

The First Church, Part 9:
“They Were Built By God”
Acts 2:37-47

I. The first church was a church built by God.

- A. God is the One who adds to His church.
- B. Every member of the church has a role to fulfill.

(Matthew 11:27; 16:15-18; John 6:37, 39-40, 44, 60, 65, 66-71; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 3:1-8; 1 Peter 2:4-5)

II. Not every church is built by God.

(Matthew 24:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:1-4)

Scripture References and Notes

Matthew 16:15-18

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Hebrews 3:1-8 (NASB)

¹ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; ² He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. ³ For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. ⁴ For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. ⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; ⁶ but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. ⁷ Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, ⁸ DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS...

1 Peter 2:4-5

⁴ Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

John 6:44, 65

⁴⁴No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁶⁵And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”

John 6:37, 39-40

³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Matthew 11:27

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

John 6:60, 66-71

⁶⁰Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”

⁶⁶From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” ⁶⁸But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” ⁷¹He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Matthew 24:10 (NASB)

At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

1 Timothy 4:1-3

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ²speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³for bidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

¹ Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

¹ I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

“To call an assembly of non-believers a church is preposterous. A church is an *ekklēsia*, *kaleō*, called out, called out of death, called out of sin, called out of slavery to Christ. We are the called-out ones. A church is an assembly of believers. There is this trend today to gather unbelievers in a group and call it a church. How misleading is that? In fact, those who are paraded as the most successful evangelical pastors in our society today are those who are the very best at collecting non-believers. I don’t mind collections of non-believers. I enjoy a football game, baseball game, basketball game, concert. I don’t mind a collection of non-believers. I just don’t like a collection of non-believers called a church. First of all, it’s not a church. And secondly, it sends a message to the world that if it is a church, this is how the church is. How confusing is that? And yet we seem to be committed to an almost inexhaustible effort to find every possible way to collect non-Christians into a building and call them a church.”

– John MacArthur

*Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are from the New King James Version.

*Bolded Scripture references are not in the bulletin notes, but are available in the full notes on the church website. You may access these at <https://www.firstbaptistcp.com/sermon-archive/>.