UNPACKING THE WORD

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY
DIVE DEEPER INTO SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

Message: The Power of the Church – Matthew 16:18

Nov 8, 2026

Speaker – Pastor David Spencer

1. **The purpose of this message was to "align our understanding with the power and position of the church in society."** What is the purpose of the church, and how does the church present itself in our society today? READ Ephesians 3:8-11 and Matthew 28:18-20. What do these verses instruct us about the church? What or who is the church?

2. **It was mentioned that THE CHURCH IS A PREVAILING CHURCH. READ Matthew 16:18-19.** What is meant by a prevailing church? Define the word "prevail [1]." Do you always think the church is a prevailing church? Why or why not?

3. **From the standpoint of Jesus and at the time He said it, when will the gates of hell not be able to prevail against the church? The past, present, or future?** This means that from every point in time in which the church exists, the gates of hell will not be strong or prevail against the church. Will the gates of hell prevail against the church today?

4. **What are the gates of hell and how do they function?** Do literal gates function to keep things in or keep things out? How, then, do the gates of hell function in regard to the church? What ways do people use the word "hell" in conversation? What does "hell" mean in this passage?

5. Pastor Spencer mentioned this in Sunday's message: "*The gates of hell is language used to describe the power of demonic evil forces that not simply attempt to obstruct your life but to hinder and halt the movement of God's church* [from ever moving forward]." What are your thoughts about this?

6. **THE CHURCH IS A GROWING CHURCH. Read Acts 2:41-47.** Who empowers the church, and how was the church empowered according to this passage? Refer to the beginning of Acts 2 for more help. However, in Acts 2:41-47, believers took action in how they "did church."
    - LIST at least six actions that the early church undertook.
    - How does this differ, if at all, from the church today in America?
    - How can we replicate the actions of the early church?

[1] The word **prevail** in Greek (κατισχύσουσιν) means to be strong or to overcome.

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7. **The early church, which was growing, interacted with culture as it engaged during a culturally rich time and the tradition of Pentecost.** Pastor Timo Heinrich shared with Pastor Spencer on Friday, November 13, 2026, that "*church leaders in Ukraine had to stop thinking about ministry in silos and learn to interact with other church leaders to meet the needs of the people while being at war with Russia. They had to quickly move from only ministering to the people in the church to touching lives of individuals and families with destroyed homes, no heat, and not enough food.*" **List five creative ways our church and we, as individuals, can engage the culture**.

8. **THE CHURCH IS A GATHERED CHURCH. READ Hebrews 10:22-25**. What are the benefits of coming together as a church in person, and how has it helped you? Many people give many reasons as to why they don't or haven't come to church. As a group, **come up with one creative way to encourage people back to church**. Think of something you haven't tried before.