

WARM-UP

- Do you like sharing your things (food, clothes, supplies) with other people? Why or why not?
- What was the biggest challenge you ever faced in a team game? What happened?
- Recall a time when you experienced victory or defeat with a group of people. Tell us what happened.

WORD ¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” **MATTHEW 16:16-18**

⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵**one Lord, one faith, one baptism,** ⁶**one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.** **EPHESIANS 4:4-6**

(Read also **MATTHEW 16:13-15.**)

This passage records the first time the word “church” was mentioned. It’s from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “the called out ones.” The church refers to an assembly or gathering of people who have been called out for a specific purpose. Sometimes, this meaning gets lost in our context because we use the word “church” to refer to the place where believers gather to worship. But, Scripture clearly tells us that Jesus wasn’t referring to a physical structure. He referred to the church as a group of people. As believers, we are part of both the universal Church,

which is composed of all true believers, and a local church or body of believers. Today, we will look at two characteristics of the Church Jesus is building.

1 | As the Church, we have a shared Lord.

¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” . . . ¹⁸“*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”

MATTHEW 16:16, 18

⁴*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* **EPHESIANS 4:4-6**

Jesus asked His disciples who other people say *the Son of Man* is (Matthew 16:13) and what they thought (Matthew 16:15). God is calling out people on a personal level to come to the revelation of Jesus. In response, Peter rightfully declared that Jesus is *the Christ, the Son of the living God*. It is on this rock of revelation that the Church (God’s people) is built upon. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who has come proclaiming that the kingdom of God has come (Mark 1:15). He is the Lord and Savior who restores people to a right relationship with Him. He is *the King of kings and Lord of lords* (1 Timothy 6:15), ruling and reigning over the world. Our allegiance is to Him alone. Because of who Jesus is, the Church submits to His Lordship, serves in unity as one body, and will overcome. Because we have a shared Lord, how do you think people in our church should relate with God and with one another?

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2 | As the Church, we have a shared faith.

18“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and **the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** *19*I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” **MATTHEW 16:18-19**

*4*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—*5*one Lord, **one faith**, one baptism, *6*one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **EPHESIANS 4:4-6**

This is the truth that the Church proclaims to the world—that Jesus died on the cross to save mankind from sin and death, and after three days, He victoriously rose from the dead and is now reigning and ruling in heaven and on earth. Those who have faith in Christ are born of God and overcome the world (1 John 5:4-5). Death no longer has the final word over the Church since those who believe in Christ will be resurrected (Romans 8:11) and will have eternal life (John 3:16). As Christians, we have faith in what Jesus has done on the cross to save sinners from sin and death. We also have faith in His promise that He will build His Church and lead His people to victory. He is at the center of everything we do as the Church. Ephesians 4:3-6 tell us that we are to be *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* because we have *one Lord* and *one faith*. According to Galatians 3:26-28, what happens when we put our faith in Jesus?

APPLICATION

- Have you put your faith in Christ alone for your salvation and received Him as your Lord and Savior? Would you like to do this today?
- As believers, Jesus should be in the center of everything we do as individuals and as part of a community. How can you apply this truth in your life this week?
- Who are the people you are serving God with? What can you do to foster unity as you follow and serve Christ together?

PRAYER

- Thank God for building His Church on earth. Pray that He will always be at the center of your church community and that you will all serve Him wholeheartedly as one body.
- Ask God to reveal to you the people in your church community who may be feeling isolated. Pray for opportunities to reach out to them and connect them with other believers.
- Pray for the Church to be united in Christ and to fulfill His mission in every nation.



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