



LESSON 15: HE'LL GUIDE YOU TO HIS CHURCH

A member of a luncheon club received congratulations for working for a company which had been doing business for a hundred years.

When the applause died down, the chairman asked whether there was anyone present who worked for an older concern. At that a minister stood up. Everyone laughed until the truth of his action suddenly struck home: the church of Christ is the oldest going concern on earth. It was founded by the Lord Jesus Himself and has been an organised and active operation for over 2000 years!

THE LORD'S CHURCH

What are the origins of the Christian church? Matthew 16:13-19

Some people have interpreted these verses to mean that Peter was the foundation rock of the church, but other Bible verses (1 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 2:20) make it clear that Jesus is the Rock. It was Peter's statement of belief in the divinity of Christ that was to be the basis or foundation of the church, not Peter himself.

Believing in Jesus is still the entry point into the church. What does the Bible say that people did as soon as they accepted Christ? Acts 2:41,47

The King James Version of the Bible reads that they were "added to the church daily." The New International Version reads that the new Christians were "added to their number daily." Either way it reads, you get the idea that people who accepted Christ immediately affiliated with a group of believers. There was an organised church for them to join.

Where did the early Christians meet? Acts 2:46

Acts 16:13

1 Corinthians 16:19

Christians met in many places in large and life groups, an indication that life group worship is as valid and important as temple worship. Because of their dual emphasis on both large and life group gatherings, the New Testament church grew rapidly and spread all over the world. What is the Lord's attitude toward the church? Ephesians 5:25-27

Jesus said He loves the church like a husband loves his wife. He also made it clear that He is the head of the church household. (Ephesians 5:23). The Bible also compares the church to a body, with Jesus as the head; (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) to a building with Jesus as the cornerstone; (Ephesians 2:19-22) and to a flock (Acts 20:28) with Jesus as the chief shepherd (John 10:14).

In all these illustrations, you notice that Jesus is number one! So if you're looking for a church, make sure that it places Jesus over all. Any denomination that questions the divinity or lordship of Christ, is not part of His true church.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LORD'S CHURCH

You can recognise God's church by the following characteristics.

1. Jesus is given first place.

What does Colossians 1:18 say about His position?

2. The church is a place of fellowship and love.

How does Acts 2:42-46 describe the church?

Notice that verse 42 puts fellowship equal with teaching, or doctrine!

What does Jesus say about the relationship that should exist between believers? John 13:35; 17:21-23

Love and unity among the members in the church is one of the ways the world will be drawn to Christ! But love and unity cannot be developed if there is no fellowship.

In the fellowship, or body, of Christians, God places people with various gifts so that the church can function well. What are some of the gifts? 1 Corinthians 12:28

You'll find many kinds of people with many different gifts and personalities in the Lord's church, but they will be bound together in love and fellowship.

3. The church will obey God's commandments. Revelation 12:17 gives two characteristics of the last-day church. What is the first characteristic mentioned in Revelation 12:17?

If God's true church is a commandment-keeping church, how and when will the members worship? Exodus 20:8-11

4. The church will have the testimony of Jesus. What is the second characteristic of the last-day church? Revelation 12:17 (last part)

This means the members will tell others about Jesus. Their goal will be to tell the whole world about Him. What were Jesus' last instructions to His disciples? Matthew 28:19-20

The Bible gives an additional definition of "the testimony of Jesus." What is it? Revelation 19:10

The Lord's church will believe in prophecy such as the prophecies you've studied about His coming. His church will also teach these prophecies to others.

5. The people in God's church will remain faithful to Jesus. What does the Bible say about them? Revelation 14:12 (last part)

No matter what difficulties face them, God's people will not give up their faith in Jesus.

What is Christ's ultimate goal for His church? Ephesians 5:25-27

ASK YOURSELF

Shouldn't I become a member of my Lord's church...

- Where He is exalted and loved
- Where His followers enjoy love and fellowship and expression of their individual, unique gifts
- Where His commandments are obeyed
- Where His testimony is believed and shared
- Where His members keep their faith in Jesus?

Yes, I want to become part of the church family as soon as possible

I'm still considering it. I have questions about:
