

# THE KIND OF CHURCH THE LORD WOULD BUILD

## Matthew 16:18

The church is the building, the body, and the bride of Christ. It is an organism with organization. The church is a body of born-again, properly baptized believers with Scriptural officers which are pastor and deacons, organized to meet for worship, to preach the gospel, to win souls, to carry out the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; to teach the Word of God; to guide, watch over and discipline its members to their good and the glory of God. The church should be engaged in **evangelizing the sinner, edifying the saint, and exalting the Saviour.**

In **Matthew 16** we find the embryo of the church that will be empowered on the day of Pentecost. The embryo of the church is converted to an organic living body at Pentecost. Many today are giving their thoughts about what kind of a church they want and desire to be a member of. However, I submit to you that our concern ought to be whether we are the kind of church (bride) God wants us to be. I want to note seven qualities the Lord would like for His church to manifest. Let us observe seven qualities the heavenly bridegroom would desire for his Church to demonstrate as observed in the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor in the book of **Revelation**. Must not view these letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor as relics of the past but as mirrors in which we can see our own church.

### I. **Revelation 2:1-7 THE LORD WANTS A CHURCH THAT WILL LOVE HIM**

The church at Ephesus was **standing up to the task**. They were full of good works. There was plenty of activity. The church at Ephesus was **standing up for the truth**. They had repudiated moral and ministerial evil. The church at Ephesus was **standing in the test**. They had been faithful. They kept at it. Ephesus was a fundamental, Bible-believing Baptist church; however, God had something against them. They had left their first love. If our service for God is not born out of a devoted passion for the Lord Jesus Christ, it is worthless.

The Lord wants a church that displays **LOVE**.

#### A. Love must be **absolutely preeminent (5b)**

If there is not love for the Lord Jesus, the reason for the assembly's existence has vanished. A local church that is functioning without love is worse than useless. It gives a wrong impression of what Christianity is all about.

LABOR IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR LOVE; purity is no a substitute for passion; duty is no a substitute for delight.

#### B. Love must be **absolutely positive (6)**

Love must be a positive emotion; theirs was a negative emotion at best. Their love for the Lord, such as it was, manifested itself in a hatred of evil. All too often those who have forgotten how to love specialize in just hating the error. Error must be hated, but there is something wrong when the Lord had to endorse the negative because He cannot find the positive. Even the endorsement He does give comes almost as an afterthought.

#### C. Love must be **absolutely personal (7)**

Though the Lord saw the church as a whole in a fallen condition, He appeals to the individual.

Have you left your first love for the Saviour?  
Have you left your first love for the Scriptures?  
Have you left your first love for the Sanctuary?  
Have you left your first love for the Second coming?

## II. Revelation 2:8-11 THE LORDS WANTS A CHURCH THAT WILL LEAN UPON HIM

In the letter to this church we find a church that was soon to face the bitter hatred of the world. In the commendation of the church at Smyrna, two things are mentioned:

### A. The persecution of the church

Here was a church that was facing great trials and tribulation. This church was under great persecution. Many of the church bore in their bodies the marks of suffering.

### B. The poverty of the church

The saints at Smyrna had lost whatever material possessions they once owned. They had lost their material possessions and their jobs through the persecution.

The words of admonition were, "Don't be afraid." God never permits the saints to suffer without a cause. TRUST ME! LEAN UPON ME. **Proverbs 3:5, 6.** God is utterly dependable. He can be trusted. He has high and holy purposes and no ulterior motives **Philippians 4:13, John 15:5** God wants a church that is dependent upon Him. A television program preceding the 1988 Winter Olympics featured blind skiers begin trained for slalom skiing. Paired with sighted skiers, the blind skiers were taught on the flats how to make right and left turns. When that was mastered, they were taken to the slalom slope, where their sighted partners skied beside them shouting, "Left," and "Right." As they obeyed the commands, they were able to negotiate the course and cross the finished line, depending solely on the sighted skiers' word. It was either complete trust or catastrophe. What a vivid picture of what the Lord asks for His church in this world.

## III. Revelation 2:12-17 THE LORD WANTS A CHURCH THAT WILL BE LOYAL TO HIM

In this letter to the church at Pergamos, we find a church that was drifting into worldliness and carnality. However, there were some who were resisting the general flow of the tide, but the majority was being swept away. Worldliness has crept into the church today, but God is still looking for a church that will be loyal to Him.

- A. Loyal to His **person (13a)** There were some who were loyal to the deity of Christ.  
**Acts 4:12**
- B. Loyal to His **precepts (13b)**  
**Psalm 119:60, Psalm 119:128**
- C. Loyal to His **plan Matthew 28:18-20**

Coca-Cola takes employee loyalty seriously. In November of 1999 company Salesman Weston Rivelino, who works in Brazil, had spent the day calling on stores in the sweltering Amazon and was parched. He stopped at a store that had neither Coke nor bottle water in stock, but they did have some ice-cold Pepsi.

Weston took “only a swig” (in his own words), and was routinely fired “for breaking his contract by drinking the competition’s product”, according to a company spokesman.

#### **IV. Revelation 3:18-29 THE LORD WANTS A CHURCH THAT WILL LISTEN TO HIM**

The church at Thyatira was being wrecked over the preaching, the precepts, and the practices of a woman (20). The church had permitted a woman to assume the position of pastor-teacher in violation of the Biblical directives. Our Lord speaks to us through His Word and informs us about His will not only for our individual lives, but collectively as members of His church. Many today are listening to the calls of the world and yielding to its demands. This can be easily observed in the fact that many are questioning the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures. Many are opening and blatantly disobeying and disregarding God’s instructions. They are trying to get a Bible and a church that the world will accept.

God wants a church that will LISTEN to HIM.

Two men were talking to each other. The first man said, “I think my wife is crazy. She talks to herself all the time.” The other man said, “Oh, my wife talks to herself all the time, too. Only she doesn’t know it. She thinks I am listening.”

Why should the church listen to Him? Because Jesus is:

A. The **saving** name (**Acts 4:12**)

A girl was asked by her friend, “How do you like your new boss?”  
 She replied, “Well he is ok, but he kinda bigoted.”  
 “What do you mean?” quizzed her friend.  
 “Well, he thinks ‘s’ words can be spelled only one way.”

Her boss wasn’t bigoted. He was bright. And Peter was not bigoted; he was right when he said what he said what he said to the council that day.

B. The **sanctifying** name (**Col. 3:17** “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”)

C. The sovereign name (**Phil. 3:9** “Wherefore God.....”)

#### **V. Revelation 3:1-6 THE LORD WANTS A CHURCH THAT WILL LOOK FOR HIM (2, 3)**

LOOKING should characterize the attitude of life in God’s children as they live in view of His promised return.

- A. The Lord’s return is a **SURE** truth. “**If I go..... I will come again.**”
- B. The Lord’s return is a **SOOTHING** truth (**I Thess.4:16-18**).
- C. The Lord’s return is a **SANCTIFYING** (purifying) truth (**I John 3:1-3**).
- D. The Lord’s return is a **STIMULATING** truth (**I Thessalonians 1:19-20**).

## VI. Revelation 3:7-13 THE LORD WANTS A CHURCH THAT WILL LABOR FOR HIM

Though the church at Philadelphia was weak, it was willing. As a result, God opened doors of opportunity for them to labor.

It is not the size or strength of the church that determines its ministry, but faith in the call and command of God. **Matthew 9:37,38** "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

A little boy approached the preacher after his Sunday morning message, "You said the children of Israel crossed the red Sea. The children of Israel did this and that. Don't the grown-ups do anything?"

- A. A call from within to labor - **II Corinthians 5:14**
- B. A call from without out to labor
- C. A call from beneath to labor
- D. A call from before to labor - **II Corinthians 5:10**

A little boy was asked to go somewhere by his dad. The little boy looked at him and said, "I ain't going. His dad replied, "Son, you are not supposed to use the word ain't. It is not proper English." The father then proceeded to give his son an English lesson. He said, "Now listen carefully, first person singular \_\_ I am not going; second person singular \_\_ you are not going; third person singular \_\_ he is not going; first person plural \_ we are not going; second person plural \_ you are not going; third person plural \_ they are not going."

The then quizzed his son, "Do you now understand?"  
"Yes, sir. It looks like ain't nobody going."

That is the problem with the harvest. Few are laboring.

## VII. Revelation 3:14-22 THE LORD WANTS A CHURCH THAT WILL LIVE FOR HIM

The church at Laodicea was blind to its own condition. They were not living for the Lord. Note verse **14a**. There is an interesting touch in the way the Bible renders the Lord's introductory remarks. It seems to imply that the church at Laodicea was none of his, it was theirs; it was the church of the Laodiceans. They were living for themselves instead of Him.

- A. The church needed a restoration of spiritual **values (17a)**  
The church was popular, prosperous, and proud. **BUT IT WAS POWERLESS.**
- B. The church needed a restoration of spiritual **vesture (17b)**

They thought they were clothed in splendor when they were in reality naked. To be naked meant to be defeated and humiliated.

- C. The church needed a restoration of spiritual **vision (17c)**

Worldliness always clouds spiritual vision. Diet affects vision. Too many Christians are feeding themselves on the things of the world, and they become blind to reality.

Conclusion: As I stated at the beginning, many today are giving their thoughts about what kind of a church they want and desire. However, I submit to you again that our concern ought to be whether we are the kind of church (bride) God wants and desires us to be.

