

THE ONLY FAMILY THAT WILL LAST FOREVER

This Is Us – Part 1: Matthew 16:18

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MEMORY VERSE

“I will build my church, and all the powers of Hell will not defeat it!” Matthew 16:18 (NLT)

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

NOT a building. . . place. . . event. . . Institution

THE CHURCH IS:

- **GOD’S FAMILY ON EARTH & IN HEAVEN**

“I’m writing to you...so you will know how to live in the family of God. THAT FAMILY IS THE CHURCH of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth.” 1 Tim. 3:14-15 (NCV)

- **COMPOSED OF SAVED & BAPTIZED BELIEVERS**

Jesus: “Whoever believes in me and is baptized will be saved, but whoever refuses to believe will be condemned.” Mark 16:16

(On the day Jesus began His Church) Peter preached: “Repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then God will give you his Holy Spirit!” Acts 2:38

“Then those who believed were then baptized and they became part of the church—about three thousand people that day.” Acts 2:41

- **COMMITTED TO JESUS & EACH OTHER**

“First they gave themselves to the Lord; and THEN, by God’s will, they gave themselves to us as well.” 2 Corinthians 8:5

“You are to be DEVOTED to each other as brothers and sisters in God’s loving family.” Romans 12:10

“In Christ’s Body, each MEMBER belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5 (NIV)

“...the members must have the same care for each other. If one member is hurt or suffers, all suffer together; and if one member is honored, all the others are to rejoice. You are the Body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:25-27 (ESV)

- **PREPARING FOR HEAVEN OR CHRIST’S RETURN**

“You are the church of God’s children, whose names are registered in heaven, because you have come to God himself...and you have come to Jesus...” Hebrews 12:23

FIVE OF THE MANY BENEFITS OF BELONGING

1. **IN GOD’S FAMILY: I LEARN MY TRUE IDENTITY**

“You are members of God’s very own family...and YOU BELONG in God’s household with every other Christian.” Ephesians 2:19

“Jesus and the people he makes holy all BELONG to the same family. That is why he isn’t ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.” Hebrews 2:11 (CEV)

2. **IN GOD’S TEMPLE: I’M SUPPORTED BY OTHERS**

“In Christ the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21-22

“I want us to help each other with the faith we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you.” Romans 1:12 (NCV)

3. **IN CHRIST’S BODY: I DISCOVER MY UNIQUE VALUE**

“Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ’s Body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we BELONG to each other, and each of us needs all the others.” Romans 12:4-5 (LB)

"If your foot says, 'I'm not a part of the body because I'm not a hand,' that doesn't make it any less a part of the body. And if your ear says, 'I'm not part of the body because I'm only an ear and not an eye,' would that make it any less a part of the body?" 1 Corinthians 12:15-16 (NLT)

*"In Christ's Body we're all connected to each other."
Ephesians 4:25 (MSG)*

4. IN GOD'S FLOCK: I RECEIVE PROTECTION

"Take care of God's flock, his people, that you are responsible for. Watch over them because you want to, not because you are forced to do it." 1 Peter 5:2 (ICB)

"Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

5. IN GOD'S GARDEN: I BECOME PRODUCTIVE

"A branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me. I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. But apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:4-5 (NLT)

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Father, As we enter this new year, we are thankful for your church. We are thankful for the corporate church around the world and thankful for this local church body where we worship each Sunday. Thank you for the way you bring us together to make a difference in one another's lives and the lives of those we interact with throughout the week.

We join together now and ask that you would bless those who join the worship call each week and those who have joined us in worship throughout the year. Bless their past, their present, their future. Bless their bodies, bless their minds with creativity, bless their physical health, bless their finances, bless their relationships and, where there's conflict, bring peace.

We look forward to this new decade together with great enthusiasm knowing that you are going to use ordinary people in extraordinary ways in the days ahead just as you have done in the past. You didn't bring us this far just to stop, but all the past serves as a launch pad for our future. Today, we are saying, "We are all in!" as we look forward to the future You have in store for us. We celebrate your great design in creating the church and calling us to be a part of something that is much bigger than one person standing alone. May this year ahead be filled with your presence as you work in our lives and in your church. In Jesus name, Amen.