

# Pt 1 - CHURCH: God’s Master Project

## Matthew 16:18-19

There are many different opinions and views of what the church is to look like. These opinions can be so far removed from Jesus’ original purpose and description of His Church. So.....what did Jesus really intend and have in mind?

## ... Jesus and His Church

2000 odd years ago, Jesus boldly declared that He would build His **‘church’**. It is His **‘master project’** and all of His energies are focused on completing it.

When Jesus chose the Greek word **“ecclesia”** (*English translation ‘church’*) to describe what He was going to build, He was taking a pre-existing term and gave it a new meaning. **“Ecclesia”** literally means *“the gathering together of the called-out ones”*.

This passage in **Matthew 16:18-19** conveys a picture of strength and authority. Jesus was saying to Peter, that His church would be a force of strength! Across the centuries and up to now - the Church has stood strong. The Church still continues today to impact the world by bringing hope and salvation to those who are far away from God.

**Bill Hybels** in *“Courageous Leadership”* said; *“The local church is the hope of the world.”* He also stated; *“that local churches need to become the redemptive centres that Jesus intended them to be.”*

God has an awesome plan of bringing lost people back to Him and the Church is central to His master project of redemption.

The book of Acts tells the story of the beginning and expansion of the church of Jesus Christ. As we read through Acts, we start to get a clearer picture of exactly what Jesus had in mind. His Big Idea - His Master Project – is the Church!

**God’s Master Project** - *“The Church is a community of Christ-followers empowered by the Holy Spirit to participate in God’s mission to the world.”*

## ... Jesus’ Church is a Community

God, in His very nature, is a community of three persons united as one in love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Trinity*). When God created us He created us to also live life in community. When Jesus came to earth He lived out this value of community. He didn’t do life in isolation.

Jesus established a community and He infused it with His love, so that it would be a continuation and a reflection of the community He had always experienced with the Father and the Spirit, before coming to earth. When the church was birthed, this same kind of community continued. (**Acts 2:42-47**)

In the first century, there was no such thing as being a Christian without being part of a community of other Christ-followers.

Church is **NOT** a **‘building’** that we visit from time to time or even an **‘event’** or a **‘meeting’** that we go to. It is a family; a community that God wants you and I to be a vital **‘part’** of.

## **... Jesus' Church is a Community of Christ Followers**

When Jesus called His first disciples, He was calling them to leave what they were doing and to follow Him, and eventually to become like Him. His goal was to change them from the inside out. This involved a full surrender of their lives to His leadership.

The goal of every true disciple is to be like their Master so the goal of every Christian is to be like Jesus. Our very calling and destiny is to be conformed to the image or likeness of Christ.

## **... Jesus' Church is a Community of Christ Followers empowered by the Spirit**

One of the most important keys to Jesus' life and ministry was the fact that His entire ministry was empowered by the Spirit. **(Mark 1:10; Luke 4:1, 14, 18-21)**

This infilling of the Spirit is extended to Jesus followers too. Jesus clearly declared that the power of the Spirit was a crucial requirement for their lives. **(Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5)**

Prayer is a key link to receiving and releasing the Spirit's power in our lives. **(Acts 1:14; 4:31)**

## **... Jesus' Church is a Community of Christ Followers empowered by the Spirit to Participate in God's Mission in the World**

When human relationships broke down and community fell apart, God did not remain aloof. He came and lived among us, taking on human form. He left the comforts of heaven to come into the brokenness of earth to make a way for people to be restored to God and to each other.

God is a missionary God! Right now God is reaching out to this world. Mission begins and ends with Him and His heart for people. When we engage in mission, we simply participate in what God is already doing in our world.

## **... Summary**

Today we have described what the church is and what it exists for. The Church is the hope of the world because it has been entrusted with the gospel message, which is the basis on which the human heart can change.

## **... Application**

### **So what does all this mean for us?**

If Jesus is still building His Church, then together as a community of Christ followers we need to refocus the use of our time, energy and resources on helping Him achieve His purpose.

Corporately we can do this together by outworking our Vision and Mission statements as they both reflect God's master project

**Vision** - *“To be a God honouring Christian community, who passionately obey the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.”*

**Mission** - *“We connect people to Jesus Christ, developing them into Christ-like maturity and empowering them to a meaningful life of service in the church, community and world.”*