

Matthew 16:13–18

- 13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”
- 14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”
- 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”
- 16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
- 17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.
- 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

“The Local Church”
Matthew 16:13-19

INTRO:

We are exploring together what this marvelous thing we see in the pages of God's Word called the church. The church is an organism and an organization. My favorite description for the church is found in Paul's statement in **1 Timothy 3:15**, *“the church of the living God.”*

I grew up in the sixties and as such I was immersed in the spirit of that age. It was fashionable to protest against the establishment, question authority, and flaunt it whenever the opportunity presented itself. I was told, *“The local church is outdated and no longer relevant.”* Were they right? Is the church outdated and unnecessary? It is not. We know this because we understand Who founded the church. We begin today by considering the foreshadowing of the church in Christ's ministry. We find this in **Matthew 16:13-19**.

I. The Foundation of the Church

II. The Function of the Church Foreshadowed

I. The Foundation of the Church

A. The conversation we are about to eavesdrop upon, actually took place. We are told in the text the setting of this discussion in **verse 13**.

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’”

1. Jesus took His disciples away to Caesarea Philippi to give them an opportunity for reflection, away from the pressures of ministry. While there He asks them to reflect upon how the "man on the street" saw Jesus.

2. The answers are revealing.

v.14 *"So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'"*

Obviously, no one saw Jesus as a run of the mill crack pot. They recognize the power of God on His life. Since prophets are the only ones in their experience who have such an anointing from the Almighty, Jesus must be a prophet. Yes, Jesus is a prophet, but He is much more than a prophet. It is vitally important that we recognize this truth.

B. In **verse 15** He asked the all-important follow-up question. *Who do you My disciples, say that I am?*

v.15 *"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"*

Here is where Peter, the Apostle with the foot shaped mouth, shines his brightest.

Without hesitation Peter puts into words the conclusion to which he had drawn.

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

C. Here the foundation of the church **verse 18**.

v.18 *"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."*

What was the rock that Jesus was indicating by *"this."* This would all be so much easier if we had been standing right there and we could see to whom or what He referred to. The options are three.

1. First, He could have been pointing at Himself. This would go along with something that the Apostle Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 3**.

v.11 *"No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"*

2. Second, He could have been pointing to Peter. Paul also wrote:

Ephesians 2:19-20 *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."*

3. Finally, He may have spoken about Peter's confession. No matter which of the three options you like, Jesus is either directly or indirectly saying what one of our

Hymns states categorically, *“The Church's One foundation is Jesus Christ Her Lord!”* This is undeniable.

D. Next, He makes a declaration we must not miss. Indeed, this is the heart of the Lord's statement in **Matthew 16:18**

“I will build My church!”

1. The church can never be outdated or unnecessary because He Who created it and to Whom it belongs is eternal and vital to our lives. This phrase can mean many things. It can be thought of as His church because He is the source of His church. The event that marked the birthday of the church was the moment the Holy Spirit went from being "with" believers to being "in" them at Pentecost. Because He indwells us in the person of the Holy Spirit we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. Without His indwelling, there would be no church.

2. Christ's church is also His church because He purchased her with His blood. **Ephesians 5:25,26** *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”*

3. It is His church because He is the object of the church and in the church He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is to have the preeminence. **Colossians 1:15-18** *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”*

4. Do not forget, it is His Church that He promised He will build, not our church, His church. If He calls the shots in it, and it glorifies it, He will bless it and grow it!

E. Also, because it is His church, we can only become a part of it in His way. This way is prefigured for us in **verses 16 and 17**. There must be a verbal confession that arises out of a divine intervention in our lives.

1. We must believe He is the Christ the Son of the Living God. We must believe He is the One who was sent to die for our sin. We must confess Him by faith.

2. We must also recognize that we could not make this profession except God Himself worked in our lives. Peter did not say these things because he worked them out for himself. He said them because God had revealed them to him.

v.17 *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."*

Significantly, the Apostle Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:3**;

"Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."

II. The Function of the Church Foreshadowed

A. That's wonderful but the church is just a group of believers gathered together to worship right? No, It is more than that. There are two things in this text that foreshadow some of the function of the church. First, He asserts that the gates of hades will not prevail over His church (**v. 18b**).

1. Two possible interpretations arise. First, this is saying that death cannot stop those who are the church.

2. Second, it may indicate the church is going to be assaulted by the forces of spiritual death! Certainly, the church is going to make a difference in the world in which we live!

B. Second, the giving of the keys indicates that the church will be given authority.

We find the authority repeated in **Matthew 18:18** in the context of church discipline.

"Verily, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

The Lord's church is one that will have authority over its membership.

What have we learned so far about the Lord's church?

1. The Church is founded upon and draws its strength and authority from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The church is a divine creation and like the family will never become outdated or irrelevant to society.

3. It is His church. He is the source of her life. He is the enabler of her ministry. He is the One who died for her and loves her. Finally, He is the one who rules her as her Lord and King.

This is what we are. We are His Church. Let us live this truth like in the world this week in order that we might bring glory to His name!