

The Uniqueness of the Church

(Matthew 16:18)

- Introduction:
1. The aim of this lesson is to do our part in raising a generation who knows (Judges 2:10).
 2. "It doesn't really matter what church you go to."
 2. I have heard that statement made countless times over the years.
 3. It's a statement that is frequently affirmed, but seldom defended.
 4. Let's seek to answer this question today.

I. An Authoritative Answer

- A. This question is too important for me to answer by giving you my opinion.
- B. We need a better authority – Jesus.
- C. (Matthew 28:18; John 12:48; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

II. A Narrow Way

- A. We live in a pluralistic and inclusive culture, and the thought of excluding someone is unfathomable.
- B. But let's consider if it is unfathomable to God to exclude people, even sincere, religious people
- C. (Matthew 7:13-14; 21-23).
 1. Will everyone who calls on the name of the Lord enter the kingdom of Heaven?
 2. Will religious people some day be surprised to learn that God never knew them?
 3. Who will enter the kingdom of Heaven?

III. A Narrow God

- A. How many churches did Jesus build?
 1. (Matthew 16:18).
 2. (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4).
- B. Has God ever chosen just one location for salvation?
 1. The Flood & ark (Genesis 7).
 2. The Passover & Death of the firstborn (Exodus 12).
 3. Jericho & Rahab's house (Joshua 2).
 4. The Church (Matthew 15:13).

IV. An Urgent Pursuit

- A. How can I be sure that I am in the one church that Jesus built?
- B. This should be a life and death pursuit to which we should be diligent (Hebrews 11:6).

V. An Important Clarification

- A. The expression, "church of Christ" is not a name of a brand of Christians.
- B. It is a description of the entire body of Christ.
- C. I no more want to be a "Church of Christ" than I want to be a Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian. I want to be a Christian, a member of the one body consisting of all Christians.

- Conclusion:
1. If we believe what they believed; and do what they did; we will be what they were.
 2. Let's make sure we are doing the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21).