

DAILY BIBLE VERSES AND PRAYER THOUGHTS:

MONDAY - VERSES: Revelation 13:8; Isaiah 2:2; 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44; Matthew 12:28 PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank God for planning the church and making sure that it happened as He planned.

TUESDAY - VERSES: Romans 5:6-10; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-11; Acts 20:28 PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank God for the love that prompted His sacrifice of His own Son to purchase the church.

WEDNESDAY - VERSES: 2 Peter 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; Ephesians 4:11-16 PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank God for providing everything we need to be the church that He wants us to be.

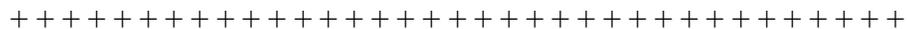
THURSDAY - VERSES: Hebrews 4:6-9; Mark 8:38; Romans 6:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 PRAYER THOUGHT: Ask God to forgive you for times in your life that you have not been a faithful part of the bride of Christ, or times that you have shamed the Lord's church.

FRIDAY - VERSES: Romans 14:19; 15:2; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15; 14:26 PRAYER THOUGHT: Ask God for the courage to help build the church into a stronger force for His good in our community.

SATURDAY - VERSES: James 1:27; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Peter 1:22-23; Revelation 19:7-8; 21:9-27 PRAYER THOUGHT: Ask God's help in our efforts to keep the church honorable, pure, holy and beautiful.



You can be committed to any church but not committed to Christ, but you cannot be committed to Christ without being committed to His church.



Any church that does not teach against evil is evil itself.



ASSIGNMENTS

1. Daily read over this material and read or sing the song.
2. Place the scripture where you will see it each day.
3. Think of times when you have missed opportunities to help in building the church.
4. Write down the ways you have helped Christ build His church in your community.
5. Plan to tell the class how you have helped edify the church, or how you could have helped but failed to do so.

**SPIRITUAL HEALTH REGIMEN - WEEK 29
CHRIST'S CHURCH - 2-4-13 TO 2-10-13**

SCRIPTURE - Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

COMMENT - Jesus would not have promised to build His church and not done it. Since He is the one building the church it must be built according to His specifications. If we build a church our way, then it is not His church, but ours.

SONG - THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

1. The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ Her Lord. She is his new creation by water and the Word; from heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride; with His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.
2. Elect from every nation, yet one or all the earth; her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth; one holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food, and to one hope she presses with every grace endured.
3. Though with a scornful wonder we see her sore oppressed, her doctrine rent asunder, by names and creeds distressed. Yet saints their watch are keeping, they cry: "how long, how long?" And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

THOUGHTS

The minister was chatting with a member of his congregation on the street one day. "I felt so sorry for your wife in church last Sunday," he said, "when she had that terrible spell of coughing and everyone turned to look at her. "

"Don't worry about that," the man said, "She had on her new spring hat. " (The church assembly is not a fashion show.)



There was a little old cleaning woman who went to the local church. When the invitation was given at the end of the service, she went forward wanting to become a member. The preacher listened as she told him how she believed in Jesus and wanted to be baptized and become a member of the church. The preacher thought to himself, "oh my, she is so unkempt, even smells a little, and her fingernails are not clean. She picks up garbage, cleans toilets - what would the members

think of her". He told her that she needed to go home and pray about it and then decide.

The following week, here she came again. She told the preacher that she had prayed about it and still wanted to be baptized. "I have passed this church for so long. It is so beautiful, and I truly want to be a member". Again the preacher told her to go home and pray some more.

A few weeks later while out eating at the restaurant, the preacher saw the little old lady. He did not want her to think that he was ignoring her so he approached her and said, "I have not seen you for a while. Is everything all right?"

"Oh, yes," she said. "I talked with Jesus, and he told me not to worry about becoming a member of your church."

"He did?" said the preacher.

"Oh, yes" she said. "He said He had been trying to get into your church for years."



A Sunday School teacher challenged her children to take some time on Sunday afternoon to write a letter to God. They were to bring their letter back the following Sunday. One little boy wrote, "Dear God. We had a good time at church today. Wish you could have been there."



THINGS YOU NEVER HEAR AT THE CHURCH BUILDING

*Hey! It's my turn to sit in the front pew.

*I was so enthralled, I never noticed your sermon went 25 minutes overtime.

*Personally I find worship much more enjoyable than golf.

* Personally I find evangelism much more enjoyable than fishing.

* I've decided to give our church the \$500 a month I used to send to TV evangelists.

*I volunteer to be the permanent teacher for the Junior High Sunday School class.

*I love it when we sing hymns I've never heard before!

*Since we're all here, let's start the service early.

*Preacher, we'd like to pay for you to go to this Bible lectureship in the Bahamas.

*Nothing inspires me and strengthens my commitment like our annual giving campaign!



There is a cartoon showing a mother, a father, and a small boy leaving church. The father was wearing a look of annoyance and saying to his son, "I want you to stop referring to the church as the repentagon."



One Sunday morning during service, a 2,000 member congregation was surprised to see two men enter, both covered from head to toe in black and carrying sub-machine guns. One of the men proclaimed, "Anyone willing to take a bullet for Christ, remain where you are." Immediately, the choir fled, the deacons fled, and most of the congregation fled. Out of 2,000 there only remained around 20. The man who had spoken took off his hood, looked at the preacher and said, "Okay Preacher, I got rid of all the hypocrites. Now you may begin your service. Have a nice day!" And the two men turned and walked out.



If Christ bought and built the church, whose name should it wear?



TEN COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT CHRIST'S CHURCH

INTRODUCTION: Matthew 16:13-19

L. S. - Some People Are Mistaken about . . .

I. The P _____ for the Church. - Isaiah 2, Joel 2, Daniel 2, Acts 2

II. The P _____ of the Church. - Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9

III. P _____'s Relationship to the Church. - 1 Corinthians 3:11

IV. The P _____ for the Church. - Ephesians 1:22-23; 3:14-15; 5:23-24

V. The P _____ P _____ for the Church. - Acts 20:28; 2:47; Rom. 12:5

VI. The P _____ of the Church. - Rev. 2-3; 1 Corinth. 11:18-19

VII. P _____ a Church. - John 17:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

VIII. P _____ Entering the Church.- Ac. 2:38-41,47; Gal.3:26-27

IX. The P _____ of the Church. - 1 John 3:8; Luke 19:10; Mk 8:36-37

X. The P _____ Being the Church. - 1 Corinthians 12; Matthew 18:17

CONCLUSION:

TEN COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT CHRIST'S CHURCH

INTRODUCTION:

A. Matthew 16:13-19 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (14) And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. (15) He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (18) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (19) And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

B. This is a very brief look at the confusion that exists regarding the Lord's church. Each of these could easily be a lesson or a series of lessons. The verses need to be studied in more detail in your own time.

C. One problem is that like a story problem in math class we have to put the right things together to get the right answer. We live in a society that wants a 3 second sound bite, but God does not work that way. He uses the Crockpot, not the Microwave.

L. S. - Some people are mistaken about . . .

I. The preparation for the church. - Isaiah 2, Joel 2, Daniel 2, Acts 2

A. Some think the church was plan B.

1. Luke 1:30-33 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. (31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

B. The church was actually planned and prophesied hundreds, even thousands, of years before it was established.

II. The presence of the church.

A. Some don't realize the kingdom and church are synonymous.

1. Why would Jesus give Peter and the other apostles the keys to something that was not even going to exist for thousands of years? - Matthew 16:18-19 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (19) And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
2. Kingdom of Heaven (33x) and Kingdom of God (70x) are used by Jesus and the apostles in descriptions of things that occurred during the first century.

B. Some think the church has come, but the kingdom has not.

1. Jesus taught that the kingdom was at hand. - Mark 1:14-15 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, (15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.
2. Jesus taught that some he was talking to would see the kingdom come before they died. - Mark 9:1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.
3. Jesus said that people were trying to get into the kingdom even then. - Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.
4. The Colossian Christians were already in the kingdom. - Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:
5. John was in the kingdom. - Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the

kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

III. Peter's relationship to the church.

A. Peter is not the rock on which Jesus built the church.

1. Matthew 16:16-18 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (18) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

2. Peter is masculine, rock is feminine. Peter is not the rock in v. 18.

3. Jesus is the foundation. - 1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

B. Peter was not the first Pope.

1. Peter was married - Matthew 8:14

2. Peter was rebuked by Paul - Galatians 2:11

3. Peter refused worship - Acts 10:25-26

IV. The pattern for the church.

A. Christ is the head of the body. - Ephesians 1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, (23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

B. The church is under Christ's authority. - Ephesians 5:23-24 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (24) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

C. Christ has first place in everything. - Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

D. The church is named by God, not man. - Ephesians 3:14-15 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

V. The price paid for the church.

A. Jesus bought it with His blood. - Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

B. The Lord adds the saved to it. - Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

C. Christ will save the body, the church, and we must be in His body to be saved.

1. Romans 12:5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

2. Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

VI. The peculiarity of the church. - Revelation 2-3

A. Notice the article "Can One Church Be Better Than Another?"

1. A church established by the Lord is better than a church established by men.

2. Churches that teach truth are better than churches that teach error.

3. Churches that teach all the truth are better than those that teach only part of the truth.

4. A church whose doctrines give all glory to God is better than one whose doctrines give glory to men.

5. A church whose sole authority is the Word of God is better than one that refuses to obey Christ's commands and takes for doctrines the commandments of men.

6. A church that encourages godly living is better than one that allows or encourages sinfulness to continue unchecked.

7. Churches that worship in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24) are better than those that worship in vain (Mt. 15:9).

8. Churches that practice the truths they teach are better than those that do not.

B. Heresies make the truth shine out brighter. - 1 Corinthians 11:18-19 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. (19) For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

VII. Picking a church.

A. Jesus prayed for unity. - John 17:20-21 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (21) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

B. Paul taught that there should not be divisions. - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (11) For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. (12) Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. (13) Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

VIII. Properly entering the church.

A. The Lord adds those who repent and are baptized.

1. Acts 2:38-41 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (40) And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (41) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three

thousand souls.

2. Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

B. The phrase into Christ, describing the change from out of to in, is used only once. - Galatians 3:26-27 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

IX. The purpose of the church.

A. God wants the church to bring Him glory. - Ephesians 1:9-12 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

B. Jesus came to fight evil and His followers/body/church should be doing the same thing. - 1 John 3:8-11 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (9) Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (10) In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. (11) For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

C. Jesus came to save the lost, so should the church. - Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

D. No physical purpose has the value of saving souls. - Mark 8:36-37 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange

for his soul?

X. The people being the church. - 1 Corinthians 12

A. The church is not a building.

1. Acts 5:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

2. Acts 11:22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

B. Jesus did not come to build buildings. - Matthew 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Conclusion:

A. Summary

B. Appeal

Matthew 16:18
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Matthew 16:18

“ . . . upon this rock I will
build my church; and the gates
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it. ”

Can One Church be Better than Another? James Pasley

Is that an offensive question to you? If so, ask yourself why. The reason, most likely, is that you believe the idea that you can join the church of your choice, I can join the church of my choice, and others can join the church of their choice with all of us meeting in heaven at the end. This idea has been spread throughout the country and anyone who disagrees with it is considered judgmental and divisive. Since the idea of one Christian group being just as good as another has been embraced by most people the movement now is to equate the Christian religion with all other world religions, but Christianity is distinct and definitely better than other religions. Now, if you are willing I want to challenge you to examine the idea that all churches are of equal value and see if it is true.

First, some believe that a big church is better than a small church, or that a rich church is better than a poor church. That is ridiculous, God is interested in faithfulness not money or prestige. Noah and his family were only 8 people in the whole world, but God thought they were the better group. In the letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 there was a poor church, Smyrna, and a rich church, Laodicea, read it and see whether God thought they were of equal value. Despite these two examples, we cannot go to the other extreme and assume the smallest and poorest are always better. Quite simply size, wealth, and popularity from men is irrelevant in God's eyes.

I believe there are some things that can and will make one church better than another. Look at the following comparisons and see if you find them to be true. They may seem rather obvious, but they fly in the face of the idea that it doesn't matter which church you go to or are a part of.

- (1) A church established by the Lord is better than a church established by men.
- (2) Churches that teach truth are better than churches that teach error.
- (3) Churches that teach all the truth are better than those that teach only part of the truth.
- (4) A church whose doctrines give all glory to God is better than one whose doctrines give glory to men.
- (5) A church whose sole authority is the Word of God is better than one that refuses to obey Christ's commands and takes for doctrines the commandments of men.
- (6) A church that encourages godly living is better than one that allows or encourages sinfulness to continue unchecked.
- (7) Churches that worship in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24) are better than those that worship in vain (Mt. 15:9).
- (8) Churches that practice the truths they teach are better than those that do not.

Now, honestly, do you really believe that all the churches in the world, or even in your community are equivalent in these 8 areas? How does your church stack up? Compare churches not by size, wealth, location, building and grounds, its history or age, or any other worldly measure. Instead compare churches by their willingness to teach and practice the things God teaches in the New Testament of Jesus Christ. If you still believe churches are pretty much the same, take a closer look at the 7 churches in Revelation. Five of those churches were sternly warned because of their sinfulness and 2 of them were on the verge of being disowned (2:5, 3:16). Two others had wicked factions that God was going to fight against and destroy (2:14-16, 2:20-23). Another is already mostly spiritually dead and the rest is about to die (3:1-3). There are two churches that are complimented and encouraged because they were faithful. Which of these seven churches would you have wanted to be a part of if you had been there?

At the time Revelation was written there was only one church in each of these 7 towns some faithful Christians were stuck to do the best they could in some unfaithful churches. There are in your community today dozens of different churches. There is no reason for anyone to feel stuck in a church that is spiritually dead, full of wickedness, practicing false doctrine, following men, or any of the other things mentioned above. Let me suggest that we have two responsibilities if we find ourselves in that kind of church. First it is our responsibility to point out the problem biblically, point out the biblical solution, and encourage the change necessary to correct the problem. If that attempt were to fail, then we have our second responsibility: to stop supporting sin and error and come to the truth ourselves even if no one else follows. The fact of the matter is that regardless of what they call themselves those who reject the counsel of God against their own souls and will not repent are not Christians: they are not believers. In 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 Paul reminds us that we should not be yoked together with unbelievers, and that we are to come out from among them and be separate. If your church will not follow the Bible you are responsible to worship as God demands.

How would you feel on the day of judgment if your association with sinful false teachers caused your friends, neighbors, children, or other family members to be lost? What if you yourself become one of those who call Jesus, 'Lord, Lord', but to whom He responds, "Depart from me"? Be sure that you determine a church's value based on the Bible and not on any other basis.