

When I graduated from Bible College I had a very important decision to make:

- My “backup plan” had come through! Better than my wildest imagination: Offered a GTA position in program!
- My primary plan had also born fruit...and a church was calling!

The same week...I think the same day...I got two phone calls...One...come be a GTA in UTA, Come to Maryland Pastor I knew that it was a critical fork in the road...One path lead to teaching in University...Other lifetime of Ministry

One question made all the difference: Where can my life count MOST for the KOG?

It took some time...but after thinking and praying about it...the answer was obvious...

The CHURCH is God’s chosen instrument for reaching a lost and dying world. All other things are good...Church is GREAT!

As we enter this study on Acts...Specifically our study on This Is Church...You have to KNOW that going in Because..In my mind there is a VERY clear delineation and order of priority: God: Family: Church (everything else less) I love the local church..with everything in my body I want to see the church healthy, growing, effective.

When it does...I celebrate...when it doesn’t...It breaks my heart!

This morning we start a new message series I have titled: THIS IS CHURCH:

Based in the book of Acts...we are going to be looking in detail at what the church IS...and what the church DOES!

Matt 16:13-20

Page 694

1. Understand What The Word “Church” Means.

- Etymology: *The study of the origin of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history*
 - God is doing something new and different...how do you describe it?
 - ~Grab a word and use it...tweak the meaning
 - ~Create a word: usually/often by taking a couple of words...and putting them together
 - Church: Greeks and NT authors did both!
 - Church: Greeks: Lit: *ek* = out of *klesis* = a calling Add together: To call out of (with/for a purpose)
 - ~Used in secular language for calling one group out of another...for a specific purpose
 - Acts 19:39: *A group of Citizens called together to discuss the affairs of state*
 - ~Used in spiritual language to refer to a group of people called out of the world...for a purpose!
 - Matt 16:18: *A group of Christians called out (of the world) by God to fulfill His purposes*
 - ~A global/universal expression: Matt 16 *“I will build my church”*
 - ~Multiple local expressions: 1 Cor 1:2: *“To the church of God in Corinth”*
- So, with that background...Let’s talk about Church!

5 Essential Callings Of The Church

1. The Church Is Called... By God

When we think of Church we have to remember...the church is a creation of God...start to finish!

- The Disciples: Mt 4:19: *“Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!”* Gal 2:9 Pillars Eph 2:20
- The 120: Acts 1:15; 2:1 *“Among the believers, (a group of 120) “They were all together in one place”*
- The 3000: Acts 2:38-39 *“Repent and be baptized...message for all whom God will call!” 3000*

Appl: The church is a creation of the mind, the heart and the will and the purpose of God!

It is NOT: Man made institution

Simply a human endeavor, we created to keep ourselves busy

A negotiable for followers of Jesus! We are CALLED to be part of a fellowship!

(there is no concept in the NT of believers that are not associated with and connected to the body)

It is NOT a contract...but rather a spiritual covenant! (Because of that...when it’s hard that’s ok!)

2. The Church Is Called... Out Of The World

- Peter’s Sermon: Acts 2:5-12:40 *“From every nation...What does this mean...Save yourselves!”*
- Paul’s Mission: Acts 14:27 *“They reported how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles!”*

Appl: Jesus always intended that the church was to be made up of people from entire world ...not just Jewish

On the day that the church was “born” he insured that by having people from every nation present...part!...

When the Church in Jerusalem was slow in fulfilling that call, God raised up Paul to go to the Gentile nations.

3. The Church Is Called... To Be The Body Of Christ

1Co 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Paul goes on to talk about the way that we function...the things that we do...how we live out the call to be Jesus hands and feet

- Done unto me Mt 10:42 *“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water ... because he is my disciple,”*
- Greater things John 14:12 *“anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father”*

Applic: When Jesus left this earth...He left his work in OUR hands...He entrusted His work to the Church...His Body!

When we function...we are not fulfilling simply our calling...but His work as well!

When we serve...we are doing the work of Christ...fulfilling the will and purpose of God (Holy thing!)

4. The Church Is Called...

To Go Back To The World

- Jesus' Plan: Matt 28:18-20 *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel...teaching them..."*
- Jesus' Commission: Acts 1:7-8 *"You will receive power...you will be my witnesses in J, J,S, Uttermost."*

Appl: Jesus planned His work...and He worked His plan!

He told them what he was going to have them do

He provided the specific direction of what they were to do

He provided the power for them to do it with (HS)

When they were slow to full His work....

~Scattered them to all nations Acts 8:1 (Scattered = sparks flying!)

~Raised Up Paul Acts 9:1-6; 15-6

God is going to accomplish His work...His will and His purpose...the Church is His chosen instrument

5. The Church Is Called...

To Call Others To The Father

- Acts 2:37-41 The conclusion of Peter's sermon
- Acts 3:1-10 Healing of Beggar
- Acts 11-4:4 Sermon in response....up to 5000
- Balance of Acts: The church, growing, developing and spreading throughout the world

Appl: Next week we are going to look at the 7 Marks of a NT Church. At RTBC we summarize them this way

Riva Trace Baptist Church is committed to loving people by leading them to Jesus and encouraging them to grow through worship and service to others.

CONCL:

Two of those 7 Marks are worship and community...both are expressed in what we call the Lord's Supper

Acts 2:42-47 "Breaking of Bread...and Fellowship" Vs

Come to the table...Church has been doing this for over 2000 years

Come join in the fellowship of the people of God