



Sermon Discussion Guide

Feb. 1 & 2, 2025

“What Is Church?”

[Matthew 16:13-19](#)

Life’s biggest questions deserve thoughtful answers. In this new sermon series, we’ll explore foundational truths about faith, God, and our place in his creation. Together, we’ll seek biblical wisdom to navigate life’s complexities, deepen our understanding, and strengthen our trust in the God who holds all answers.

PRAY & CONNECT

Open in prayer and invite the Holy Spirit into your conversation. Ask God for wisdom and discernment and trust him to guide you. Take time to recap the message or view it on [hopeonline.tv](#). Did you have any ah-ha moments where you felt convicted, compelled, or inspired during the sermon? What’s been on your mind this week? Have you been able to apply the message to your everyday life?

GROW

Read [Matthew 16:13-20](#) – “Peter’s Declaration About Jesus”

- Jesus asks, “Who do you say I am?” How would you answer that question? How does your answer shape your daily life and choices? How can we guard against following a version of Jesus that simply aligns with our personal preferences?
- Peter had a defining moment when he recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Have you ever had a moment where your understanding of Jesus suddenly deepened or changed? What led to that moment, and how did it impact your faith?
- Jesus tells Peter that the church will be built on this confession, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. What does that tell us about the church’s role in the world? In what ways do we treat the church as a passive institution rather than an active force?
- Jesus says he will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What do you think that means? How should the church use this authority responsibly today? How does understanding our authority as Christ’s church affect the way we engage with the world?

Read [Luke 5:1-11](#) – “Jesus Calls His First Disciples”

- Peter initially resists Jesus’ instruction to cast his net again, assuming he knows better. Have you ever had a moment when you resisted God’s call or direction? What happened? How do we discern whether a challenge we’re facing is an invitation from God?
- When Peter sees the miraculous catch, he falls to his knees and says, “I’m too much of a sinner to be around you.” Why do you think he responded this way? How does this reaction compare to the way people respond to Jesus today? Do we ever assume we’re too unworthy to be fully used by God?
- Jesus calls Peter out of his old way of life into something new. The sermon emphasized that church means being called out and sent into the world. In what ways do we resist leaving our “boats” (comfort zones, old mindsets, priorities) to follow Jesus fully?
- Jesus tells Peter, “From now on, you will fish for people.” How does that statement challenge the way we think about sharing our faith? How can we be more intentional about making disciples without making it feel forced or transactional?

Read [John 13:34-35](#) – “Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial”

- Jesus commands his followers to love one another as he has loved them. What makes Jesus’ kind of love different from how the world defines love? How does loving like Jesus challenge our natural instincts and biases?
- The sermon emphasized that the church should be countercultural, including those whom the world excludes. What are some modern examples of people the church struggles to welcome? How can we change that?
- Jesus says people will recognize his disciples by their love. If an outsider observed your life, would they recognize you as a disciple of Jesus by your love? How can we be more intentional about reflecting Christ’s love in our daily lives?
- Loving others isn’t just a feeling—it’s a decision and an action. What is one tangible way you can love someone this week in a way that reflects Jesus’ radical love? What obstacles might prevent you from doing this, and how can you overcome them?

APPLY

Pick one of the applications below to put into practice this week ...

- How is Jesus calling you out of your comfort zone and into a deeper relationship with him?
- How can you show love to someone in a way that stretches you beyond what is comfortable or expected?
- Who in your life needs to hear about Jesus? What is a step you can take to share your faith or invite someone to experience church?