

Calvary Baptist Church
Sunday School
January-February 2025



**WHAT IS THE
CHURCH?**

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “**But who do you say that I am?**” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered 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 tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Introduction

In Matthew 16:13-20, Jesus speaks about His Church for the first time. He reveals that the Church is built upon the Gospel and that it has a unique identity and mission in the world. This lesson will explore what it means to be the Church and how we live out that identity.

Reflection Question:

- When you think of the word “church,” what comes to mind?

1. Being the Church

Key Verse: “*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” (Matthew 16:18)

Jesus gives us the foundation for what the Church is and does:

1. **The Gospel Proclaimed:** The Church is built on the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This gospel message is central to our identity and mission.
2. **Believers Gathered:** The Church is not merely a building but a people—those called out by God to belong to Him and to one another.

3. **Ordinances Observed:** The Church practices baptism and the Lord's Supper, reminding us of our union with Christ and with one another.

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it important for the Church to center everything on the Gospel?
- How does gathering with other believers help you grow in your faith?
- How do the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper strengthen our connection to Christ and to each other?

2. Images of the Church

The Bible uses several images to describe the Church, each revealing a different aspect of our identity and role:

1. **A Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27):**

- The Church is one body with many members, each with unique gifts and roles.
- **Reflection:** What is your role in the body of Christ, and how are you using your gifts to serve?

2. **A Family (1 Timothy 5:1-2):**

- The Church is a spiritual family where we care for and honor one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- **Reflection:** How can you help create a family-like atmosphere in your church?

3. **A Flock of Sheep (1 Peter 5:2):**

- The Church is like a flock under the care of shepherds (pastors), with Jesus as the Chief Shepherd.
- **Reflection:** How does Jesus' leadership give you comfort and direction in your life?

4. **A House (1 Peter 2:5):**

- The Church is a spiritual house made up of living stones, built on Christ as the cornerstone.
- **Reflection:** How does seeing yourself as part of God's house change how you relate to others in the Church?

5. **A Priesthood (1 Peter 2:9):**

- The Church is a royal priesthood, called to worship God and proclaim His greatness to the world.
 - **Reflection:** How can you live out your calling to be part of God’s priesthood in your daily life?
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3. The Church’s Confidence

Key Verse: *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matthew 16:19)

- **Jesus Builds His Church:** The Church is not sustained by human effort but by Jesus Himself. This promise gives us confidence to carry out His mission.
- **The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail:** The Church is victorious through Christ, even in the face of opposition.

Reflection Questions:

- How does Jesus’ promise to build His Church encourage you to remain faithful in difficult times?
 - What does it mean to use the “keys of the kingdom” to proclaim the Gospel and extend God’s rule on earth?
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4. Living as the Church

The Church is called to live out its identity in the world by:

- **Proclaiming the Gospel:** Share the good news of Jesus with boldness.
- **Building Relationships:** Cultivate genuine fellowship and care for one another.
- **Serving Faithfully:** Use your gifts to contribute to the Church’s mission.
- **Trusting Jesus:** Rely on His promise to build and sustain His Church.

Reflection Question:

- What steps can you take this week to more fully live as a part of Jesus’ Church?
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Prayer:

- Thank God for the gift of the Church and its role in your life.
- Ask for wisdom and boldness to proclaim the Gospel.

- Pray for unity, growth, and faithfulness in your local church.
 - Seek God's guidance to better understand your role in His body.
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Confession:

Baptist Faith and Message 2000

Article 6: The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

What is a Healthy Church?

January 19, 2025

Ephesians 4:1–16 (ESV)

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

⁸Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.”

⁹(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Introduction

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians highlights the gifts Christ has given to the Church to equip and build it up. These gifts serve a specific purpose: to unify, mature, and strengthen the body of Christ. In this lesson, we will explore the roles Christ has established in His Church and the results that flow from their faithful exercise.

Reflection Question:

- What do you think are the most important roles within the Church, and why?

1. The Gifts to the Church

Key Verse: *“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.”* (Ephesians 4:11)

Christ has equipped His Church with specific roles to guide, teach, and care for His people:

1. **Apostles:** Sent ones who laid the foundation of the Church and its doctrine
2. **Prophets:** Those who proclaim God’s Word and will for the Church.
3. **Evangelists:** Messengers who share the Gospel and call people to faith in Christ.
4. **Shepherds:** Pastors/elders/overseers who nurture and care for the flock.
5. **Teachers:** Instructors who help believers grow in their understanding of God’s Word.

Reflection Questions:

- How do these roles work together to strengthen the Church?
- Which of these gifts have you personally benefited from, and how?
- Are there ways you see yourself serving in one of these capacities?

2. The Results of the Gifts

Key Verse: *“To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”* (Ephesians 4:12)

When the gifts are exercised faithfully, the Church experiences transformation:

1. **Equipped Saints:** Every believer is prepared for ministry and service.
 - Reflection: What steps can you take to become better equipped for ministry?
2. **Working Saints:** Believers actively engage in building God’s kingdom.
 - Reflection: How are you currently contributing to the work of the Church?
3. **Body-Builder Saints:** The Church grows stronger and healthier.
 - Reflection: How can you encourage and build up others in your church community?
4. **United Saints:** The Church experiences unity in faith and purpose.

- Reflection: How can you promote unity within your church?
 - 5. **Knowledge of God:** Believers grow in their understanding of who God is.
 - Reflection: How can you deepen your personal knowledge of God this week?
 - 6. **Mature Adulthood:** The Church grows in spiritual maturity, reflecting Christ's character.
 - Reflection: What does spiritual maturity look like in your life?
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3. The Church's Stability and Growth

Key Verses:

- *"So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine."* (Ephesians 4:14)
- *"Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."* (Ephesians 4:15)

Paul outlines the markers of a stable and growing Church:

1. **Not Tossed:** Believers are grounded in sound doctrine and avoid being swayed by false teachings.
 - Reflection: How can you strengthen your knowledge of biblical truth to avoid being misled?
2. **Truth Speakers:** Believers lovingly speak truth to one another, fostering growth and unity.
 - Reflection: How can you speak truth in love to encourage someone this week?
3. **Held Together by Christ:** Jesus is the head of the Church, and He holds every part together.
 - Reflection: How can recognizing Christ as the head of the Church impact how you serve?
4. **The Body Joined:** Every part of the Church works together to fulfill its mission.
 - Reflection: What role do you play in helping your church function as a unified body?
5. **Every Part Working:** Each member contributes, using their gifts to build up the Church.

- Reflection: How can you use your unique gifts to support the mission of your church?
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4. Living Out the Lesson

The gifts Christ has given to the Church are not for individual benefit but for the building up of the body as a whole. As we live in unity and truth, we grow into maturity and reflect the fullness of Christ.

Reflection Questions:

- How can you better support the leaders and teachers in your church?
 - What specific steps can you take to use your gifts for the good of the Church this week?
 - In what ways can you encourage someone else to engage in the ministry of the Church?
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Prayer:

- Thank God for the leaders and teachers He has provided to guide and equip His Church.
 - Ask for wisdom and courage to use your gifts to serve the body of Christ.
 - Pray for unity, maturity, and growth within your church community.
 - Seek God's guidance to discern how you can contribute to the Church's mission in a meaningful way.
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Catechism:

The Baptist Catechism, Question #101

What is the duty of such who are rightly baptized?

It is the duty of such who are rightly baptized to give up themselves to some particular and orderly church of Jesus Christ, that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.¹

¹ Acts 2:41–42; 5:13–14; 9:26; 1 Peter 2:5; Luke 1:6