

Jesus Came to Build His Bride, Not an Institution

The following quote was read in our sharing time on Sunday by one of our members to encourage us to see that we are part of The Bride and that the church is about people, life and relationship, not structure and organisation.

William Young explains it this way:

“Then what’s with the pearly-gates-and-gold stuff?”

“That stuff, my brother,” Jesus began, lying back on the dock and closing his eyes against the warmth and brightness of the day, “is a picture of me and the woman I’m in love with.”

Mack looked at him to see if he was joking, but it was obvious he wasn’t.

“It is a picture of my bride, the church: individuals who together form a spiritual city with a living river flowing through the middle, and on both shores trees growing with fruit that will heal the hurts and sorrows of the nations. And this city is always open, and each gate into it is made of a single pearl...” He opened one eye and looked at Mack. “That would be me!” He saw Mack’s question and explained, “Pearls, Mack. The only precious stone made by pain, suffering, and—finally—death.”

“I get it. You are the way in, but—” Mack paused, searching for the right words. “You’re talking about the church as this woman you’re in love with; I’m pretty sure I haven’t met her.” He turned away slightly. “She’s not the place I go on Sundays,” Mack said, more to himself than to Jesus, unsure if that was safe to say out loud.

“Mack, that’s because you’re seeing only the institution, a man-made system. That’s not what I came to build. What I see are people and their lives, a living, breathing community of all those who love me, not buildings and programs.”

Mack was a bit taken aback to hear Jesus talking about church this way, but then again, it didn’t really surprise him. It was a relief. “So how do I become part of that church?” he asked. “This woman you seem to be so gaga over.”

“It’s simple, Mack. It’s all about relationships and simply sharing life. What we are doing right now — just doing this —and being open and available to others around us. My church is all about people, and life is all about relationships. You can’t build it. It’s my job, and I’m actually pretty good at it,” Jesus said with a chuckle.

For Mack these words were like a breath of fresh air! Simple. Not a bunch of exhausting work and a long list of demands, and not sitting in endless meetings staring at the backs of people’s heads, people he really didn’t even know. Just sharing life.”¹

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