

Life Link

Video Illustration: Don't Go To Church

Slide Background:

Title: "**We are the Church**" **ekklesia** (ek-klay-see'-ah);

Big Idea: **Introductory Illustration:** The church is not a reference to a location or to time period in the history of ages past, present or future but, to a people. A group of people who have accepted Jesus the Lord of their life. When John writes to the Seven Church *Rev 1:4) he (John) is sending a letter, an account of things to come. The future of the Church is limited in this world. There will come a time when the ekklesia (Church) the bride will be with the groom (Jesus) and will live together in eternity.

This word **ekklesia** carries the meaning of being called out, that this calling is a calling of separation from the world (1 Peter 1:11). That separation extend beyond this world but into eternity.

John writing to the ekklesia (church) is writing to all the ekklesia (churches) that have existed unto the point of the churches exit from this world.

Someone asked me "Where is Your Church?" My reply was that first it is not my church it the church of Jesus, then I asked when do you mean? This question confused the person who asked me the question. Then I answered the question this way. "On Sunday morning the church gathers in West Tawakoni, but during the week the church is located all over east Texas. While the building where the church comes together has a physical locating the church the "ekklesia" is mobile and on the move.

Read Sermon Text:

Matthew 16:15-18 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. NKJV

1. Foundation of The Church (vs. 18)

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. NKJV

- a. We must notice the words of Jesus in verse 18 when He states " I will build". These words imply a future event which is to take place. The day of Pentecost ushers in the formation of the church. The book of Acts records the empowerment of those disciples who we could call the first members of the first church. The church will be built upon the foundation of Jesus and it is securely anchored in the "Rock" that is Jesus.

- b. Peter states that the stone which the builders rejected is the very corner stone of the foundation which we the church is built on. We often lose sight that the church is and will ever will be the most important object of Jesus affection. One may asked just how important is the church. It was and is so important to Jesus that he died for it.
- c. The church is comprised of men. women, boys and girls who have made a decision to join as "living stones" who are built up to become a spiritual house. Those living stones are a holy priesthood and as priest we are to offer up a spiritual sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ.
- d. When we think of a sacrifice which is no longer alive but Paul wrote in Rom 12:1 that we are to offer a living sacrifice, we are not to die for Christ but to live for Him each day. We are to die to the things of this world, to the life of self and live a life which is Christ. Therefore the church is a group of people who have separated themselves from the world and turned to Jesus Christ who died for the Church by paying the price for sin and disobedience in our lives.

1 Peter 2:4-6 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion
A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,
And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." NKJV

Isa 28:16 <A Cornerstone in Zion>

Therefore thus says the Lord God:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily. NKJV

1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

NKJV

Eph 2:19 <Christ Our Cornerstone> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

NKJV

Rev 21:14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. NKJV

2. Power of the Church (vs. 18)

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, **and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.** NKJV

- a. The power in the church is not in the believers but in their faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is the key. It was faith in God and His word that allowed Moses to deliver the plagues of Egypt and brought pharaoh to his knees. It was faith that provided Moses to deliver the children of Israel to the opposite side of the Red Sea and destroy the armies of Egypt. It was faith in the word of God as Elijah (1 Kings 18:38) was able to humiliate the Prophets of Baal. It is only through the strength and power of Jesus were the disciples able to do signs and wonders. However Jesus questioned their faith when they were unable to cast out demons.

1 Kings 18:38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. NKJV

- b. The power of the church is not its members but in their faith as individuals and in their collective faith in Jesus.
- c. The church is not the physical building that surrounds us here which is composed of wood and stone, but the building of God, the church of our Lord that is composed of living stones.

We Are God's Building

"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5).

There's a story about a king of Sparta in ancient Greece who boasted to a visiting monarch about the mighty walls of Sparta. But the guest looked around and didn't see any walls, and finally he said to his host, "I'd like to see those walls. Show them to me!" The Spartan ruler pointed with great satisfaction to some disciplined and well-trained troops, part of Sparta's mighty army, and exclaimed, "There they are! Those are the walls of Sparta!"

Just as each Spartan soldier was viewed by the king as a brick in his mighty wall, so we are viewed by God as "living stones... built up a spiritual house" (Source: Allen Smith, White House Church of Christ, Sermon Central)

3. Future of The Church (vs. 18)

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will **build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. NKJV

- a. Just as God promised Abraham He (God) would give him (Abraham) a place flowing with milk and honey, so through Jesus we will live in a place prepared for us. A place where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are. That place as has many names, Mountain of God, Zion, and Heaven. But regardless of what it is called it is a place prepared for us. Jesus stated in John 14 that he was going to prepare it for us. It has 12 foundations (12 Apostles) and the Chief Corner Stone, Jesus (Rev 21:14) Land it too is a land flowing with milk and honey. A placed where there is no sorrow and tears a place where God is.

Conclusion: When I enlisted in the U.S. Army, I was sent to Ft. Polk La. There I entered basic training. As part of our training we had to march and run in formation. The drill sergeant would call cadence as we marched and as part of the cadence the drill sergeant would ask the question " Who are you" our response was we were solders. Like that those days of preparation to become a soldier of God we must remember who we are. Let me ask you, Who are You? If you cannot answer "We Are The Church" you can be if you enlist in Army of God. Your life is sure, Your strength is in Jesus, and Your future is reserved in Heaven till you claim it.

Text Illustration: ON TOP OF THE FENCEPOST

Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," had an unusual picture hanging on his office wall. It was a picture of a turtle on top of a fence post. When asked, "Why is that there?" Alex Haley answered, "Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words & think that they are wonderful, & begin to feel proud of myself, I look at the turtle on top of the fence post & remember that he didn't get there on his own. He had help."

That is the basis of thankfulness - to remember that we got here with the help of God, & that He is the provider of every blessing we have. You cannot get there by yourself, your strength is not in you and your eternity is secure in JESUS. SOURCE: Melvin Newland, Minister, Central Christian Church, Brownsville, TX.