

# THE TAKE AWAY

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sunday, September 10, 2023

## Message Summary:

In Sunday's message, Pastor John Carter taught us about the power and authority of the Church. The Church is called the hope of the world. But the Church is so much more than an organization, a business, or the four walls of a building. The "Church" always refers first to His people gathered together in His name. We do tend to call the building where we gather "our Church." But what we are really referencing is our *local church*, the place where the local branch of our faith community meets to fellowship, serve, and grow together as a body.

People are drawn and called to their local church by the revelation of Jesus. And they are called together for a higher calling. Because the Bible tells us that His church was given the keys to His authority (Matt. 16). The Church carries the power and authority of Jesus to transform society. In the New Testament, His disciples emulated how to build the Church and transform a community. This is the higher purpose of the Church: to be a community with its own culture, to love one another, to serve one another, and by doing so, to shine the light and hope of Jesus to the world.

The Church was filled with the Holy Spirit who gave the people of God the power to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). The people were saved together (Acts 2) and then given authority in the name of Jesus (Acts 3). This community of believers was transformed by Jesus, and by extension, their transformation was so disruptive, the WHOLE CITY was affected (Acts 7). This is the power and the authority of the Church. The power of Jesus that transforms our community, we are now authorized to use to transform the community around us. Because the church is more than a building, because it is the people of God, everywhere we go, His Church goes with us into all the world (Matt. 28:19-20), transforming it in His name for His glory.

## Scriptures:

- **[Matthew 16:18-19 NKJV]** 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. 19 "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- **[Ephesians 1:22-23 NKJV]** 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
- **[Colossians 1:13, 16-18 NKJV]** 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ... 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What does the Bible mean when it says "the church?" Is it the building?
2. What did Paul mean when he said he said Christ is the head of the church and we are His body?
3. What is the power of the local church?
4. What is the authority Jesus has given to the church to transform our community?
5. How can the local church (people of God) support one another?

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## **Life Application:**

Over the next week, as you study the key scriptures, ask yourself the following question: Think about how the church has blessed your life? Can you even imagine your life without the church? Think of all the ways the church has taught you, served you, connected you, and supported you. We are all active members of the body. It is our responsibility to link arms together with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and pray for one another. This week, pray for our church. Pray for God to move in our church. Pray for the resources and finances of this house. Pray for more people to hear the word of God that is taught in this house. This is YOUR church. Pray for the house that feeds you.