

“The Importance of the Church”

Matthew 16:13-19

Introduction

The church is a collective body whose job it is to bring down legislation from heaven based on God’s Word, to see it worked out in and through the church and then through society. The church acts as heaven’s embassy on earth and brings God’s viewpoint into the culture. It is comprised of Jesus’ followers who are unified by their common belief in His death and resurrection and who confess Him as Christ. The word *ekklesia* is the Greek term for church and was used as a term to refer to an assembly or gathering of people, often for legislative purposes. It is the charge of the *ekklesia* to create a clear plan for the world to see what God’s will looks like lived out in the lives of everyday people.

The church is more than a social or religious gathering. It is made up of the disciples of Jesus Christ – people of God who verbally and visibly reflect the rule of Christ in their everyday lives. The people that make up the church have a job to do: God wants His people to be present in the world for His purposes. The church is more than a group of people with a shared faith. Believers are to represent God’s eternal plans and purposes on earth. As such, the church has been given collective authority to draw heaven into history. When a believer operates in obedience to God’s Word and His will, they gain access to the keys that unlock heaven’s power to act on earth. Every believer should be a part of an active ministry that possesses and operates with the keys of the kingdom.

For every hellish gate, there is a kingdom key. These are keys that are issued by divine authority, based on God’s word, through His people who are communicating and walking with Him according to His purposes. The church’s influence on earth is activated by heaven’s keys to release heaven’s perspective on earth and to call on the power of heaven to demonstrate God’s will on earth. In fact, heaven is waiting on the church to act in the matter of permitting and releasing before heaven’s authority gets activated in history. You can only bind and loose – restrict or release – what has already been bound and loosed in heaven due to delegated authority.

Some things only happen through God’s church. Being connected to the church sets you up to receive the full authority and full power of God to operate in your life.

Getting Started

1. Are you connected to a local church? Why or why not?
2. What do you understand now about the importance of the church that you did not understand before?

Let’s Get Personal

1. How do you like your church? Is it more of a social or religious gathering? Are you as connected to your local church as you should be? If you are actively serving in a local church or considering it, what do you think it looks like to be intentionally connected to a local body?
 2. The people of God should operate in obedience to God’s Word and His will so that they are in alignment to receive the keys that unlock heaven’s power to act on earth. Are you walking in alignment? How do you know?
 3. In this week’s sermon, Pastor Evans talked about the activation of heaven’s keys being tied to the people of God operating according to heaven’s perspective. Can you give an example of how having heaven’s perspective on a matter gives you the key to release God’s blessing in your life?
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Take the Next Step

1. What if heaven is waiting on you? The power of restricting or releasing power and authority has been given to the church. Are you positioned in your relationship with God and with His church to be a part of the important role of the church on earth?
2. How can you better serve your church? Are you thinking about what it looks like to be unified to the church during the pandemic season? Or what it might look like later to engage with a local church? What can you commit to doing right now?
3. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: 2 Chronicles 7; 1 Peter 2; Acts 19.

Renew Your Mind

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . ."
Matthew 16:19
