



JULY 5, 2020

## WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE CHURCH?

Matthew 16:13-18

**The Big Idea:** Jesus commanded us to make disciples of people from all nations, teaching them “everything” He commanded us. He also explicitly stated His own purpose – “I will build My Church...” (Matthew 16:18). Jesus’ purpose is to build His Church. That must be our purpose: to work in the building of His Church. Just because we have a church doesn’t mean it is His; and just because we are involved in a lot of religious activity doesn’t mean that He is building His Church. Our purpose must be to work in the building of His Church.

### 1. A profound question from Jesus – “Who do you say that I am?”

Jesus did not ask “What is My name?” or “Where do I come from,” but “Who am I?” In essence, “What am I doing here?” “Whom do I represent?” “What is the meaning of what I am doing here?” “How do you understand what I am doing?” “What is the Father doing through Me?” “How do you understand everything you see in My life and work?”

### 2. A profound answer from Peter – “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Peter didn’t just get the name right, he understood this is the Messiah that God had revealed in the Old Testament, the eternal Son of God, the Savior of the world, the One who takes away our sins, the One through whom we overcome the enemy, the One who establishes the Kingdom of God on earth, the One who reveals God. The incarnate God, the perfect image of God, the Christ who fulfills all God’s purposes. This is the meaning of Peter’s revelation.

### 3. A profound statement from Jesus – “On this rock, I will build My Church.”

The revelation of the Person and purpose of Jesus Christ is the Foundation on which Jesus will build His Church. This shows us the centrality of the Church in the purpose of God. It’s not that God has many purposes, and this is merely one of them. This is the core purpose of God. He said, “I will build My Church.” This is Jesus’ purpose for coming.

**Everything Jesus did was for this purpose.**

### 4. The bombshell from Jesus – “I will build My Church.”

**What does this mean? In Jesus’ declaration, we see three things:**

- Jesus is building His church. He is not just throwing it together haphazardly, but He is intentionally building it.
- Jesus is building His church, not us. This is His work, His vision, His responsibility, His Church. That means the plan is His, not ours. He works through us. Our ideas and desires must be checked and reviews because they may not be His.
- Building the church takes time. Like farming, it must not be rushed. This means we must hold a long-term view.

### 5. Certainly, Jesus came to die on the cross. But was this just to get us to heaven? He delivered us from eternal destruction and from the power of darkness **to build His Church!**

*“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.” – Ephesians 3:8-11*

Before the creation of the world, this was His purpose, His vision – to build His Church. This is the centrality of the Church in God’s mind.

**We are called to be part of this great eternal purpose – the building of God’s Church.**

# LifeGroup Worksheet

JULY 5, 2020

*This sheet is to be completed DURING your LifeGroup session*

Scripture Reference – **Matthew 16:13-18**

**1. Reflect-** *How has God been working in your life? How has He provided, comforted, answered, reconciled or guided you? Be open to sharing both your successes and struggles.*

**2. Read-** **Matthew 16:13-18** carefully several times, *both with your group and alone.*

**3. Engage and Explore-** *What do you think God was communicating to his people when this was first written? Try to answer at least one questions below.*

- Describe your experience with church. Where did you start, what has happened, where are you now?
- What does this passage teach you about Jesus and His personality? What is important to Him?
- Why have most of us come to believe that we are consumers of what the church has, rather than being participants in helping Jesus build His church? Which of these two points of view lead to the most disappointing burnout?
- Discuss – “We know Jesus invested a lot of time and energy in building leaders. But why? Building leaders was His strategy; His goal was to build His Church.” A leader is anyone who has influence in the life of someone else. How important is it for us to build leaders? Who do you influence and how can you grow to impact the church?
- Saying Jesus is Lord is easy. Being used by Him to build the church is not. Why?

**4. Connect-** *how this passage applies to you and your relationship to Jesus and others. How is the Holy Spirit speaking to you through this passage? Try to answer at least one question.*

- How is God calling you to change? What help is God giving to help you change?
- Because of His vision for the Church, Jesus endures, He perseveres, never forsakes or abandons us, never gives up, always believes, always trusts, always loves, always forgives, always encourages, always hopes, allows mistakes, gives another chance – His love never fails. Let us look at the Church from Jesus’ perspective. **What will be the results if we do so?**
- Share the hurts, discouragements, and pressures you have endured in the process of serving in Good Shepherd or another church. Pray for each other for the Lord’s healing, renewal, comfort and encouragement.
- Now, together, let us repent of any bad attitudes we have towards the Church of Jesus Christ. Then let us respond to God with commitment, surrender and victory! Lord, let us see what You see for Your Church. May your vision become our vision; your passion become ours.

**5. Silent Meditation-** *You may want to move away from the group to a quiet spot. Silently read the scripture several more times. Write down the words/passage you want to focus on this week and how you plan to apply God’s truth to your life.*

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**6. Share-** *Key insights with your group from question #5.*

**7. Close in Prayer-** *Try using different prayer models found in the LifeGroup Leader Handbook.*