

The Church

Ekklesia

Two overlooked facts.

- **Jesus only mentioned the church twice.**
- **Matt 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.**
- **Matt 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.**
- **There are no instructions in the Bible on how to plant one. or (Start one).**

The Early Church.

- **Radically transformed the hostile environment that it faced when it started.**
 - 1. They faced Social pressure. (They confronted the culture.)**
 - 2. They faced Political pressure. (They confronted the Lordship of Caesar).**
 - 3. Yet, they impacted nations in a short period of time. Acts 17:6 ...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;”**

How did they turn the world upside down?

- **Upside down: Became a force to reckon with. They created an uproar. They comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable.**
- **Yet they had:**
 - 1. No buildings.**
 - 2. No professional clergy**
 - 3. No religious freedoms**
 - 4. No social status.**

Today our influence appears to be diminishing in comparison.

- **Jesus gave two promises:**
 - 1. John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**
 - 2. John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.**

- **When they preached the gospel people were forcing their way into the kingdom.**
- **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.**
- **Luke 16:16 "Until John the Baptist, the law of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is eager to get in.**

It appears that what we call the church is what Jesus is going to reject.

- **When Jesus comes to judge the nations, those who though they were “in” will end up out,” and those who thought they were out will end up in. Matthew 25.**
- **Matt 25:44-46 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.**

- **How about those who will try and appeal the decision of Jesus in Matthew 7?**
- **Matt 7:22-23 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

The church is outside of the 4 walls.

- **The church is meant to be expansive, like salt, light, leaven and water.**
 - 1. Salt left in the shaker is useless.**
 - 2. Stale water turns putrid.**
 - 3. Light that is hidden results in darkness.**
 - 4. Leaven in a container remains inert.**

What did the early assemblies look like?

- **Acts 2:41-47** 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

- 1. Members were devoted their leader's teachings.**
- 2. There was individual and corporate prosperity that provided for the needs of people inside and outside of the church.**
- 3. People were added daily. (They grew).**
- 4. Favor with outsiders, authorities in the city.**
- 5. The power of God. Praise and reverence for God.**
- 6. Leaders had power.**

What did Jesus mean when He said, I'll build my church?

- **Matthew 16:18**
- **What do we picture when we hear the word church?**
 - 1. A building with a cross on top.**
 - 2. A pulpit.**
 - 3. A choir.**
 - 4. Members in attendance.**
 - 5. A preacher, etc...**

- **When Jesus said “church” none of this was even in existence.**
- **The word he used for church, “Ekklesia” existed in his day and was used by both the Greek and Roman empire.**
- **It refers to a secular institution that operated in the cities the Greeks and Romans ruled in a governmental capacity.**

- **During the time of Jesus on earth, there were three main institutions in Israel.**
 - 1. The Temple.**
 - 2. The Synagogue.**
 - 3. The ekklesia.**
- **The ekklesia was the only one that was non religious.**

- **The ekklesia that Jesus mentioned had no building, it was people, designed to operate 24/7 for the purpose of having an impact on everybody and everything.**
- **Jesus did not say, I will build my Temple. I will build my synagogue.**

I will build my 'EKKLESIA'!

- **The Temple represented the indwelling presence of God, the Synagogue represented the central role of scripture and fellowship of the saints.**
- **The EKKLESIA represented the mobility of the people, their location and their mission.**

Ekklesia: The Coventus.

- **Where two or three Roman citizens were gathered anywhere together in the world, it constituted the conventus.**
- **Their gathering together wherever they were assembled brought the very power and presence of Rome into their midst.**
- **Jesus is saying just like the Romans make available their authority to their citizens that gather I do in a greater dimension. Matt 18:18-20.**

- **Matt 18:18-20 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**
- **The disciples understood what he meant. I'm not building a temple, a building, I'm commissioning people.**

Food. (Turning tables into pulpits).

- **The church grew with food.**
- **Remember Acts 2:42? “continually devoting themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread (eating) and to prayer.”**
- **Tables turned to pulpits and homes into assembly halls where strangers were welcomed and the gospel was preached.**

- **They filled all of Jerusalem with their doctrine because they were filling bellies with food.**
- **Peter on the streets wanted what they had and they took it to them. Acts 5:15-16**

- **The cry today is to make the church relevant.**
- **Fill bellies not buildings.**
- **Meet needs not just meet.**
- **Preach the gospel and not propaganda.**
- **Be the church and not go to church.**

