

sermon study summary

Why Believe Series Part 14

November 2 / 3, 2024

Why the Church Matters?

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Some people reject or ignore the church **because it is exclusive**. It claims to have a corner on truth and excludes those who believe or live differently than they do. But in order for any organization to exist and survive, its members must represent the beliefs and values of that organization. The church **MUST** consist of those who have committed their lives first of all to Jesus Christ. Christians are called to love everyone, but are not called to accept or condone beliefs or behaviors that are contrary to Scripture.

Some people are **repulsed by the hypocrisy** they see in the church. They focus wrongly on people who **CLAIM** to be Christians rather than on Christ. That is not a valid reason to reject Christianity. God has chosen to reveal Himself, His truth, His new community, His love and compassion **THROUGH** the church. True followers of Jesus are committed to living out His love, truth and values in the world. Because Christians don't perfectly live the life God calls us to live doesn't mean the problem is the church. People should not write off Christians and the church because they fall short.

Some people ignore the church because they **want private religion**, a spirituality that doesn't include others. James says a private faith is a dead faith!

The Church matters ...

1. because she matters to Jesus. The church was His idea. Jesus established the church and is committed to building His church. He said "I will build my church!" Notice He said it was **HIS CHURCH**. The church is His bride whom He loves so much that He died for her. To say you love Jesus and yet to reject or ignore the church is to reject Christ. If you have an issue with the idea of church, then you have an issue with Jesus.

2. because she gives attention to eternal issues. The church is the only voice that reminds us that this life is not all there is. The church deals with the eternal things of life, including the lifesaving and life altering good news of Jesus Christ. The church shows us **HOW** to enter into a real friendship with God, how to be forgiven and set free from sin. The church challenges us regularly from the Scriptures to ask, "What am I staking my life on? What am I giving my life to that is going to matter in eternity?"

3. because she is the community through which Christ is bringing hope and healing to our hurting planet. Whenever and wherever Christianity was lived out authentically, **PEACE, GOOD WILL and JUSTICE** reigned. In Acts 2, the early church met regularly to not only encourage, care for and pray for one another, but to challenge one another to serve and care for their neighbors. They sold their possessions and gave to anyone as they had need. They fed the hungry, cared for the sick, prayed for and encouraged the hurting. Throughout history Christians were known as people who helped the widows, orphans, the sick, prisoners and victims of natural catastrophes. Christians established schools and orphanages, medical centers and hospitals all over the world. These institutions had virtually not existed before the church age.

When we sincerely worship our LORD, we will increasingly **REFLECT** who HE is in our lives by actions such as: being honest in a world of dishonesty, forgiving in a world of unforgiveness, being gracious in a world of anger and resentment, being peaceful in a world of conflict, and being generous in a world of greed.

That kind of church matters!

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What club, organization, or company have you joined? What common traits do the members share?
2. What are the most common complaints about the church?

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read *Matthew 16:13-18*. Jesus stated that He is building His Church on Peter's declaration. What is the declaration? Why is it important that the Church is built on this declaration?
4. Refer to *Psalms 39:4* and *Matthew 16:26*. Why is it important to think beyond this life? How does the Church help us have an accurate perspective on eternity?
5. Read *James 2:14-18*. According to this passage, what is faith and its result? What does living authentically as part of the Church look like?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

6. What good is the Church to the communities outside the Church? What steps can your group take to help others see that the Church is relevant to them?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

One day life will end for everyone. How often does that reality factor into the decisions you make? How can you make better decisions with eternity in mind? Does your life reflect the God you worship?

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 16:13-18

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Psalms 39:4

"Show me, Lord, my life's end
and the number of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.

Matthew 16:26

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

James 2:14-18

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Jem Ong, Deb Matiko, Alfred Samson and Jorel Quemuel