

I. ME

- A. Welcome/Online
- B. Series
 - 1. Questions/Framework
- C. So What About Questions

II. WE

- A. Have you ever asked yourself why are you here? Why do you go to church? What's the point of church for you?
 - 1. Someone is making you?
 - 2. It feels good?, Music? Awesome snacks?
 - 3. Connect to God?
 - 4. Habit? What your family has always done?
 - 5. Want a good influence on your kids.
 - 6. Social/business connection?
 - 7. You'll feel guilty if you don't?
- B. Don't you know how many other things you could be doing right now?
 - 1. "That's what I said!"... I don't blame you
 - 2. Often I think God made me be a pastor just so I would go to church.
- C. **Going to church is often boring at best and harmful at worst.**
- D. **Boring**
 - 1. Like going to a lecture in French on the trade practices of 16th century Italian city-states.
 - 2. Sermons about ancient Jewish washing rituals.
- E. **Harmful**
 - 1. Guilt/fear/intimidation/duping people out of money
 - 2. The horrible things that have been taught and done by people calling themselves churches are too much to list.

- F. Not to mention church can just be **weird!**
 - 1. Speaking in tongues
 - 2. Slapping on the forehead
 - 3. Eating Jesus' body (?) and drinking blood (?)
 - 4. Happy songs about blood and death and crucifixion
 - 5. Weird insider words and phrases like... Blessed, Sinful, Glory Hallelujah, Propitiation, Washed in the blood of the lamb.
- G. "I love Jesus but I really don't like church."
 - 1. "Why can't I just worship God out in nature?" Or "I follow Jesus. By myself."
 - 2. Just don't see the point.
- H. And maybe that's it...
 - 1. **Church seems pointless b/c we've missed the point of the Church.**
- I. Maybe we don't really understand.
 - 1. When I read about the 1st JF's there's nothing boring about it.
 - 2. Life giving, not harmful.
 - 3. Maybe Dangerous, yes, but in the way helicopter rescues are dangerous.
 - 4. Weird? Yes but in the people who are paralyzed suddenly being able to walk kind of way.
- J. I think we often reject the idea of church b/c we don't know what it is for.
 - 1. And therefore it gets boring, weird, or even harmful.
- K. So what is it actually and what's the point?
- L. **Church isn't somewhere you go. It's something you are.**

III. GOD (Matt 16)

A. Matthew Background

B. Passage Background

1. Caesarea Philippi
 - a. 150 mi north of Jerusalem
 - b. Named after Caesar Augustus (1st emperor) after he died in 14 AD
2. "Who do people say I am?"
 - a. John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, other prophets
3. "What about you? Who do you say I am?"
 - a. Most important question in history.

C. V. 16

1. Messiah- Anointed one (Christ in Greek)
2. Son of Living God
3. God's king over humanity
4. Jesus- "YEP"

D. V. 18a

1. Peter as leader
2. Jesus' Identity as foundation of CHURCH
3. **The Church was Jesus' idea.**
4. Will build CHURCH... predicting what will happen after he's done...
5. **Church-** German word for House of the Lord (building)
6. Not what Jesus was saying at all...
 - a. This confusion is one of the primary reasons people, you, me have a unfavorable opinion about "going to church"
 - b. Why churches have forgotten their purpose
 - c. **The Church is not a place you go...**

7. Original word is **Ekklesia**

- a. Not religious word- Gathering, assembly, group... usually for a specific purpose
- b. Not a **place** built for a specific purpose but a **group of people** brought together for a specific purpose

c. **Jesus didn't create a place he created a people.**

- d. Who's identity and foundation and commonality was him and who he is.

8. The purpose wasn't just to sit around...

- a. Talking about rules
- b. Staying busy and out of trouble, off the streets
- c. Keeping members happy
- d. Hearing each other sing once a week
- e. Being against anyone who wasn't inside the building

E. V. 18b.

1. Hades- realm of the dead
2. Death itself will not stop the Ekklesia.
3. Ekklesia will smash the gates of death
4. Jesus designed the Church to be God's multi-ethnic, multi-generational, unstoppable people doing his life-giving work on earth.

F. The church is Jesus' chosen tool to save the world

1. There's no Plan B.
2. **The real mission of the church is to bring real life to a hurt and dying world.**
3. Not to be the moral police, not to be the judges, but to be transformed by the love of Jesus and then model true life/love and share how to have it.

G. It's a mission we have all been invited to participate in.

IV. YOU

- A. So then why do we have Organized Church why can't we just all go and do our own thing?
- B. Jesus doesn't want something from you. He wants something for you... A new, transformed life.
 - 1. And the Organized Ekklesia is designed to help facilitate that new life.
- C. Often we think/feel/hear that the Church needs something from us in order to accomplish its purpose.
 - 1. In reality, the organized part of the Ekklesia is here to help YOU accomplish YOUR purpose.
 - 2. Often church leaders see themselves and organization as Luke Skywalker when in reality they should be Obi-Wan Kenobi. For those of you unfamiliar with Star Wars...
 - 3. **Ephesians 4:11-13**
 - 4. When the organized aspect of the Ekklesia is functioning as it should, then real transformation happens in people's lives.
- D. But that transformation doesn't happen by sitting back and watching...
 - 1. The Church is God's vehicle to transform people by giving them the ability to participate in the mission... to contribute.
 - 2. **Participation creates transformation.**
 - a. Like Luke Skywalker, Frodo Baggins, Teaching, Hands on Training...
- E. At CCC, we call that participation Contributing.

F. Contributing on a team.

- 1. When you serve others with others... you transform.
- 2. You have ownership, camaraderie, see the world differently and see your place in it more clearly.
- 3. There are even psychological and physical health benefits to serving others.
- 4. **Doing what's best for others is what's best for you.**

G. AND participation looks like...

H. Contributing Financially

- 1. Crosscreek doesn't work without support from normal people like you.
- 2. No denomination support, no mother church sponsorship
- 3. Every dollar we use to bring God's love and message of transformation to Salem and our neighbors comes from the people you are sitting next to... and a few who give from far away.
- 4. Might not believe this but for CCC to run smoothly it takes about \$13,000 monthly.
- 5. Sounds like it's for the church but it's actually for you.
- 6. Best way to strengthen faith is giving financially.
- 7. **The best vaccine for greed is generosity.**
- 8. **3-10 Challenge.**
- 9. Maybe start smaller with the goal of reaching 10% in a few months.
- I. Ever see injustice or tragedy and say, "I wish I could do something to help?"
 - 1. You can.
 - 2. On an individual level you can care for and even prevent by helping people discover God's love by contributing on a team...
 - 3. On a larger level we can do something together by contributing financially...
- J. If every American Jesus-Follower gave 10% it would create an additional \$165 billion.

1. Relieve global hunger, starvation, deaths from preventable diseases in 5 years
2. Solve the world's water and sanitation issues, specifically in places where about 1 billion people live on less than \$1 a day
3. Could eliminate illiteracy in 5 years
4. Provide food, clothing, shelter to all refugees in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

K. What could **WE** do?

1. Let's find out!

L. Maybe not ready for these?

1. Come back
2. Be consistent- Hard to be effective if you miss 75%.
3. Join a Connect group- Where the churching happens
4. For Salem Opportunity... bring your bottles and cans.

M. You can be a part of the greatest effort in the history of humanity

1. God's rescue mission for the people he loves.

N. So contribute... Paul calls the church a body.

1. A Jesus follower who isn't contributing or a part of the church really is like the appendix.
2. You're there but not really doing anything until you have a problem.
3. **If church seems pointless, boring maybe it's time to focus on the real point of church and contribute to the mission.**

- A. Thinking back on our passage where Jesus predicts his new movement.
- B. It must have seemed crazy or impossible to look at the power, sophistication, wealth of the Roman Empire...
- C. Looking at this city named after one of the most powerful men in history
- D. And hear Jesus say that what he was building, would change the world.
- E. What could they do?
- F. But Jesus was no ordinary rabbi, no ordinary man...
- G. Death couldn't stop him and now his Ekklesia is on a mission to bring life to the world.
- H. The Roman Empire is nothing but dust.
- I. Jesus' Ekklesia still thrives...
- J. Jesus is still building his Church and you are invited to participate and contribute to the greatest mission in the history of humanity...

K. The Church is not FOR church people. The Church is God's rescue plan FOR the world.

- L. Join the mission and watch yourself transform as you are used to transform the world.

M. A life devoted to the Kingdom of God stands out in a world devoted to the Kingdom of Self – Carey Nieuhof.