

Jesus Is Not Finished With His Church

Sermon Notes

Anna First Church of the Nazarene

Primary Texts

- Acts 1:8
- Acts 2:1–4
- Matthew 16:18
- Jeremiah 29:4–7
- Matthew 5:13–16
- Philippians 2:14–16

Introduction — The Church Born in Holy Spirit Power

Church family, today we gather on the Sunday after Pentecost.

Pentecost was not simply a historical event.

It was the birth of the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Before Pentecost, the disciples were hiding in fear.

After Pentecost, they became bold proclaimers of Jesus Christ.

Acts 2 records the moment the Holy Spirit descended upon ordinary believers and transformed them into a Spirit-filled movement that changed the world.

Acts\ 2:1-4

The Church was not born through political influence.

Not through wealth.

Not through cultural power.

The Church was born through:

- Prayer,
- Holiness,
- Surrender,
- and the power of the Holy Spirit.

And church, that same Holy Spirit is still at work today.

The same Spirit that filled the upper room is still empowering the Church to proclaim the Gospel and make Christlike disciples.

That is why the mission of the Church of the Nazarene remains:
“To make Christlike disciples in the nations.”

Main Theme

“This Church in This Community Is Our Assignment”

Anna First Church of the Nazarene is not here by accident.

Long before many of us were born, God stirred the hearts of faithful men and women to plant a holiness church in this community.

They prayed.

They sacrificed.

They believed southern Illinois needed the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the message of holiness.

They started in a small church building on Chestnut Street.

As God blessed and the congregation grew, they built this sanctuary in 1966 believing the mission would continue for generations to come.

They did not build merely for themselves.

They built believing future souls would be saved here.

Future families restored here.

Future disciples raised up here.

This church was planted with purpose.

And just as God assigned the early church to Jerusalem,
God has assigned Anna First Church of the Nazarene to this community.

This building is more than property.

It is mission ground.

The three "core values" of the Church of the Nazarene have been identified as "Christian, Holiness, Missional".

In 2013, the Church adopted seven characteristics to express the core values which are meaningful worship, theological coherence, passionate evangelicalism, intentional discipleship, church development, transformational leadership, and purposeful compassion.

Point 1 — The Church Exists for Holy Mission

Acts 1:8

Jesus told His disciples:

Acts\ 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses...”

The Holy Spirit was given for witness.

Pentecost was not simply about emotional experience.
It was empowerment for mission.

Nazarene Theology

In the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, we believe the Holy Spirit:

- convicts sinners,
- regenerates believers,
- sanctifies hearts,
- and empowers holy living.

Entire sanctification is not about spiritual pride.
It is about the cleansing of the heart from inward sin and filling believers with holy love.

A sanctified church should become a missionary church.

The founders of Anna First Church did not merely want church services.
They wanted revival.
They wanted transformed lives.
They wanted a church that would reach lost people.

The Church cannot lose that vision.

Key Truth

Holiness and mission always belong together.

Point 2 — God Plants Churches Intentionally

Jeremiah 29:4–7

God told His people in Babylon:

- Build
- Plant
- Pray
- Seek the welfare of the city

Even in difficult places, God had purpose.

Application to Anna First Church

Church family, our community has changed over the years.

Culture has changed.

Families have changed.

Values have shifted.

Many churches today feel discouraged by the spiritual condition around them.

But we must remember:

God knew exactly where He planted this church.

We are not here accidentally.

We are here assignmidentally.

This church is called:

- to pray for Anna,
- to love this community,
- to minister to hurting people,
- and to proclaim Jesus Christ faithfully.

Nazarene Theology

John Wesley taught there is no holiness without social holiness.

That means holy people engage broken communities with compassion and truth.

The Church is not called to retreat from darkness.
The Church is called to shine within it.

Key Truth

We are not preserved for comfort.
We are sanctified for service.

Point 3 — The Church Must Shine in Darkness

Matthew 5:13–16

Jesus called believers:

- the salt of the earth,
- and the light of the world.

Salt preserves.
Light exposes darkness.

Application to Anna First Church

Anna First Church cannot become merely a building people drive past.

We must remain:

- a beacon of hope,
- a place of prayer,
- a center for discipleship,
- and a Gospel witness in this city.

People in our community are searching for hope.

Families are hurting.
Young people are confused.
Many feel isolated, anxious, and spiritually empty.

The answer is not found in culture.
The answer is Jesus Christ.

And the Church must proclaim Him boldly.

Nazarene Theology

Holiness is not isolation from people.

It is Christlikeness among people.

Jesus walked among sinners while remaining holy.

And the Church must do the same.

A holy church should:

- love deeply,
- Serve faithfully,
- Preach truth boldly,
- and welcome broken people graciously.

Key Truth

The darker the world becomes, the brighter the Gospel shines.

Point 4 — The Church Must Depend on the Holy Spirit

Philippians 2:14–16

Paul described believers as lights shining in darkness.

Church family, we cannot fulfill our mission through human effort alone.

Programs alone cannot save people.

Buildings alone cannot transform hearts.

Methods alone cannot bring revival.

We need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nazarene Theology

The Church of the Nazarene teaches that the Holy Spirit still sanctifies and empowers believers today.

The same Spirit who filled Peter with boldness is able to fill the Church again.

We need:

- Holy boldness,
- Holy compassion,
- Holy love,
- and Holy fire.

Not emotionalism without truth.

Not religion without transformation.

We need genuine revival.

If revival comes to Anna,
it will not begin through human strength.

It will begin:

- through prayer,
- repentance,
- surrender,
- holiness,
- and Spirit-filled obedience.

The future of this church does not depend upon culture.
It depends upon faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

Key Truth

The Church thrives when it depends fully upon the Holy Spirit.

Challenge to the Church

Church family, we must not become complacent in our assignment.

We must:

- Pray for our community intentionally.
- Walk through our neighborhoods prayerfully.
- Build relationships with lost people.
- Disciple the next generation faithfully.
- Invite people to church boldly.
- Support missions passionately.
- Pursue holiness personally.
- Seek revival continually.

This church building is not merely a sanctuary.
It is a mission outpost for the Kingdom of God.

Invitation

Perhaps today someone needs salvation.

God's grace has been drawing you.
Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.
You can be forgiven and transformed today.

Perhaps others need renewal.
Maybe the fire has grown cold.
Maybe the burden for souls has weakened.

Ask God to fill you afresh with the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps some believers need entire sanctification —
a deeper work of grace where the Holy Spirit cleanses the heart and fills the life with holy love.

The altar is open.

Conclusion

Church family, Jesus is not finished with His Church.

The Gospel still saves.
The Holy Spirit still sanctifies.
The Church still has a mission.
And Jesus Christ is still building His Church.

Matthew 16:18 says:
“I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.”

Anna First Church of the Nazarene was planted here for a reason.

This place is not an accident.
It is an assignment.

And the same Holy Spirit who birthed the Church at Pentecost still empowers the Church today.

Benediction

May the Lord Jesus Christ fill Anna First Church of the Nazarene afresh with holy love and holy boldness.

May the Holy Spirit ignite within us a passion for revival, holiness, and lost souls.

May this church continue to shine as a Gospel lighthouse in Anna and throughout southern Illinois until Jesus Christ returns.

In the name of the Father,
the Son,
and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.