

## **GOD'S FAMILY THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FAMILY SERIES**

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**TEXT: Matthew 16:18 “I also say to you that you are Peter (*Petros*), and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”**

**INTRO:** Family. When you think of family, what comes to your mind? Several things can come to your mind depending on what you have gone through in your own personal family life.

If I asked you to describe your family, what would you say? “My family is a mess... dysfunctional... broken... divided... painful” or “beautiful, wonderful, important?”

I think everyone knows that family is important. Many couples who would have divorced many years ago have stayed together in their loveless marriage for the sake of their children.

Why is family so important to us? I want to suggest that when God made us in His image and His likeness, He created us for relationship. Relationship with God and relationship with one another begins with your family.

Another way to say this is that we are hardwired for worship and community. We are called to love and worship the one true God. If we don't worship the true God, we will worship other gods. There are so many other “gods,” like money, sports, or another religion. It is interesting to note that there are 600 million Buddhists, 800 million Hindus, over 1 billion Muslims, and 2.2 billion Christians. We are made for worship.

We are also created for family, and if we don't have a family life, we look for family in gangs, clubs, associations, sports, etc. It is intriguing that when Kobe Bryant passed away last Sunday, people started to talk about the “Laker Family.” Ice Cube was interviewed on NBA Jump, and he said, “No matter what your race

is or social economic status, or education background, we are all united by those who love the Lakers basketball team.” I think he was describing what the true Church ought to be, but his best metaphor was the Laker Family.

It is also interesting that 120 million Americans will attend a church service this weekend. To give you a perspective, that is more than all the sports events combined in a given year. Why? Because we are hardwired for God's family.

**I want to submit to you that you will not find that sense of belonging and the sense of purpose in your life until you become an active member of God's family, the Church.**

PURPOSE: I want to share three truths of God's family that will give us a sense of purpose and belonging.

## **I. IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE FAMILY**

**A. Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

1. In Genesis 1:31, “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” Think about this: God created the universe so it could house His family. The primary objective of creation was creating His family. That is how much He loves you and how much you matter to God and how important the family is.

**B. FIVE PURPOSES FOR THE FIRST FAMILY** (This is based on the classic *Ultimate Intention* by DeVern Fromke. This book changed my life.)

**1. TO LOVE AND FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD** - God is love (1 John 4:8). God created us to be loved by Him and He wanted man to love Him in return.

**2. TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER** - God made us in His image and likeness. God is love and He also created us to love one another. It's all about love. That is why it is echoed throughout Scripture. It is called the Great Commandment. We are called to love God and to love one another, beginning with our family.

**3. TO MULTIPLY AND SPREAD HEAVEN ON EARTH** - Next, we are called to create a big family. He wants a big family to love. Also, the family was

placed in the Garden of Eden. It is heaven on earth, and as humans filled the earth, the Garden would also spread around the world.

**4. TO SUBDUE THE ENEMY - “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.”** The word *subdue* is the Hebrew word *kabash*, to conquer and subjugate your enemy.

**5. TO CO-RULE WITH GOD OVER THE EARTH - “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it and rule.”** The Hebrew word for *rule* is *radah*, which means to have dominion, reign and rule.

## II. THE EKKLESIA: THE RESTORATION OF GOD’S FAMILY

### A. Matthew 16:18 “I WILL BUILD MY EKKLESIA”

1. God is restoring everything that was lost due to sin.
2. Why did He call His people *Ekklesia*? Why not call them “My Synagogue,” or “My People,” or “My House,” or “My Temple?” By the way, the Church is not a building!
3. “I will build My Church,” *Ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* comes from two Greek words: *Ek-*, “out,” and *Kaleo*, “called.” **The called-out ones.** Jesus uses this word only three times in the Gospels: once in Matthew 16:18 and twice in Matthew 18:17.
4. The term *Ekklesia* is a marketplace word that was used in Athens, Greece, for 500 years before Christ was born. It was the calling out of select citizens of Athens to legislate laws that would be for the good of the city.
5. God has called every one of us for His purpose. All of you are called by God to bring forth heaven on earth in your life and your city.

**B. THE CHURCH IS BUILT ON THE CONCEPT OF THE FAMILY – “I will build My church.”** I want to focus on this important word, *build*.

**C. BUILD: *oikodomeo*.** This word comes from two words: *Oikos*, “house” or “family,” and *Domeo*, “builder.” House builder or built on the family. In other words, the Church is built on the family. We have many other verses to describe the Church as God’s family.

**1. Ephesians 2:19** So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. *You are members of God’s family.* <sup>20</sup> Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. (NLT)

2. **1 Timothy 3:15 That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth. (NCV) (New Century Version)**

3. In California, where we have earthquakes, if you don't have a house or apartment with a good foundation, the building is going to crumble during an earthquake. So, too, the Church is to support believers in a time of shaking.

4. **1 Peter 1:3 God has given us the privilege of being born again so that we are now members of God's own family. (TLB)**

5. The greatest privilege in my life has been to be part of His Church. When you were born, you were born into your nuclear family. When you were born again, you were born into God's family. God's will is not for you just to be a part of the mystical universal Church but to be a practical member of a local church. I have people come up to me and say, "Pastor Ché, I love your church." I want it to go from "your church" to "I love *our* church." Have you made this switch?

6. I would not be where I am with the Lord if I were not involved in a local church since I gave my life to Jesus in 1973. The Church is God's family.

7. **Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You." <sup>33</sup> Answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" <sup>34</sup> Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! <sup>35</sup> For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."**

8. Jesus is saying, "In My Kingdom, those who believe in Me and follow Me are the family I am restoring." May it begin with your nuclear family, but even if your family rejects you, you are part of God's family.

#### **D. TWO OR THREE COMING TOGETHER IN JESUS' NAME**

1. **Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."**

2. Two or three gathering in His name is the basic number for the nuclear family. The two make up the basic, fundamental number for a married couple, and three is the number of a family with one child.

**E. IN MY NAME** - His will. What He would do. Representing Him. His Word tells us what He expects us to do. Acts 2:41-42 tells us what God's will is concerning His Church.

1. **Acts 2:41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. <sup>42</sup> All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including**

the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. (NLT)

2. Putting it all together, I want to give you a basic definition of the church:
3. **The church is a group of baptized believers who are called to grow as disciples of Christ through the Word, worship, and fellowship, and then called out to transform the world through prayer, evangelism, and discipleship.**

F. **LIFE GROUPS** - I want to give a brief word on our Life Groups.

1. Our fellowship is expressed through Life Groups. We have three different Life Groups for adults: Mixed Life Groups, Men's Life Groups, and Women's Life Groups.
2. We want to make our Life Groups begin with at least three but up to five people.
3. I am asking every Life Group to gather to pray. Pray by binding and loosing. Yes, pray for the needs of the Life Group members, but also pray that His Kingdom will come and His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
4. I am asking every Life Group and every aspect of our church to have a mission's focus so that we can truly be the *Ekklesia* that brings transformation to our society. This leads to the final truth of God's family.

### III. THE EKKLESIA IS TO OVERCOME EVIL IN SOCIETY

A. **Matthew 16:18** "I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

1. Caesarea Philippi, north of Galilee, was a two days' walk from Galilee. It was an extremely pagan and demonic area. As you walk up the Jordan River, you come to a huge rock called the Gates of Hell. There is a natural cave inside this rock, and there is a natural boulder inside the cave that was used as an altar where animal and human sacrifices were made. Throughout the history of Israel, different pagans occupied their land and brought their pagan worship. For example, when the Greeks occupied Palestine, they dedicated the whole area to the god of Pan. Unfortunately, other pagan nations used the rock for human sacrifices. There is nothing more evil than killing an innocent life, made in the image of God. Jesus was telling them that no matter how evil people can be, the Church will overcome the evil.
2. The Gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church! 120 million Americans attend a church service. That is more than all the sports events combined in a given year!

3. Jesus teaches that Satan will not overpower or defeat the Church.
4. In fact, we will destroy all the works of the enemy by using the authority that God has given us in Binding and Loosing.
5. The Church is the only group on earth that will succeed. Nations come and go, governments come and go, but nothing will defeat the Church.
6. Three things that are eternal and that will be victorious: God's Word, His Kingdom, and His Church. We won't perish; we have eternal life.

**CONCLUSION:** Jesus loves the Church so much that He died for the Church (Ephesians 5:25).

1. God loves the world so much that He died for the sins of the world. But His purpose from the beginning was to restore His family. All who believe in His name. So, He really died for the Church.
2. **Billy Graham said, "The Bible says that it was Christ's love for the church that caused him to go to the cross. If Christ loved the church that much... I must love it too. I must pray for it, defend it, work in it, pay my tithe and offerings to it, help to advance it, promote holiness in it, and make it the functional, witnessing body our Lord meant it to be."**
3. If you are not part of a local church, I am going to say very honestly and straightforwardly, Sue and I want you to be a member of HRock Church. I am going to ask you to be a member of HRock Church.