything. He's in control.

Thirdly, on this area, Jesus promotes the church. He's for you. I'm just going to say this, and we're going to go to the third point.

He's for you. He's rooting for you. He wants you in heaven.

He's done everything He can to get you there. The vehicle that takes you there, so to speak, is the church. It's where you learn about Him.

It's where you come to fellowship with His people and share with one another. But not only that, it's where you and I go out from this place and change the world. He promotes you.

Listen, those of you who are involved in Christian service, you know what I'm talking about. He pushes you. So many people, man, I wish I could do this.

I'm trying to think of something right now to get your attention on this. Billy Sunder, the great evangelist, used to throw stuff at his congregation to get their attention. Listen, those of you, you've been sitting for so long, I don't know this, you know, I'm a Christian, and you are a Christian.

You believe, you trust, you have faith, you're looking to Him to get you to heaven. You're not working it out on your own, but you're just like, you know, is this it? Are you in your mind asking, is this all there is? You know, it's all there is if that's all you're going to allow it to be. Well, that sounds like a New Age statement.

No, it's not. Listen carefully. Will you step out and let God push you along, promote you? I don't mean promote you, like make you something.

I mean propel you. Well, I don't know this Christian thing, I don't know. You know, the moment you say that, I know that you're just kind of hanging out.

You're not really expressing your love toward Him by serving Him. Makes all the difference in the world, you know. Keep going, this is convicting.

Move on. We look to the third, and again, we've got to run through this very, very quickly, and we're in trouble. Christ, the church, and forever.

Christ, the church, and forever. The Bible shows that in heaven, you and I are going to be the bride of Christ, the church, forever. And by the way, are you ready for this? I found this on my own.

I hope I'm not wrong about this. I've been researching this for a long time. But did you know the Old Testament saints, as we referred to earlier, do you know that in heaven they wear white robes? White robes.

And did you know that the tribulation saints in heaven, do you know what they wear? White robes. Do you know what the bride of Christ wears? She doesn't wear any robes. She wears fine white linen.

I did a wedding yesterday. What do you think the bride had on, a robe? Did she come out of the hotel with a robe on? You know, I'm ready. Hair's up, you know, curlers, with a robe.

No. She came with fine white linen. Why? Because, quite frankly, she was the wedding.

The Bible says, blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Are you ready for this? Are you sitting down? Hang onto your seat. The bride of Christ is not invited to her wedding.

She is the wedding. Who's invited? Tribulation saints, Old Testament saints, I mean, you name it. Those who have died in Christ, both believing in Him futuristically or looking back to Him.

The marriage is between Christ and the bride, the church. A bride is never invited to a wedding, her wedding. It's hers.

There is no wedding without her. Isn't that fun? We are going to be the church forever in heaven. We'll have a special place and that very place should cause us to realize that we've been designed to serve in worship and in adoration and in giving our hearts to Him, whatever the case may be.

We've been designed to serve. Secondly, we've been ordained with power, the person of the Holy Spirit. The church exclusively has the Holy Spirit dwelling within her right now.

Oh, it's so wonderful. It's so romantic to think Jesus has left her a deposit, a promise, and that is the Holy Spirit in your heart. What a wonderful thing.

Thirdly, we've been destined for glory. We have been destined for glory. We are actually going to enjoy the fact that we are going to spend eternity with Him and we'll see the holy angels and we'll see the activity of God and the saints and all that there is.

We're destined for glory. Fourthly, we'll run through this very fast. I mean it and really, truly.

There's only one real true church. Did you know that? Oh, I knew the weird thing was coming. There's only one true church.

This week, I had to be in two cities, one for definitely a visit. The other one was just to get on a different plane, though I'd been to that city too many times before, all over the place. And regarding the one true church, let me say this.

Note this first, that its founder is Jesus Christ, okay? Its founder is Jesus. It's not some man. There's only one true church and it's the one that He died for.

Would you like to become a member? Then bow your heart to Him. Ask Him to come into your life and save you from your sin and write your name down in His Lamb's Book of Life. But look, the founder is Jesus.

Secondly, its home office is not of this world. Now, why did I put that down? Because in two cities I was at this week, one is Salt Lake City. And I don't need to say any more.

Salt Lake City is not the home office of God's work in the universe. I know that might come as a shock to some of you. But Salt Lake City is not the headquarters of God's eternal work.

Okay, I also spent some time this week in Brooklyn. And for some of you, you know what I'm talking about. When you're going over the Manhattan Bridge onto the Brooklyn, there's on the right-hand side a massive building with the big red letters blinking.

I mean not blinking, but shining to the world. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. Did you know if they'll tell you the truth? They believe that Jesus is living today in Brooklyn.

This is the message of the Watchtower Society, the Jehovah Witnesses. Now, they aren't going to tell you that at your door. An insider might tell you that.

Listen, I got news for you. The home office of God's eternal work for all the ages is not in Brooklyn. I mean, you know, you wouldn't pick Brooklyn anyway.

It's mission, the church is, is for you. Simply put, we're all done here now. We're really done.

The church exists for you to A, meet God. B, that you might get equipped to serve Him. To learn how to pray, how to read, how to serve, how to love, how to enjoy community or fellowship one with another.

The mission of the church in our lives then is to send people out into the world. The mission during all of that is that the church would love and worship Jesus first. That's what's so great about a brand new believer and an old season saint.

There's one thing that they can do simultaneously. They can praise the Lord. Isn't that great? I hope this message has made sense to you this morning.

We simplify this thing about the church. It's so wonderful that Jesus gave all that he had for her. Aren't you blessed? You are so blessed.

You are so rich. You are so spoiled by the loving hand of God. Father, we thank you for your word.

We pray, Lord, that this morning perhaps someone in this place has heard from you, not from man, not from us, not from me, but from you, that maybe for years they've used a bad experience with someone or some sign, some place, some thing, some address, as an excuse to not come to you. Father, we pray, Lord Jesus, that you would right now touch their heart and cause them to repent of all of their excuses that they've been mustering up on why they won't come and just sit down at your feet. Lord, that this morning they would say, Jesus, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry for taking it out on you. And I'm asking you, Lord, to make me a member of your body. Bring me, Lord, into your church and save me from my sins.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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