

# Christ Building His Church - Part 1

by Bill McLeod

---

*Christ's Church is built on the rock of Jesus Christ and grows through the work of gifted men, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.*

**Duration:** 1:00:25

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:13

**Topics:** "Church Growth", "Building the Church", "Prayer and Fasting"

---

## Description

Bill McLeod emphasizes that Christ is actively building His church, as revealed in Matthew 16:13-19, where Peter acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah. He explains that the church is founded on Christ, not on any human leader, and that despite persecution and challenges, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. McLeod highlights the importance of prayer and fasting in the life of the church, asserting that true guidance comes from God when believers seek Him earnestly. He also discusses the role of gifted individuals in the church and the necessity of love and good works among its members. Ultimately, he calls for a return to biblical principles in church governance and practice.

---

## Transcript

On the gospel of Matthew chapter 16, verse 13, when Jesus came into the co-successory of Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that you are John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He said unto them, But whom do you say that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I say also unto you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Now I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then he charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Well, Father, the Bible speaks about the mystery of godliness, and that mystery will end when Christ returns. We are told that also, and we thank you. But Father, as we read, we just read, Father, as Jesus said to Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And so, Father, we implore you in Jesus' name to relate truth to our hearts today. I can't do that. You can do that.

That's your business. And we would ask you to be gracious, Father, to us this day, and again make your word live to our hearts. We pray in Christ's name.

Amen. So Christ said, I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. In Rwanda, a couple of years ago, 100,000 people were slaughtered.

Probably half of them were born-again believers. Does that stop the church of God? Was that something Jesus couldn't deal with? Not at all. It's nothing new.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 12, it says that the dragon, that's the devil, the dragon went forth to make war with those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. He's been at it in the beginning. He'll be at it until the end.

The dragon warring against the church. I read somewhere not long ago, the writer was saying that more Christians have been martyred this last century than in any previous century in the history of the world. I don't know if that's true or not, but a lot of people have died in many countries of the world.

So what's Christ doing? Well, he's building his church. Stop and think of this. Most of the church is already in heaven, right? They've been crossing over for 2,000 years.

Most of the church is already in heaven. When Christ comes back, we make that we say, when he comes back, the church will be caught up to meet him in the air. Well, actually, most of the church will be with him when he comes back.

And only that part of the church that's left on earth will be caught up to meet him in the air at that particular time. It's not a big deal, but it's something to think about. When Christ said to Peter, you are Petros, and on this Petra I will build my church, he was making a distinction.

He was not building the church on Peter. The word Petra really meant a little stone. The word Petra meant a ledge like we might call it bedrock.

I think he pointed to himself when he said that. On this rock I will build my church. I remember talking with a Catholic priest one time, and I asked him if he really believed that the popes were infallible.

He said, yes, they are. I said, retroact or write to Peter, all the way back to Peter. I said, how was it that Paul the apostle had to straighten the first pope out, Peter, because of some things he was practicing and doing? And he stared at me for about two minutes.

Then he said, it must have been a different Peter, and he slammed the door shut. He wouldn't talk anymore. Maybe you've heard of Holy Ann.

She lived in Toronto. She was so well known that the mayor of Toronto was at her funeral. She couldn't read or write.

She was never educated. She couldn't read or write, but she could read the Bible. She could read anything in the Bible.

She asked God one day to give her the ability to read the Bible, and he gave that to her. So she was a gift from God. Otherwise, she couldn't.

Somebody gave her the newspaper one day and said, can you read any of this? She was reading it, and she says, oh, this word here, I'm sure that means Lord, but it can't mean my Lord, because my heart doesn't burn. Anyway, she'd been a Catholic, and one day she was walking, and her priest saw her walking and gave her a ride and tried to talk her into coming back into the church. He said, you know, Ann, the church is built on Peter, and Peter has the keys to heaven, and you've forsaken the truth.

She said, well, Peter might have the keys, but she said, I've got the whole door. Jesus said, I'm the door. I don't care who.

She said, I don't care who's got the keys. On this rock I will build my church. Other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Okay? You've got to get that straight. It's built on Christ. It's His church.

I understand there's around 500 different Christian groups now, small and large, 500 of them. I don't know how God deals with that, so I'm still building His church. Yes, He is, in spite of all of the divisions that we have to deal with today.

He's building His church. The gates of hell cannot stop Christ. He's the head of the church, and that's where we have to start.

And He's building His church in His way, at His speed. He's getting the job done. Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world.

He knows what He's doing. He knows what He will do. It's all figured out from the days of eternity, and we have to agree with Him on this.

A couple of us were talking with a fellow one time. He was very well educated, and he said, Well, you know, this Christianity stuff, what we really have to do, he said, is take the best in Christianity, the best in the Jewish religion, the best in the Buddhist, the best in the Muslim faith, and make, make, oh yeah, a new foundation. And so I said, An other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

You know, he turned and literally ran. I don't know what God said to him, but he just took off, you know. How true.

An other foundation can no man lay. His church is built on the teaching of the apostles, because we read that in Ephesians chapter 2, on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. So it's built, His church is built on the teaching of the apostles.

And then in Revelation, if you remember, when John saw the bride, the Lamb's wife, he saw the New Jerusalem. And it had twelve foundations, and in those twelve foundations were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Okay? So the teaching of the apostles is part of the story.

They were important people, really, chosen by God, not important. I remember how blessed I was one time reading in the Gospel of Luke, and it mentions all these big shots, you know, Pilate and a bunch of others. I think there were seven of them all together, and it gives all their names.

And then it says, the Word of God came unto John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He bypassed all these big guys, you know. Well, a high priest was mentioned in that group of seven, too, you know.

He didn't go to them. He bypassed all of that stuff and went to John in the wilderness. And so these apostles, none of them were great men.

All of them were made great by God. And they, the church, is built. And any church that is not built on the teaching of the apostles is not the church of Christ.

It's not part of His church at all. His church is something that's built on fasting and prayer, on the practical side. Jesus never said, if you fast.

Jesus said, when you fast. It's something that's lost to the modern church, at least here in North America. There's very little fasting going on.

You hear about it occasionally. But if you ask your congregation, how many of you people have fasted or are fasting on a regular basis, sometimes three or four hands go up, and sometimes no hands go up. Why are we neglecting this? You remember Christ, when the apostles, eight of them, tried to cast a demon out of a child and they couldn't do it.

And later they were so embarrassed and they said to Jesus, Why couldn't we? And He said, Because of your unbelief. But then He also said this, Howbeit this kind, this kind of demon, only comes out through prayer and fasting. So some demons are more powerful than others.

We found that in conflict with these powers over the years a few times. And some require fasting and prayer. And sometimes we get six or eight people to fast for a day before we dealt with a person who had been dealt with before and could not be overcome.

We've forgotten that, you know. But fasting, this kind, goes not out but by fasting and prayer. And we find in the scriptures that people prayed when they needed guidance, they prayed and fasted for guidance.

Well, David said, I humbled my soul through fasting. Are you having trouble with pride? Maybe you need to fast for a while and humble your soul through fasting. And so there are many different reasons that people fasted in the Old Testament and in the New.

And by the way, in view of the fact that there are 3.2 times as many words in the Old Testament as in the New, fasting is mentioned more frequently in the New Testament than it is in the Old. And we normally think of it as an Old Testament thing. It's not really.

There's times when we need to fast and pray. And remember that fasting is praying without words. And in the book of Esther it says, it uses this phrase, the matter of the fastings and their cry.

Fastings cry to God. Every moment you're fasting you're crying to God. You're praying without words.

And that's very, very important and we need to do that. Acts 1.14, 120 people there praying before Pentecost. We don't know what they prayed about, but they did have the promise of Christ that the Spirit would come.

I'm sure that was included in their praying. And then in Acts chapter 4, when things went wrong, that is, the apostles were forbidden to preach. They had a prayer meeting.

They didn't go around getting a bunch of signatures so they could present this to the government to make them ease up on the persecution. They prayed. And we ought to learn from that.

We need God's power, God's wisdom, and we only get it through fasting, through praying, and through faith, of course, through faith. The apostles said, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Now we reversed that.

We give ourselves continually to teaching the young and the old, and if we have a little time left over we'll pray. Why are we doing it this way? This is not the biblical way. This is not what God's church should be doing.

We will give ourselves. It means, you know, we're going to throw ourselves. We're going to give it everything we can.

We're going to pray. We'll give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. And that's how they operated.

Why don't we follow this godly example today? You know when they appointed deacons, they prayed, laid hands on them, prayed. Later when a group of them, five of them, were praying and fasting, the Spirit spoke and said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work were unto I have called them. So what did they do then? Well, they fasted some more, and they prayed some more, and laid hands on them.

And it says, So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, they were sent forth by the Spirit of God, because this little group of five were praying and fasting. And God spoke. And God speaks when we pray this way, giving ourselves continually to prayer.

The idea was in appointing deacons, you know, that this would relieve the preachers from a lot of responsibilities that otherwise they would be involved in. The Bible says, No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life. And they didn't want to get entangled that way.

And so the deacons were chosen in order to relieve the pastors, the preachers, of these other responsibilities in the Church. But today the deacons tell the preachers what to do. I mean, that's the reverse.

That's not how it should be. That's how it often happens in churches. It isn't right.

It's not the way Christ's Church should be run. All right. You know, Ephesians 6, 17 and 18, praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

And then Paul adds, And for me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel. This comes up in Colossians again. So Paul was concerned.

Apostle, yes. But prayer, oh yes. He knew his need of prayer.

He couldn't operate without that. I made a study not long back on, I have six or seven books on Spurgeon's life, and the latest one, well the manuscript was a thousand pages. The book is about 925 pages, I guess.

And there's two things that really blessed me greatly in studying his life. One was this. The emphasis he put on prayer, and the emphasis he put on fasting.

He said we had days, regular days of fasting. He said these were high days in the life of the Church. High days.

And some American tourist asked him one time what the secret of his astonishing success was, and he simply said, My people pray for me. And over and over again in those books, there was references there where he was calling on his people to pray for him. When he went to Water Beach at the age of seventeen with no training, a little church with forty members in a town of twelve hundred or so, they said every second person was a drunkard, and there was all kinds of stuff going on, even in the community.

He was only there two years. The church went from forty to four hundred. There wasn't a drunkard to be found, and he said, We had Holy Ghost revival from the first day.

That's what he called it. Holy Ghost revival. That's why he got called to London.

They heard about this astonishing kid down in Water Beach. He didn't want to go. He thought it was a mistake.

A church in London wanting me? So he goes. This church would see twelve hundred. They were running anywhere from sixty to a hundred and twenty Sunday mornings.

The prayer meeting was running at five, and they called him. And within a year the prayer meeting was running at five hundred, not five. The church was packed to the doors.

They had to enlarge the building to seat three thousand. When they had it enlarged, they couldn't get the people in. So they had to go and build a bigger tabernacle seating six thousand.

But he said it was Holy Ghost revival all the way. And he kept telling the people, If you ever stop praying for me, I'm finished. I'm through.

I have nothing in myself. There's nothing in me. It's God the Holy Ghost.

He talked about this constantly. And we've forgotten that. You know that church? They started two hundred and fifty churches.

They had forty-eight organizations in the church, all of them organized to help people, to win people to Christ. He had eight hundred people that went out every Sunday evening, soul winning. It's one of the greatest churches in the history of the church.

But the thing that really has helped me was his extreme emphasis on the work of the Spirit of God. God has to do it. He had a brother, you know, who used to set up open air meetings for him.

And there's a chapter in one of those books about his brother. And his brother said he could never forget the power of God in those open air meetings. He said the Spirit of God was dealing at one moment with thousands of people.

He said sometimes Spurgeon had to quit preaching. It wasn't possible that people were under such conviction of sin as God the Holy Ghost took over. Well, I'm not preaching.

Spurgeon in the Bible says, Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, whether power or promise for Peter, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come. All are yours, and you are Christ and Christ's gods.

And we can put Spurgeon's name in there too. He wouldn't want people to be glorying in him. He gloried in Christ, and God used him as a consequence.

All right. His church is built through gifted men. So it says in Ephesians 4, He gave some apostles.

The Latin word for apostle is missio, from which we get the word missionary. There were more than twelve apostles even when Paul was on earth. Those different people were called apostles who were not part of the twelve.

So there were church planters, I would say, missionaries going into new areas, to new groups, preaching the Word of God. He gave some apostles and some prophets. It says about Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, they exhorted the brethren with many words.

That's the job of a prophet, exhorting the brethren with many words. Christians go to sleep so easily, you know. We heard this morning that while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

They all slumbered and slept. And that's been the history of the church of God. So He gave gifts to men.

And then He gave gifted men to the church. Apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers. It doesn't say and pastors and teachers.

He just gave pastors and teachers. That's one office. If you're a pastor, you're a teacher.

If you can't teach, you shouldn't be a pastor. Anyway, He gifted men, and then He gave gifted men to the church. And that's how He's been building His church down through the centuries.

You are to esteem those who are in full-time service very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves. So the Word of God says. They're called of God, gifted by God.

They're to be highly regarded and loved and prayed for. And God will bless us as churches follow the example He's given us in the Word of God. You know, when the Spirit of God spoke to the seven churches in Revelation, the Spirit did not speak to a church board.

He didn't speak to the deacons. He didn't even speak to a plurality of elders. He spoke always to one man.

People say, but the word is angel. That's right. The word angelos is used in the New Testament for five places of ordinary human people, not meaning angels from heaven.

Some people think that each church has got an angel at its head because of what it says in Revelation 2 and 3. That's a bunch of nonsense. An angel at the head of a church? Some of these angels were sitting, you know. How can that be? What he was doing here was God was speaking to the preaching messenger of the church.

I was in a church in the States that had twelve pastors. They tried to have a common eldership, and they couldn't make it work because one of the number had a gift that the others never had, and they recognized that, and they talked with him. They asked him to become the preaching elder.

Others did some preaching, too, but he was looked up to as being the leader in that assembly under God. And it worked just great for them. I've heard of other churches that have done the same thing.

Okay. Deacons remember then to carry on the work that the pastors give them, and to remember to love their pastor, to pray for their pastor, and encourage him as often as they possibly can. God's church will follow the leading of Christ.

He's the head of the church, right? As a church is subject unto Christ. The church is to be subject to Christ, so it should not be getting involved in all kinds of programs because they work somewhere else, or because someone in the congregation thinks that a certain program should be started. You know, there's... someone should write a book on the death of programs.

There's thousands of programs that got started and didn't work. I knew a pastor. He went down to Jack Heil's church to study how they did it.

He introduced that program to his church. It flopped. So he went out to... I think it was in California, this Body Light program, and he applied that.

That didn't work. He tried the Kennedy program. That didn't work.

So finally he gave up the ministry and backslid. What he should have done was find out what God wanted his church to do. Not what Jack Heil's was doing, or Kennedy, or these other guys.

They're doing what God has led them to do, and we've got to do the same in our churches. Find out what God wants done. And not start multiplying things.

Sometimes, you know, when the church isn't growing, sometimes pastors make the mistake of thinking, well, I've got to create an impression here that something's happening, so they have another committee. They try and do something else. It's all a bunch... it's just a bunch of nonsense.

And it grieves the Spirit of God. The church is to be subject unto Christ. Not subject unto the pastor even.

Not subject unto a board, but subject to Christ. And certainly he's able, as we said in one of the earlier messages, if there's one thing God can do, He can communicate with the people He made. He made us in His image and likeness for that very reason.

Truly our fellowship was with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And how can you have fellowship if you don't have communication? So any church that waits on God for guidance will receive it. And back... back home, maybe I mentioned this before, I sometimes repeat myself.

I know other preachers do the same, so I don't feel too badly. But a church, they... they don't have a pastor, so they don't know how to get a pastor, apparently. So they had a town hall meeting.

Got all the people together. What do you think about it? What do you think about it? And they had everybody give their opinion, what they thought about it, what they should do. And the confusion was worse.

It was worse afterwards. They knew less after they did this than they had... than they had did before. That's not how you do it.

I had a meeting with them, and I suggested they try fasting and pray and find out the will of God. I don't know what's going on. I hope they're doing that.

It's so important. It's not hard. It's not hard to find out the will of God.

Mueller said, nine-tenths of the battle in discovering the will of God is over when we have no will of our own. When we're waiting on God, waiting for God to speak. I'm glad when He speaks, and then we are subject under Christ.

We noted before that the Holy Spirit prevented Paul and his team from going into Asia. You know, if that happened in modern times, why, Christians would just totally ignore that. Not going to Asia? Why, the need is so great.

We've got to go into Asia. So they would push it aside and go ahead and do it. Then they'd grind their wheels for a while and get absolutely nowhere, and then back off and try some other stupid plan, you know, and get nowhere.

This is going on all the time, and sometimes thousands of dollars, maybe hundreds of thousands of dollars are wasted on programs that God did not originate at all. So, He's waiting for us to get a little wiser and follow His Word. For they didn't buy the Spirit to preach in Asia or by Phineas, so they waited on God in fasting.

I don't know about fast, it doesn't mention that, but I'm positive it was there. Fasting and praying to find the mind of God, and then they found that He wanted them to go into Macedonia. That was not in their original plan.

They were thinking of Asia with its millions, that would be a great place, we ought to get over there quickly and get the job done. God said no. Why don't we listen to God in our churches? What a thing would happen, what a time.

Phineas said, revival is nothing more than a new outburst of obedience to God on the part of Christians, not on the part of churches. And basically, that's true. Revival, an outburst of obedience to God on the part of individuals, not on the part of churches.

This church should be an obedient church. Now individually, 1 Corinthians 6, after all, we're individual members of the Church of Christ. How we operate? Well, it says, don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? You are not your own.

You are bought for the price. Therefore, because you are not your own, because you have been bought for the price of the blood of Christ, you are not your own. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God.

So as individuals in the Church of Christ, so that the Church of Christ can become truly a Church of Christ, and be doing the things He wants us to do, which are glorify God in our body, in our spirit, which are God's. Have you ever thought it through, you're not your own? You're not your own. He made you, then He remade you through Christ in the gospel.

You're not your own. You're bought for the price. So we should be praying about everything we do.

Pray before you buy, before you sell, before you go. Pray, God, guide me, and God will do that if we get earnest about it. And then corporally, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, world without end.

That's in Ephesians 3.21. Glory in the Church as individuals, which are glorify God in our body, in our spirit, that is a Church. Glory to God in the Church. And there's another thought here.

There's a phrase in Ephesians 3, to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers and heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. He's trying to use the Church to demonstrate to the powers that host in heaven His manifold wisdom. And many times it's a sad deal, because the Church is not doing that, and they are not seeing the wisdom of God in the modern Church.

I'm sure He is, or they are, in some countries, but in North America, and there are some here too, but to such a large extent. Have you ever thought it would have been a wonderful thing if you could have gone somehow back in time and sat in and listened to Christ when He talked to twelve? Ever thought of that? I thought of that too. I came across a verse that helped me.

It's in John 17, the last verse. What did Christ do? Well, we should probably turn there and just read that. It's a very, very important verse.

John 17, the last verse. Christ said, I have declared unto them, I think He's talking about the twelve, thy name. I've declared unto them thy name, that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

So His teaching, the sum total of the teaching of Christ, was that He might produce a group of people that were filled with the love of God. That was the basic thing. Moody once addressed a gathering of four or five hundred pastors, not too long before he died, and one of the things he said was this, Brethren, hold the churches to love, because this is where we've gone wrong.

They'd seen thousands of the people converted, but there's rumblings in the churches, and unhappiness, and there was not the unity there should have been. That's why He said what He said. And of course that's what Christ is saying here.

I have declared unto them your name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. Is that our need in the churches today? Most certainly it is. Little, you know, backbiting, gossiping, troubles.

You hear it all over the continent, you know. And preachers are leaving the ministry because of this. Scores of them.

They can't hack it any longer. A preacher friend of mine recently took two years' leave of absence. He's not sure whether he's going to go back into it or not.

He's had enough, you know. It's so wrong. But we've missed this thing called love.

The love of God is poured forth, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who has given unto us. And somehow we're not in a right relationship with the Spirit of God, and consequently this is not happening. And it can't happen until we're in a right relationship with Him.

Well, this church is a church that lives for the glory of God individually and corporally, and then trying to demonstrate the wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. And then it's a church

of good works. You know, sometimes in evangelical circles we get the idea that good works are kind of a bad thing, you know.

Because by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Turn with me to the book of Titus for a few moments. Could you do that? Titus chapter 1, verse 16.

It says, They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work void of judgment. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him. Then chapter 2, verse 7, In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works.

Now these are for Christian people. Then in the same chapter, verse 14, Christ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Zealous of good works.

Chapter 3, verse 1, Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready. That word means eager to support every good work. And then further in the same chapter, in verse 8, This is a faithful saying, And these things I will, that you affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.

It's a short little book. It's got a lot to say. So not of works for any man should boast.

What does the next verse say? For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Let your light so shine before men, Christ said, that they may see your good works. Are we involved? I think every Christian ought to be involved to some extent in some good work or works to the glory of God.

And here again, you have to pray and find out what God has in mind. I read something about a church that God was using wonderfully. It was in the States.

And it started this way. There was a fellow, he saw a girl standing on a street corner with a baby in her arms, and she was crying. So he went over to ask her what the problem was.

Well, she was an unwed mother. She didn't have a dollar on her. She didn't know where to go.

She didn't have any friends. She didn't know what to do. He said, Listen, you come home.

My wife and I will look after you. So he took her in. And then he got his eyes open and began looking for people like this.

They finally, well, I heard a black preacher. I better give the whole story. And when he started off on a TV program, it was kind of dumb.

I was going to turn it off, and I'm sure glad I didn't. He told how they had a million dollars in the building in front of the church. And so one day on the street, he met a guy.

The guy asked him for money for a meal. And he said, How long since you had a meal? He said, Three days. He said, Well, this is a home of the free and the land of the brave, he said.

And you haven't eaten in three days? So he takes him to a restaurant and buys him a meal. Then he went to the treasurer and said, I'd like to have \$300,000. What for? I'm going to build a place where we can

serve free meals to people who don't have any money.

So he built this restaurant. And I figure there had been 3,000 people that had been served at the time he mentioned this story. And then this other story about this guy from his church who saw this girl and took her home.

And finally, the pastor heard about it, so he went to the treasurer and asked for another \$300,000. And he built a place to put girls that were unwed. And they finally had about 40 girls in there, you know.

And then I figure what the third thing was that happened was something along the same lines. And he went to get the rest of the money to build another building for some other good works in the church. And then the city heard what they were doing, and the city came to that church and gave them a million dollars just to do good works.

Yeah. So, I mean, that's the Church of Christ. We put such a heavy emphasis on not on works, as Standing Man should boast, that we forget we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained or prepared that we should walk in them.

So you can do something. You can write letters to missionaries. You can have the ministry going encouraging missionaries.

They don't get many letters, you know. We've been on the mission field different times, and they love to get letters from home, and sometimes they get nothing. There's different things we can do.

God's got something for every Christian, I think, in every church that we think about when we say, I'm too busy. Maybe you're just buzzy, you know. Okay.

The Church of Christ. The church is to be subject unto Christ. I read something in a book recently, and the writer was saying there's two things we have to know.

One, what is the gospel? Two, what is the church? And I would like to add a third thought. Lord, what would you have me to do? Because that's the question Paul asked in Acts chapter 9. What is the gospel? I do a lot of reading. I've got well over 3,000 books in my library.

I'm reading all the time. And in evangelical circles, it started mainly in England. It's come across the seas as well.

But to what point? The gospel. Is the gospel if you're baptized in the name of Christ, you're born again, you go to heaven? That's not the gospel. And so what is the church? They were saying the same thing.

You don't have to believe all that the Bible says to be a true church, you know. You call yourself a church of Christ, then you have no right to question the fact whether they're a church of Christ or not. So we have to find out what is the church.

Well, the church is a company of people that are born again, born of God, to use that phrase in John's gospel, chapter 1. Not of blood, born not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God. Are you born of God? Then you're part of the church of God. And the church, I say, must be subject unto Christ.

Four times in the New Testament we are commanded to walk worthy of God and the gospel. Walk worthy. Believe it all.

Preach it all. You know, something Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10, the thing you heard in the ear in closets, preach it on the housetops. Do we have much housetop preaching? No, not really.

We're very quiet about it. We don't do any housetop preaching. I don't think he means we should climb up from the house and preach it from the housetops in that sense.

But to preach it openly and fearlessly, never mind the kind of faces you see. When God spoke to Jeremiah, he said, Jeremiah, if you're afraid, I'll make a fool of you in front of the whole nation. Don't you be afraid.

I'll confound you in front of the nation if you do. He said the same thing to Ezekiel. Don't be afraid of them, of their words, or their looks.

Don't be afraid. There's no evidence that Ezekiel was ever afraid either. And we have to learn by the grace of God to be unafraid.

In Acts 4 when they prayed, they said, And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant it to thy servants that with all boldness we may speak thy word by stretching forth your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. He answered part of that prayer. He filled them with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

They didn't need the miracles. They had the miracle of being filled with the Spirit of God, and they immediately spoke the word of God with boldness. They couldn't be stopped, and we shouldn't be stopped either.

All right? You know, when we think of the Church of God, and I've used this illustration before, maybe some of you have heard it, I think it needs to be used again. You know, we drive from the center here each night. We pass a building quite close to the center, and they have a scaffolding around the building, you know? And so you often see that.

My wife and I were in Hong Kong, the fifth floor of a hotel, and there was a building being built next to us, and they had bamboo scaffolding, you know? Just four-inch bamboo stuff. I said, man, I wouldn't want to climb onto that. But apparently nobody got killed.

It worked, you know. That's a scaffolding. Now listen carefully.

You don't have to agree with me, but listen carefully to me. Denominationalism is a scaffold around the building. That's all it is.

It's not the building. It's a scaffold around the building. And Christ is building His Church inside the scaffolding of denominationalism.

I don't hear any amens, but it's okay. I'll say it anyway. But really, see what we're doing? We're talking about the scaffold.

We're taking pictures of the scaffold around the building. When the building is completed, the scaffolding will be taken away, all of it. When you get to heaven, if you get to heaven, when you get to heaven, you

won't remember whether you're a Baptist, a Nazarene, or Pentecostal.

The former things that says in Isaiah will not be remembered nor come into mind. You will not remember that stuff. You'll be just a Christian saved by the grace of God.

You know, Whitefield used to sometimes speak that way. He'd say, he'd cry, big crowd listening. He'd say, Father Abraham, are there any Anglicans in heaven? There are none? None at all? None at all.

Are there any Baptists in heaven? None? No Baptists? And he'd go on like this through all denominations. And finally he'd say, Abraham, who's in heaven? Oh, sinners washed in the blood of Jesus. Right.

Now we got it right. But the scaffolding. The Lord showed that so clearly to me some while ago.

Why are we monkeying around the scaffold stuff and taking pictures of the scaffold when he's building a building inside? Christ loved the church and gave himself forth that he might sanctify and cleanse it with a washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spotted a wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish before him. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, it says. A loving church.

It's so hard to find a loving church. I remember one time when I was a district worker for a group of Baptist churches, and I had to go around troubleshooting and stuff like that, you know, and it wasn't always pleasant, but I got to one place. The pastor was out in the country, that nice congregation.

I mean, the cars, those farmers were driving wild and half of them were Cadillacs. And here's a preacher, a little dinky car, you know, lived next to the church out in the country. I asked him how evangelism was going on.

He said, I can't do any. I don't have any money to put gas in the car, you know. I just sit here and come and preach on Sundays.

I said, really, you're kidding. He said, I'm not kidding. He said, they pay me almost nothing.

So I called a meeting in the church. The guys, I got the guys together, and I gave them a hard time, you know. If you do it with a smile, you get away with it, and sometimes you don't, but I really laid down the line.

These guys were so embarrassed. I think they tripled their salary right away and, you know, all this kind of stuff. I had another friend and him kind of dating a church in Alberta, and they had a dinky little church building.

The church building was far too small for the crowd to have, so a lot of people didn't bother coming to church anymore. And they were, the previous pastor tried to get them to build a bigger building, so they fired him. They didn't want to waste any money on the building.

And so my friend candidated there, and then he saw they had a parsonage, and they had a room for an office. He said it was so small, when you turned around, you hit your elbow on all four walls, you know. So I had a meeting with the board, and he said, you guys are a bunch of shylocks.

He said, I wouldn't even preach for you guys. I don't care what you pay me, I wouldn't preach here. You guys are a bunch of crooks.

And he walked away. They were really upset. Well, they called another guy, and he told them the same thing, not going with what the previous guy told them.

So after the second guy left, they had the good sense to get together and get honest. He said, maybe God's saying something to us. Then they went to the opposite extreme.

They built a huge building. They built a huge parsonage with a fantastic office for the pastor, you know, triple his salary and all this kind of stuff. Sometimes they need to be told.

But where is the love in all of this? Love, it's just a word. Love, the best definition of love is found in 1 Corinthians 13. Love, whatever it is, seeks not a room, whatever it is.

This Hollywood love stuff, those guys always say, he's a great lover. It means he's great at sex and death. That's what they mean.

Those guys couldn't even spell the word love. They don't have a clue what it's all about. We have a clue, or we should have.

We should know what it really is. The church of God is supposed to be, remember again, to go back to John 17, I have declared unto them your name, and will declare so that what? The love wherewith you love me may be in them, and I in them. That's his ideal.

That's what he wants in the church. That's a true church of Christ, where the love of God is in control, and people love one another with a pure heart, fervently. Let all your things be done with love, the word of God says.

Why is that so lacking in our churches today? It's no wonder we've grieved the Spirit of God so greatly in so many different areas, but specifically in this area. So, you know when I first went out preaching, if I had to depend on the church, I'd have starved to death. They would pay me \$30 a month if it came in.

It didn't always come in, you know. Nobody asked any questions how we were doing, so we never told anybody either. We just told God.

And remember that saying, I think I shared it the other day, if God knows the need, who else needs to know? So we operated on that principle, and God always took care of us. And many times, people outside the church, they were doing what the church should have been doing. They didn't have a clue, you know.

So, they just... I think, you know, sometimes people are afraid to ask questions because if the guy's broke, then I'm going to have to give him something, so I better not ask any embarrassing questions, you know. People are so afraid, you know. There's a verse in the Bible which most Christians don't believe.

I want to give it to you. Whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Most Christians don't believe that, but that's what he said.

You do something good for people, God will do something good for you, in some way. You know, I was with Life Action. I didn't know that they never take offerings in Life Action meetings, you know.

They don't do that. When I was first with them, their weekly need was \$35,000, but they never took offerings. So I'm sitting in this meeting, and then Dale Faisonfeld comes up and he says, now, we don't take offerings in Life Action meetings, but here's what we do.

There's an offering box in the prayer room. Right now, we're going to have a time of prayer. We want each of you to say, Dear God, what should I give? If God says nothing, it's nothing.

If God says \$5, it's \$5. If God says give your car, you give your car. Whatever God says to you, okay? They told me, after about a third of the people respond, they always have their needs met.

And here's what they did. If it ever comes to a point where the needs are not met, then they get together and they make a huge offering to missions. And right away, it jumps right up the gate.

They've got it right, these guys So, of course, I was in that meeting, so I had to pray. And the Lord told me what to give, and it was almost everything I had. And then when I was putting it in the offering box, I'm from Canada, and the Lord said, Don't forget the exchange.

Well, then I have to give everything, you know. So I gave everything. The day before I was leaving, I was putting on my suitcase, and I heard a little wrinkle in my pocket, so I reached in my pocket, and there was three \$20 bills there.

So being Scotch, I checked the other pocket, and there was a couple of checks in this other pocket. I don't know how it all got there. I got about \$20 more than I gave, you know.

But this is what God said. Whatever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord. Don't be afraid to give.

Don't be afraid it's going to cripple your budget. It isn't going to cripple God's budget. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, He said.

So why not believe it and operate this way? Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven. The Church of Christ is supposed to be this kind of a church. Someday we're going to be presented faultless before His presence with exuding joy.

I don't know how He can do that when I think of myself, but I know it's going to happen by the grace of God. But in the meantime, are you a part of the Church of Christ? Are you involved in some good works? Don't think in terms of giving the tithe, you know. That's fine.

Christ gave His approval to that in Matthew 23, 23, the tithe. That's a good place to start. A friend of mine was in South Korea, and he preached on a number of things.

And one day he asked the leaders there, now I'd like to bring a series on tithing. No, no, they said, no, no. Oh, well, don't the people tithe? They said, listen, our people are so far beyond the tithe, we don't want to go back to back.

So, yeah, so, well, you know, God wants to bless us, but we have to be ready to be a blessing to other people. You're looking for people you can bless through prayer, through encouragement, through money, whatever way God lays in your soul. You know, it's wonderful to live that way.

I have a brother, Keith, and he was like that. If you gave him \$20, you'd probably get it back somewhere down the road, you know. He just, no glue on his hands, you know.

See, Laterno said, I had a shovel, and God had a bigger shovel, and he shoveled in and I shoveled out. He always had the bigger shovel. He gave 95% of his income to God.

One time he stood, you know, with a check for \$30 million. He just sold a factory. He looks at this check, and he says, well, Lord, what do I do with this? And God showed him, and he did it, you know.

He had the time of his life just giving his money away to the glory of God, you know. He knew. He used to publish a little paper once a week, and he was doing more than most preachers were doing, you know, preaching all over the country and all, and winning people to the Lord and giving his money away.

He had a great life. I'm sure he's having a great time in heaven right now. Okay.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18382.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/christ-building-his-church-part-1/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**