

# Church Is More

Message 01 of the series, "More"

## 1. We are more than people who go to church; we are the Church.

"You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple."  
1 Peter 2:4-5a (NLT)

*Note:* Jesus chose Peter, an ordinary fisherman, to be a foundation stone of the Church.

(Andrew) immediately led him to Jesus. Jesus took one look up and said, "You're John's son, Simon? From now on your name is Cephas" (or Peter, which means "Rock"). John 1:42 (MSG)

"Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."  
Matthew 16:15-18 (NIV)

- a. Church is more than a worship service.
- b. Church is more than a building.
- c. Jesus is the cornerstone of the Church. "As the Scriptures say, 'I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.' Yes, you who trust him recognize the honor God has given him. But for those who reject him, 'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' And, 'He is the stone that makes people stumble, the rock that makes them fall.' They stumble because they do not obey God's word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them." 1 Peter 2:6-8 (NLT)

"Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord." Ephesians 2:20-21 (NLT)

*Life Application:* The Church of Jesus Christ has no boundaries.

Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem... indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way."  
John 4:21-23 (NLT)

"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."  
Acts 1:8 (NLT)

## 2. We are more than volunteers at church; we are ministers of the Church.

"What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God." 1 Peter 2:5b (NLT)

"(Jesus) has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen." Revelation 1:6 (NLT)

- a. *We can all serve others.* "Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:43-45 (NLT)
- b. *We can all pray for others.* "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer..." 1 Tim. 2:1-3 (NIV)
- c. *We can all teach someone else how to better follow Jesus.* "...teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live... to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children..." Titus 2:3-4 (NIV)

**3. We are more than individuals in a Christian organization; we belong to God's family and we are His people.**

"Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." 1 Peter 2:10 (NLT)

"Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family." Ephesians 2:18-19 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We have direct access to God through Christ.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." Romans 8:15 (NLT)

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place... let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him." Hebrews 10:19-21 (NLT)

**4. We are more than people who hear about Jesus; we are ambassadors of Jesus.**

Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world. 1 Peter 2:11-12 (NLT)

"So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'" 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NLT)

*Life Application:* Christ gives our lives purpose and meaning.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

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**Connect Group Discussion Questions:**

1. What are your earliest memories of attending Sunday morning worship services?
2. When you hear the term 'the church' what goes through your mind? How would you explain to someone who has never been a part of a church why you are a part of one?
3. Read Hebrews 10:23-25. Why should we meet together? Does this passage lead you to believe that a believer can be a 'spectator' at a worship service? If not, then what should a believer 'do' while at a church meeting?
4. Read Romans 8:15-17. Have you ever doubted your ability to minister to the body of believers (the Church)? How do these verses speak to the feeling of "I'm not good enough?" Why is identity so important?
5. Read Acts 2:42-47. Why was the community formed by the first followers of Christ so special? Do you think we are close to living like the early New Testament Church? What changes would be necessary?
6. Read 1 Peter 4:8-11 and Mark 10:41-45. If Jesus sat down beside you today and evaluated your serving in the local church, what would be the results?
7. Based on 1 Peter 2:11-12, how should you be living differently as a child of God? Do your actions and responses reflect the love of Jesus Christ?
8. How can you put your thoughts into action this week knowing that you have the ability to walk confidently into the presence of God, are gifted to serve the body of believers, and have an incredible identity as a child of God?

**Quotations to consider:**

"When Protestants speak of going to church... they are not thinking of a building but of a congregation. The congregation, not the building is holy... The church is holy because the congregation is the house of God."  
Edmund Clowney

"The Church is the one institution that exists for those outside it." William Tyndale

"I don't think the job of the church is to make people happy. I think it's to make them holy." Chuck Colson

"There wouldn't be so many non-church goers if there were not so many non-going churches." Billy Sunday

"When you think about your relationship with Christ, it really just affects every aspect of your life. I think a lot of people try to segment off, like, 'This is church, so this is God, this is my daily life, this is my job,' but I think true faith is when it manifests itself in every single aspect of your life." Jeremy Lin