

Our Calling To The Church

I. WHAT IS THE ASCEND SERIES?

- A. **ASCEND** is a four part teaching series looking at four areas that we are called to as a house of prayer community. We will share these for 4 weeks on Friday's and Sunday's (except for Friday 11/24). The Church, The Believer, The Mission, and the Capital City.

II. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

- A. Our first focus will be our calling to the Church. Jesus said these words: ***“You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden” (Matt 5:13-14 NLT)***. That is what we are called to be and to do. To serve as a catalyst to inspire the Church.
- B. The Church is the body of Christ. The people of God who are born again (Jn. 3:3) and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, and King. The Corporate fellowship of believers, both locally and globally. The word used for the church is *Ekklesia* which means, *the called out ones, an assembly*. Called out to be and do what Christ commanded us.

17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. 16:17-19)

III. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

- A. We can trace the founding (birth) of the Church to the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out. Jesus told His disciples to wait in the city of Jerusalem until the promised Holy Spirit would come. (Luke 24:49, Acts. 1:4-8). As the Holy Spirit was poured out, fire fell on the Church and it exploded with faith, power, and evangelistic energy to go to the ends of the earth with the gospel (good news of salvation).

⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem^[a] until you are endued with power from on high.” (Lk. 24:49)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Matt. 28:18-20)

¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they^[a] will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” ¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. (Mk. 16:15-20).

IV. DEFINITIONS OF THE CHURCH

- A. As we study the New Testament, we get a glimpse of what the Church is called to be. There may be others, but here are a few: The church of the Firstborn (Heb. 12:23). The house of God (1 Tim. 3:15). The habitation of God (Eph. 2:22). A Holy temple (Eph. 2:21). A spiritual house (1Pet. 2:5). Lively stones (1Pe. 2:5). The household of God (Eph. 2:19). The household of faith (Gal. 6:10).
- B. The Church is not the building. Buildings where we have church, houses the church (the people of God). The people are the church, with Jesus as the head of the Church.
- 24“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’” (Acts 17:24-28)*
- C. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. He is the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:10, Ps. 23, 1Pe. 5:4). We are His people (sheep of his pasture). Christ is came to seek and save the lost, including leaving the 99 in order to find the one lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7).
- D. The Church is made up of believers in Jesus Christ from all across the world who hold to the teachings of the Bible, and seek to practice what it teaches. It may have different expressions, but the core values are the same.

V. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

- A. The purpose of the Church is to provide a corporate gathering place to worship our Lord, and where His presence can be felt. We are instructed in scripture that we should come together on a regular basis to worship our Lord and King, and to not neglect this important aspect of our spiritual life (Heb. 10:24-25). He is to be the focus of our worship and church life. We don’t worship the institution of the church, or leaders, or the dogma (teachings, doctrine, beliefs etc.) of the church; We worship Jesus!
- “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Heb. 10:24-25)*
- “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. ² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’” (Isa. 6:1-3)*
- B. The purpose of the Church is to love God, love people (Mk. 12:30-31) and bring the gospel to all mankind (We will focus more on this point in the Ascend Pt. 3 “The Mission” message).
- ³⁰ And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*