

How to Be Joined



I will
build my
Church



to Jesus' Church

As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at
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How To Be Joined to Jesus' Church

This was written primarily to clarify some important matters for those that have expressed an interest in the Church of Jesus Christ, and what constitutes the Church we are a part of here in this city. It would not be necessary to write an explanation of what “Church” is about if the religious world of these past generations had not all but entirely lost sight of several overwhelmingly important issues.

Why have we, those that wear the Name of Jesus, often lost sight of what the Church of Jesus Christ is called and empowered to be? Let us suggest what we have seen in our own lives and in the parts of christendom that we have been a part of in the past (many of us were leaders of these assemblies). The religious world has been impotent and ransacked with lukewarmness, sin, and general unfruitfulness due to at least seven enemies of the Cross and the Loving Reign of Jesus:

1. Little true intimacy and fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Usually programs, “scholarship,” legalities, temple exercises, or pep rallies replace the genuine friendship that our Father, our Brother Jesus, and “the Lord who is the Spirit” long to have with each of us.

2. A distinct absence of interwoven lives, “compact together” as a family, as an organic “body” where the hand would never say to the eye, “I have no need of you until next week’s meeting” (1Cor. 12:21).

3. The blinding effect of the traditions and “expedients” of men that nullify the true current Headship of Jesus Christ in His Church.

4. A famine in the hearing of the “living and active Word of God” (that lays bare and “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart”). Most have never encountered the Truth of Jesus on this level, but have only been supplied sermons and lessons that instruct the mind or tickle the emotions.

5. Undealt-with personal sin in the congregation, in disobedience to Jesus and the Scriptures.

6. A faulty definition of what a “Church” is, what a “Christian” is, and what makes one a part of Jesus’ Church.

7. Man-made qualifications for “Leadership” in the Church, the Kingdom of God. So much of what we’ve held up as “church” has been “non-Prophet organizations” with “Staff infections.” God is calling out, with the “certain sound of the trumpet,” for men of God, not hired speakers, junior-scholars, or church MC’s and CEO’s.

Without these issues resolved by God’s Grace, the “church” will go on in its way, continuing to demonstrate a Gospel that “is no Gospel at all.” Our Jesus deserves better! Remember that expression of Jesus’ Life flooding out from His People in the first century Church? How they rocked the Roman Empire and the status quo religion of their day? With men and women just like us? Jesus will have that glorious, victorious Church again—with you (or me), or without you (or me)! He will make a great Name for Himself!

(Eph. 3:10, 21, 5:27; 1Cor. 15:24-25; Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 16:20; Rev. 19:7; Ezek. 18:30-32, 20:9, 22, 44, 36:20-32, 37:1-14, 38:23, 39:7-8, 23-29; Dan. 9:17-19; 1Sam. 12:20-23; Josh. 4:24; Ps. 25:9-11; Isa.48:11!)

Let’s all go back to the Word of God for our understanding of what the Church of the Living God is, what a “Christian” is, and what “Leadership” is, OK? For too long we have defined these things by what we’ve seen for generations around us. And, speaking in general terms, almost everything around us is a re-worked roman catholic “form,” rather than the Kingdom of the Living Christ, “on earth, as it is in Heaven.” Fortunately for us, the Truth about these areas is very, very clear in the Word of God. As an added encouragement to us, to prove that it can be done, Jesus’ Life was lived out, a long, long time ago. A multitude of “unlearned and ignorant men” experienced true Life from Heaven, and God recorded this for us in the book of Acts. The only questions that remain are, “When,” not “If;” and, “Will you and I pour out all of our heart, soul, mind and strength to be a part of it? Will we be willing to be emptied of pride, fear, worldly ambition, laziness, idolatry and lust of the flesh, in order to be in on it?” By His grace and my full, undivided will—count me in! How about you? And now...

To those who would consider joining themselves to the vision, purpose and organism of the Body of Christ, the Church of Christ, here (or anywhere, according to the Word of God):

1 First and all-inclusive, all who would be members must be “bought by the Blood of the Lamb.” Place your full weight on this truth, as the precious blood of the Lamb of God is our only hope. But, OH, WHAT A HOPE! It will never be anything that we do that will persuade God to overlook our selfish, wicked lives. It is the Father’s relationship with His Son Jesus, and our Faith and Trust in His Work that “sets captives (that’s us) FREE!” Now, go live the Way that demonstrates your gratitude to Him. Respond to His Call to you: Repent and be baptized in water (Acts 2:36-47; Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:16-17; etc.). Tell the world of His Love and His Lordship (Rom. 10:9-10; Mat. 10:32). If you are a Christian, you have truly met a LIVING Jesus and declared Him with your lips to be your Lord from that moment on, the decision maker and priority of your remaining life (Lk. 13:3, 14:33, 9:57-62). You have made a covenant with Jesus to leave your ambition, materialism, defensiveness, family or job or knowledge idolatry, fleshly demands, lust, and everything else that is not of Christ on the Altar (Rom. 12:1-2; 2Cor. 5:16-17, 7:9-11). It is your full will to love, honor, and obey absolutely Jesus Christ and the Word of God with all of your heart (Mat. 10:32-39; 1Jn. 3:1-10; Lk. 10:27-28). These things are the very definition of a “Christian” according to Christ Himself (Lk. 9:23-62, 13:3, 14:33).

The true Church of Jesus is only for Christians. And, of course, some will be joyfully “hanging around” pursuing the possibility of embarking on this Journey with us! Obviously, this is no place for pretenders. If these things aren’t your heart, please do not even consider joining yourself to the local Church—you’ll only hurt yourself and others. You may have been fooled by the prevailing religion of our day into thinking that you are a Christian. For your own benefit, please look into these verses and call out to Jesus. He’s a wonderful friend who longs to help you. By God’s great mercy and grace we are all learning to walk in Him more perfectly every day. Unfortunately, we do botch it up from time to time. Yet the conviction on each of our hearts “from the least to the greatest” (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-13; Mat. 13:44)—not just a “committed nucleus”—is the same in each case. Each of us is undeniably and observably hungry to be all that we can be for our Lord, without defensiveness. This is not

for the “elite” or the “spiritual,” but the norm of Christianity. Who says? The only One who can make the rules: Jesus Christ. The response of a Christian, a disciple of Jesus Christ, to even the most difficult teaching or rebuke is always craving and loving the Truth, regardless of personal cost (2Thes. 2:9-12; Mat. 7:21-27). That’s Christ-ianity! Remember even weak Christians’ response to the living Word of God? “Observe what godly sorrow, what eagerness and earnest care to make it right, what indignation that this sin was yet undealt with, what alarm, what yearning, what zeal, what readiness to deal with the evil! At every point you have cleared yourselves in this sin that you had tolerated” (2Cor. 7:8-11). The people who Paul was writing to when he said these things were about the most carnal group in the history of the New Testament Church! Yet even they demonstrated clearly that “from the least to the greatest,” by definition, every truly regenerate man or woman (in other words, every true Christian) hears and obeys the Word of God. As they clearly demonstrated, no matter how far off base in the beginning, a true Christian will TURN when the Word of God is spoken regarding their sin. I’d like to write that sentence again, but I guess you could just read it again! As Jesus taught: “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets (The Word of God), they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead!” (Lk. 16:31). ALL the “sheep know the shepherd’s voice”; “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God” (1Jn. 3:9). Are you anxious to “walk in the light as He is in the light,” and to “LIVE for Him who died for you”? If so, come along on the Journey with us—it’s exciting to get out of the theoretical realm into the very Courtroom and Council and Purposes of the Most High God! If that’s not you, please don’t wear Jesus’ name until you have given your life to Him and become a Christian. He wants to redeem you and set you free. Will you bend your knee to the Lord of Glory?

2 Because the above is true for all of our number, “from the least to the greatest” (Lk. 13:24-30; Heb. 8:7-13), you must know this: We’re playing for keeps. You cannot, once united to any true Church of Jesus Christ, float in and out, “do your own thing” as an isolated “spiritual christian.” The Father of our Family in Christ hasn’t called any of us to pursue our own course or “ministry” apart from the leadership and relationships in the local expression of God’s community (“church”). So many well-known leaders have discovered their need for intimacy and

accountability in relationship as they have plummeted into sin. No one can have, in truth, the “Head” (Jesus) without being intimately “joined and knit together” (Eph. 4:11-17; Col. 2:19; Heb. 3:12-14; Php. 2:1-5; 1Cor. 12) to the other members of the “BODY,” the Family of God that shares daily life together. Your participation cannot be theoretical, as in simply a “universal body of believers” anymore than our relationship to the living Jesus can be theoretical. This is not a doctrine, but the very essence of our existence here as the corporate life of Jesus Christ. “This is how all men will know that you are My disciples,” that this is from HEAVEN and not simply a philosophy of living. How? It is “by the love (that is patient, kind, does not envy or boast, is not rude or self-seeking or easily angered, that is always protecting, trusting, hoping and persevering! [1Cor. 13]) that you have for one another.” The world must see the reality of the corporate Life of Jesus, not simply hear us tell them about it. Based on all of that (Thank you for your patience, but this is essential to communicate somehow!), we will not be a nice little social church with a Wednesday and Sunday “serve-us.” Rather, we are joining ourselves to God’s fullest intention for His Church. We have set our sights unswervingly upon “becoming, with ever-increasing GLORY, a habitation of GOD, by the Spirit,” “the Pillar and Foundation of Truth.” We will, by His Grace and stated Decree, destroy the strongholds of the serpent and the very “gates of hell” itself (Eph. 2:21-22; 2Cor. 3:16-4:7; Mat. 16:18-19; 1Tim. 3:15; 2Cor. 10:3-6; Rom. 16:20).

I recognize that this has probably not been your experience of “church” as you grew up, but it needs to be from here on. Even the “angels long to look into these things” and the demons are awestruck and trembling at the infinite wisdom of our God (Eph. 3:10, 6:12). How could He possibly use mere humans such as us to publicly humiliate the principalities and rulers of wickedness in this life and bring about their final defeat?! The demons hate it, but THERE’s a MAN (Acts 7:55-56; 1Jn. 4:3; 2Jn. 7) in heaven! And worse yet for them, He’s only the first of a whole new Race! (Php. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14,17-18, 4:15; Eph. 3:10,20; Col. 1:15-20, 2:15; Rom. 16:20; Jos. 10:24-25; Jn. 14:12; Mat. 16:18-19; 1Pet. 1:12-13). Not only will our God obliterate the hateful uprising of satan and his disciples, but He will even use mere mortal men, created “a little lower than the angels,” and build them into His stature and character and fullness, to bring about the shellacking of the enemy!

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3:10).

“I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

That’s God’s Heart and Purpose. Is that your purpose as well—to glorify your God by walking in the Power of His Spirit and, by Faith, overcoming the world and its slavery? Will you commit yourselves to seeing “on EARTH as it is in Heaven” and in this way “serve the Purpose of God in your generation”? (Mat. 6:10, 16:19; Acts 13:36).

My intentions here are not to make some kind of doctrinal statement, but to let you know that in any Church that God would be pleased with, things do not revolve around a meeting or two each week and a few neat programs. Satan is devastated and humiliated only in the daily expression of Life and Koinonia and sacrificial love. He is thrashed only by those that are truly taking up their crosses daily for the sake of others. (Crosses are never “taken up” in a vacuum. They are taken up for others.) If we’re His Followers, these are the crosses that Jesus told us to take up: Unexplainable love of brothers and sisters and others, devastating the adversary. You’ll discover, therefore, in a Church that is doing a number on satan, that it is observably “daily in the public arena and from house to house.” All are “devoted to the teaching, and to fellowship” (“having all things in common”) as an attitude of the heart—a simple response to the teachings and Spirit of Jesus. This Life in Christ is not legislated, but also it is not theoretical and invisible. God’s People truly are devoted to “the breaking of bread and to prayer.” We do, in reality, gather continually as the Family of God to share Life. In reality we “serve one another,” “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ.” We “confess sins one to another” as God has clearly instructed us would be the norm in His Church. Truly this kind of Church would be an uncomfortable place for anyone who does not crave to “walk in the Light as He is in the Light,” would it not? Ananias and Sapphira discovered as much about God’s Church filled with God’s Glory. “Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and will not come into the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the Truth comes into the Light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God” (Heb. 3:12-14, 4:12-13; Jn. 3:19-21; 1Jn. 1:5-10, 3:1-10; 1Cor. 5:1-8; 2Thes. 2:11-12). God’s People long for the transparency and honesty and freedom of that kind of Church (scary as it is!). Can you see yourself living out the above, in reality?

3 It is truly clear in the Word of God that, if you are a Christian, God has called you to a special place of service in His Kingdom. He has most certainly uniquely gifted you and each of His children to contribute to the building up of His body. Our God builds with “Living Stones,” not with uniform, cloned “bricks” as the Babylonians do (Gen. 11). We’re called to celebrate uniqueness and giftedness in its many forms in the Church. There must never be the defiling sound of man’s chisel in the temple courts. It is our loss if we demand the “easy way” of trying to conform each of the members of the body to the same function, personality, calling, or perspective. While we love and enjoy the above truth in the Churches of Jesus, it is also safe to say that it will likely be a period of time before you will be exercising any type of leadership in any Church of Jesus that you may want to become a part of. Of course, many religious organizations of today may be glad to “give you a job” right away to stroke your ego and keep you from going somewhere else. God, on the other hand, said, “Lay hands on no man suddenly;” “Let him first be tested;” “Test everything and hold on to the good.” In the Church of Jesus Christ, only a man that is tested and observably “full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom,” can even be utilized in the Church to be over the matter of “waiting on tables”! The key word is “observably,” as was the requirement in the Church that was walking in God’s authority in the Bible (Acts 6).

If a person has no authority in the unseen world and hell itself, he will fail and hurt others as well in a position of responsibility before his time (Acts 6:3-7, 19:13-17; 1Thes. 2:4; Rom. 10:15; 1Sam. 10:6-7; Ezek. 44:7-9; 1Ki. 13:33-34; Ps. 78:72; 1Chron. 15:13). Therefore, the Church here, or any that you would seek to be a part of, is not a new platform for you, or anyone to jump on the “stage.” As one brother here said of his early days, “No one was impressed!” when he expounded on his doctrines, types and shadows and illustrations. “The LIFE becomes the Light of men.” The Bride of Jesus, His Church, is not a platform to flaunt superior spiritual vocabulary or “knowledge” or experiences. It is a place to express His Life that pays a price to ransom others. In other words, please try to keep a bit of a bridle on your tongue during gatherings or in smaller group or private situations, unless you are convinced that you truly are saying what God would have you say. Please do not “bury your talent,” but likewise it seems that it is necessary at this point to make mention of this. It has been, over time, such a common trap of

the devil for some to fall into. Some have proven by their actions that they are not seeking to serve and love and “consider others better than themselves.” Though these would deny it, the fruit of their actions is that they have instead sought to promote themselves and do God and everyone else a big favor by riding in on their white horse to save the day. Don’t you be in that category, OK? To say it one more way: If one is truly walking in the Light, it will easily be evident to all. It will not be by your knowledge or experiences that your “spirituality” will be seen, but by your humility, your quiet heart and your tangible, measurable service and outreach to others. In short, take your time. You have nothing to prove before our Lord or men except your debt of love. “By their *fruit* you shall recognize them” is the means of discerning where a person’s life really is, according to our Lord (not knowledge or age or previous accomplishments or anything external—[Gal. 2:6]). This will take some time to live out, so be patient and humble for the sake of Jesus and His people here. Thanks.

4 Another word about the nature of the Church that our Lord brought down from Heaven to us. These next few thoughts concern how we as God’s People are to relate to one another and how we are to go about the work of the Kingdom of God. Ready? The same “sarx” nature that tragically birthed Ishmael into the world, also longs to have a program or some kind of “crutch” to help us “do the will of God.” Funny thing is, the Church that Jesus founded wasn’t, and isn’t like that. The Church has its roots in the way Jesus imparted Truth and Life into the first disciples, and how that impartation of Life continued in the book of Acts. No amount of scholarly study of the Bible has ever revealed Jesus, or the Apostles, or any man of God in the New Testament turning to man-made “expedients” as we have today. None of the letters of the Apostles to the new Churches of their day in need of direction even vaguely refer to programs for “church growth,” “benevolence,” “Sunday school and Worship Services” (as such). There was no “visitation,” leadership “training,” or “discipling” others via assigning people to each other to police them into maturity. Even with as many as 20,000 “members,” as was likely the case in the Jerusalem Church, there were no such external props.

It seems that the religious world has adopted the methods of corporate America (some of the IBM executive and marketing school

of thought, and others the Amway pyramid school of thought) to try to accomplish God's objectives. It also seems obvious after these hundreds of years of lack of depth and power in the church that systems and programs aren't God's way. (Bear in mind, though, as in any "sport," "growth" and enthusiasm can be produced in spite of the fact that God has not endorsed it. See Genesis 11:1-7). As the Holy Spirit said through our brother Paul, "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by *sarx* (man-made, "logical," natural, ordinary human effort and means)?" (Gal. 3:3, 4:29-30; 2Cor. 10:4). Has "Sunday school," an innovation of the 1800s that we now cling to, produced "spiritual" teenagers? The evidence says, "No way!"

I only mention all of this so that you might be aware, in advance, that we don't have any of those kinds of things in the Church here. Why not? The Bible, history, and our experience have bore out the fact that these things *block* true Life rather than enhance it, as they were intended to do. Here is a challenge to our carnal natures that arouses every fearful or ambitious or impatient area of each of our hearts: *If you will simply "live life" in the presence of the Lord, and daily in the commonness of purpose and true relatedness with His lambs, you will have your true needs met.* All that Jesus desires to do in you—to purge, instruct, equip, feed and care for you and your family, will be supplied in a way that you would've never imagined possible. Organizations must do business via systematic externals and hierarchy. Families don't lean on such things.

§ We and every Church of His must, in obedience to the Founder and the Head of this Church, remove from our midst those that will not submit to the Word of God. Of course, I am not referring to purging those that are weak and truly are "hungering and thirsting for righteousness," but have been so sapped of strength by the pressures of the world that they need help to stand. I am speaking of those that are defensive or apathetic when the Word of God comes to them. There are some issues that the Word of God lists specifically as areas that we are to "expel the wicked man from among us," and, "With such a man do not even eat." We are commanded by God Himself to deal visibly with those that "call themselves brothers or sisters" and are: sexually impure, accumulating and/or driven by material things, or those that allow job or family or recreation or anything else to divert their attention from the Kingdom of God. (This is idolatry.) We are commanded by Jehovah God to deal with the one who has a critical heart,

or with unwholesome speech (secretly, on the job or with worldly friends of course—never “at church”), or one who is idle and will not work, or one who is divisive (1Cor. 5:6-13; Mat. 18:15-18; 2Thes. 3:6; Tit. 3:10; Heb. 12:14-15). If we claim to be the Church of Jesus Christ, we certainly have no right to disregard these passages simply because it is heartbreaking and very delicate to do and no one else seems to be functioning this way. Don't you think God knew that it would not be an easy thing before He commanded it? As God said (and Ananias and Sapphira bear witness to [Acts 5]) to His people who had one man in their midst with a hidden, willful disobedience in his tent:

“Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. That is why my people can not stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, except you cut off the defiled from among you” (Joshua 7:10-12).

Therein lies the reason that so many groups of believers are functioning in emptiness and going through religious exercises and “the empty traditions handed down by our forefathers,” rather than in the Glory of God. The curse of God's Absence in Power is not because of sin (certainly this will happen from time to time), but because the sin is undealt with face to face. (Of course, it was preached at during a speech or two, but not dealt with honestly.) God give us grace and mercy and wisdom to uproot every stronghold of the evil one in every man, woman and child, while never “breaking the bruised reed” or “embittering the child.”

6 How does one know when they are a part of the local Church? In the religious world, the organization can identify its members by attendance statistics and donations. Not so in the Kingdom of God that is “not of this world,” “neither here nor there,” “not in Jerusalem or on this mountain” at some certain time and place. In the Kingdom of the Beloved Son, “the Lord adds” to our number. It happens, not by vote or by “placing membership” when you hit town and find a convenient building to “attend” that believes basically the same as your parents. If we gave you a gold-embossed certificate, a placard, hung a banner on the wall, took your picture in your “Sunday best,” put a sticker on your windshield, and threw a banquet for you, it would not make you a part of any true Church of Jesus. Scary, huh?

Only by your commitment to obedience to the Word of God in every “secret” area of your life, by your sacrificial love and service of the Saints, and by your priorities fully governed by “seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness,” can you be melted into the Life of the Church. Only by the forsaking of the idolatry of your secure lifestyle, and uniting your heart to the Purposes of God in His local Church on a daily basis can you be a part of the Body of Christ.

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-7).

It is in walking together in the light of exposure that we have real fellowship with one another. Any other kind of “fellowship” is a counterfeit. And in an environment of true Life, you will stand out like a sore thumb continually if your life is not right with Jesus and is not committed to your brothers and sisters in service and transparency. His Kingdom is manifested in the unseen realm (Eph. 2:4-6, 6:12; etc.). It is truly “not of this world,” “neither here nor there.” Consequently, the way to be “joined and knit” to the Body of Christ is to be one in heart and life with them as you are fully submitted to, and in love with, the Head of the body, Jesus. Simple enough, right?

We fully recognize the danger of embarking on such a Journey as the one we’ve just given you a glimpse of. But it’s GREAT. Join us on the Adventure, no matter where geographically God sends you to be equipped. Time is short, Family! Please feel free to ask any questions, voice any concerns, or fears, or anything else. We’re not trying to “be anybody,” just to walk as close as is supernaturally possible to our God, to one another and to His pattern for the spirit and visible life of His Church. He purchased Her with His blood to reign with Him in Glory. That means everything to us, and we hope to you as well. If this description on these pages doesn’t sound like (and look like, if you were to spend time with us) the Church that you read about in the Bible, then you shouldn’t consider and act on the thoughts included here. Or if you’re not really interested in the vulnerability that all of this leads to, you’ll be very uncomfortable trying to hide in the shadows when the Light of a true Church is “getting brighter and brighter unto the full

Day.” If you love your “rights,” surely the Church of Jesus Christ is not the right place for you to be. Unfortunately for the Cause of Jesus and for you and for all of us, I know that if you do not desire to walk in the Light of exposure and on the “Highway of Holiness,” you still will be welcomed gladly at many, many other places that do religious things in Jesus’ Name. Whatever you choose to do with your life, know that a compromising “church” is the last thing on earth that you should be yoked to if you love Jesus and long for His Appearing. On the other hand, if fully immersed in the Work of God as He builds a Habitation for Himself in His Church, by His men and women, you will grow and blossom into “the unity of the faith and the full intimate knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Can’t beat that!