

“I Will Build My Church”

“Church” - it’s such a loaded word these days that communication about it is often quite difficult. Imaging that you are discussing “bars” but no one is on the same page. Someone says “bars” and one hearer is thinking “drinking establishments” another is thinking “security devices on windows,” another is thinking “Klondike ice cream bars,” and yet another is thinking about the red cross bars on a Confederate battle flag. A terrible argument ensues as each man expresses his opinions about the “bars” he is envisioning in the conversation. It would be utter chaos and could even be dangerous as each one in the conversation asserts and defends his position on the “bars” he thinks are under discussion!

The word “church” is like that in many modern circles and sometimes even among religious people. Like many modern terms, the connotation of the word “church” is both varied and rapidly changing. Some think, “the building,” some think, “a denomination with man-made bylaws and a home office with officials who run that entity,” some think, “those nice people at the church club,” some think, “those self-loathing people who are driven by guilt and sorrow,” some people think, “those gossiping, back-biting jerks,” and some think, “those self-righteous bigots who want to run everyone’s lives.”

None of those connotations bear any resemblance to the church that Jesus built! It's not surprising because most Americans today get their working definitions of various parts of our culture from the evening news or social media rather than from an actual and authoritative source. The apostle Paul said, “...when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery for Christ,” Ephesians 3:4. “When you read,” is an assumption that humans are reading God’s word rather than pontificating about what they heard on campus or at the coffee shop. “When you read,” not, “If you read” is the key to properly defining and understanding the ***actual church that Jesus built.***

A few realities that actually reading will reveal:

Jesus built His church, not man - Matthew 16:18

Jesus bought the church with His blood, so it belongs to Him not man - Acts 20:28; I Cor. 6:20; 7:23; I Pet. 1:17-19

Jesus’ church is the people, not a place - Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18;

Jesus commanded His church to love one another - John 13:34, 35

Jesus commanded His church to forgive one another - Matt. 6:14, 15; Eph. 4:32

Jesus commanded His church to put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice and to be kind to one another with a tender heart - Eph. 4:31-32

Jesus commanded His church to worship in spirit and truth - Jn. 4:22-24

Jesus’ church imitates Him, not humans - I Cor. 11:1

Jesus’ church has the ambition of pleasing Him - II Cor. 5:9

Jesus’ church reaches out to share love and His good news with others - Lk 2:10; Acts 10:34; 13:32; Rom. 10:15-17; I Thess. 3:6

In doing these things, and many others, Jesus’ church becomes a family of

loving brothers and sisters who worship together, pray together, share life together and are bound together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, Eph. 4:3.

Considering the actual, authoritative definition and description of Jesus' church found in the actual text of the Scripture, we can and should properly conclude that the word, "church" deserves to be understood as a precious, loving, caring, giving, forgiving, family of brothers and sisters who seek to please Him and not self, not other men or the writings of men, and certainly not the negative connotations foisted upon our culture by the news media, entertainment media and social media of our day. "When you read you can understand!"

Ray Wallace