



What Isn't the Church?

Matthew 18:15-20

September 12, 2021

Pastor Mickey Klink

Introduction

In this sermon we explain four misconceptions about the church that are common in contemporary Christianity.

The Text: Matthew 18:15-20

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

There are four common misconceptions of the church that need to be challenged and corrected.

a) The church is NOT a metaphor.

b) The church is NOT coffee with friends.

c) The church is NOT a human project.

d) The church is NOT a voluntary society.

Response

What comes to mind when you hear the word “church?” Let us remove anything that is NOT true.

Sunday Text Questions for Matthew 18:15-20 (“I Will Build My Church” Series)

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- 1) Starter Question: What comes to mind when you hear the word “church?”
- 2) Read the text aloud and discuss together any significant observations or issues needing clarification.
- 3) When v. 20 is read in isolation (without context), how would you interpret its meaning and significance?
- 4) How do vv. 15-19 give the necessary context for Jesus’ statement in v. 20?
- 5) What does this passage teach us about the practice of church discipline?
- 6) How does this passage teach us that church discipline, even though difficult, is good for the sinner, the rest of the saints, and honors the Savior?
- 7) Why have so many people taken v. 20 out of context and used it to offer an incorrect definition of “church?”
- 8) What makes a church gathering different than just any collection of Christians who meet with spiritual intentionality and fruitfulness?
- 9) How do the three historic “marks” of the church help define “church” (Scripture, Ordinances, Authority)?
- 10) In what ways have we allowed cultural definitions of “spirituality” and “church” distort a biblical definition of church, and how can that be corrected?

Further study this week: Passages on church discipline: Romans 16:17-20 (Mon); 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24 (Tues); 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15 (Wed); 1 Timothy 6:3-4 (Thurs); Ephesians 5:25b-27 (Fri).