

A P P L I E D

These questions are for Small Groups and families who want to discuss these truths together.

1. **When you think of the word “church” what images and ideas come to mind?**
2. **How do you think our culture views the church today? How is this different from the Bible’s description of the church?**
3. **What is the difference between the universal church and a local church? How are they similar and how are they unique? Why do you think it would be important to understand the difference?**
4. **Read through 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 together. How do you see yourself participating as a part of the body of Christ?**
5. **Why is it important for Christians to have an accurate view of the church?**
6. **How does it comfort you to know that Jesus is building his church and that he will not allow the Enemy to overtake it?**
7. **At Living Hope, we speak about being a part of “The Core” of the church. What does this consist of and how are you pursuing this in your own life?**

LIVING HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

SERMON SERIES: ReNew Your Belief

Sermon Message: Where Do I Belong?

September 11, 2011

Dr. Jason Pettus

Public Reading: 1 Timothy 4:6–8
Next Week’s Text: Matthew 3:13-17

SEEKING RELATIONSHIPS FOR OUR OWN _____
NEVER PRODUCES COMMUNITY. IT CREATES EMOTIONAL
_____ THAT DESTROY COMMUNITY.

GOD’S PEOPLE BELONG IN GOD’S FAMILY...

WHERE _____ GROW CORRECTLY | Peter 2:1-3 (Pew Bible page 1014)

SO THE _____ GROWS CONSISTENTLY | Peter 2:4-5
(Pew Bible page 1014)

**GOD HAS _____ US _____
(CHURCHED US - ἐκκλησία) OF DARKNESS
TO LIVE IN AND BE LIGHT AND A BEACON OF HOPE
AND HEALING.**

Matthew 5:14-16 / 1 Peter 3:15 / 2 Corinthians 5:20 / 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
(Pew Bible pages 810/ 1016/ 964)

NOTE: You can check out Pastor Jason’s thoughts at pastorjasonpettus.blogspot.com or on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/pastorjpettus.

A copy of today’s message is available at the kiosk in the lobby immediately following the service. Suggested donation for CDs is \$2. First time guests get today’s CD free by turning in your guest card at the Welcome Center.

THE CHURCH ...

We believe that a church is an expression of God's people gathered in a community of believers who have entered into covenant with one another. The local church is to gather for worship, teaching, fellowship, and is entrusted with the mission of taking the Gospel to all the nations of the world. That a local church is free to cooperate with like-minded churches and associations in order to fulfill its mission to the world. The church of Jesus Christ observes two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the universal Church is the body of all believers in all places at all times existing under the headship of Christ.

U N P A C K E D

As Jesus and his disciples were traveling through Caesarea Philippi, they had a very important conversation. Jesus looked at the men who had abandoned their lives to follow him and asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter, representing the rest of the group, responded well, "You are the Christ, Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus' response to Peter is striking, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (16:18). While the identity of "the rock" is often debated, Jesus' point was really about the church. Peter's confession regarding the identity of Jesus sparked Jesus to make a promise that he is still fulfilling today, "I am going to build my church and nothing can stop me." In this context, the word "church" is referring to the universal church as described above. However, every local church that is a biblical church is an expression of the universal church of Jesus Christ.

So what does all this have to do with Living Hope? For one, **this church belongs to Jesus**. In Matthew 16:18, he uses a possessive pronoun to make his point clear: the church is the property of Jesus alone. This means that all we do as a church must aim at his glory. In our statement of faith, we mention four key purposes of the church: **worship, teaching, fellowship, and mission**. Each of these categories and every aspect of church life contained within them must aim at glorifying Jesus Christ. The church belongs to him so its practices must honor him.

The second truth about local churches revealed in this passage is that **Jesus himself is building his church**. To put it another way, Jesus is gathering God's people to himself through the preaching of his word. We believe that a church is an expression of God's people gathered in a community of believers who have entered into covenant with one another. This means that church requires commitment on the part of its members. However, we do not build the church through our commitments. Jesus builds his church. He is the Head of the church and the Chief Shepherd over the flock (1 Peter 5:1-5).

This why we can trust that **the church of Jesus Christ will prevail**. Every few years, someone writes a new book predicting the demise of the church in our day. One could certainly evaluate the church's effectiveness but it is unwise to predict its disappearance. Jesus has promised us that this will never happen. "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus doesn't say that there will be no attacks. He just promises that the Enemy will never be victorious.

Let's pray that Living Hope continues to be a church that honors Jesus.