

“I Will Build My Church”  
Mark 8:27-29; Matthew 16:13-20  
(Preached at Trinity, September 14, 2011)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We’ve been looking at the all-important question Jesus asked His disciples.  
"But who do you say that I am?"  
It is a very personal question demanding a very personal answer.
2. Peter’s answer is the most important answer that a man can give. "You are the Christ."  
By calling Jesus Christ Peter knew that He was the long-awaited Anointed One who was ordained by the Father – The Messiah promised by God, prophesied by the prophets, and expected by the people.
3. As I’ve stressed in our previous sermons in this series, this is one of the times I think it is essential for us to look beyond our current examination of the Book of Mark. In order to experience the full force of the passage it is necessary to incorporate the parallel passage in **Matthew 16:13-20**.
4. In Matthew’s Gospel Peter adds the phrase, “The Son of the Living God”  
Peter is declaring the absolute deity of Christ.  
To this Jesus pronounced His blessing:  
**Matthew 16:17** "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."
5. At this point in **Verses 18-19** Jesus makes a declaration that has presented a problem to the church for centuries.  
**Matthew 16:18-19** – “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."
6. These verses have received various interpretations throughout history. It is upon these very verses that the Roman Catholic church bases its claim to Peter as the first pope, claiming that Peter is the rock upon which the church has been built and that the keys to the kingdom has been given to Peter and that this power still resides in the popes as the successors of Peter.
7. I demonstrated last time that this interpretation is impossible. Rather, the church is built upon the true Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. Jesus declared that upon this solid rock of Himself He will build His church, an invincible force that will reign victorious until the end.  
**Matthew 16:18** – “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”  
Tonight I want to look at this church.

I. What is the church?

- A. First of all we have to distinguish between the local church and the universal church
1. The NT speaks of both but sometimes it is difficult to determine which is being spoken of.
  2. The universal church is that body which consists of all of the redeemed. The local church is single, local, individual, particular representation of the universal church.
  3. The universal church is perfect – only the redeemed are a part of the universal church.  
Although we should strive for a regenerate church membership, no earthly church can be said to be an infallible judge of a person's salvation.
  4. Yet we are to exercise every caution in receiving members and we are to use church discipline to correct our errors in who we receive  
"The churches are not infallible judges, being unable to search the heart; but they owe it to the cause of Christ, and to the candidate himself, to exercise the best judgment to which they are capable" (J.L. Dagg).
  5. Although Jesus never started a particular local church while on the earth in the broadest sense Jesus is referring to both the church universal and the local church.
- B. Something that stands out in this passage is our Lord's use of personal pronouns
1. "I will build" – The church is Christ's work. He established it. He redeemed it. He adds to it.  
**Acts 2:47** - "And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."
    - a. It must always be remembered, we do not add ourselves to the church of Christ. We cannot save ourselves.
    - b. The members of a church have not just decided to take up religion  
We are a gathering of people who have been called, redeemed, changed  
**Acts 2:39** – "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call."
    - c. And just as we did not add ourselves to the church, ultimately we cannot add others. We must preach, teach, and plead with sinners about their souls, but we do not have the ability to add them to the church.
  2. This is also true regarding local churches
    - a. Jesus Christ is Lord of every church. He adds their candles among the lampstands.  
**Revelation 2:1 NAU** - ""To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands"
    - b. It is also true that we are not the ultimate factor in additions to our local church. God is building His church.

- c. And it is true that a church is not something you decide to join. You should seek where God would have you to serve.
3. Second, we find the pronoun “my.” Jesus has ownership of the church – “I will build My church”
- Literally it could read, “Upon this Rock I will build the church, namely My church.”
  - Jesus owns the church. He is the Head of the Church. He has preeminence. Peter referred to Jesus as the Chief Shepherd.
  - We often talk about church autonomy. We are only autonomous from other institutions. We actually function under an absolute monarchy. Jesus is our high Potentate. Jesus owns the church.
  - Jesus has all rights over the church. He purchased it with His own blood  
**Acts 20:28** – “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”  
**Ephesians 5:25** – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”
- B. “I will build My church” – We can glean some additional information from the Greek word translated “church”
- Often attention is given to the etymology of the word:  
 ἐκκλησία - from a compound of ἔκ – from out of, and καλέω – to call;  
 The church is the called out ones. But we don’t need to over-focus on this etymology. The word ἐκκλησία was used for several hundred years before the Christian era.
  - In classical Greek it was often used to describe a gathering of citizens gather into some public place as an assembly. It was even used to describe legislative assemblies.
  - In the most basic sense, the church is an assembly of people – but not just any assembly like a Union meeting, PTA, AA, Lions, etc.  
 The Church used in the NT sense is an assembly of God’s people.
    - The church is a people who have been personally chosen and called of God  
**2 Thessalonians 2:13** – “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”  
**John 15:16** – “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.”
    - They were chosen before the world began  
**2 Timothy 1:9** – “who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,” - KJV – “before the world began,”

- c. It means we've been drawn together as an interactive and interdependent body. As we consider the church the idea of corporate unity must not be overlooked.

II. What is the unifying factor of this assembly – We are built upon Christ  
“Upon this Rock.”

- A. We have a common bond that holds us together?
  - 1. We have been added to the body of Christ by His atoning sacrifice  
**Acts 20:28** – “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
  - 2. We are united under a system of doctrine – “the pillar and ground of the truth” Jesus said, “Upon this Rock I will build my church”  
He is the Rock but He also linked this solid foundation with the foundation of truth.  
**Matthew 7:24** – “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:”
- B. Because of our union with Christ there is cohesion to the Church
  - 1. Paul described it as being “fitted together”  
**Ephesians 2:20-21** – “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,”
  - 2. This is true with both the universal church and the local church
    - a. The universal church is comprised of various members bound tightly together by Christ. Not a single stone shall lose its place.
    - b. The local church must be also be bound tightly in unity. If individual stones are lost or become loose in their fit the church will begin to crumble.
  - 3. There is no such thing as individualism in the church  
We are a part of the great building of God

III. What is the purpose and function of the church?

- A. Jesus uses the terminology of a building
  - 1. Peter writes:  
**1 Peter 2:5** – “you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
  - 2. Every great building has a purpose
- B. Like everything, God created the church for His own glory. The Church exists for the praise and worship of God

- C. The church was established for the evangelization of the lost  
**Matthew 28:18-20** – “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."  
**Acts 1:8** – “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”
- D. The Church was established for the care of the saints
1. Materially  
**Acts 2:44-45** – “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.”
  2. Spiritually
    - a. The church is vested with the duty of teaching the disciples of Christ - It is the pillar and ground of the truth.
    - b. Christ’s disciples must be taught  
 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you”
    - c. The ministry was given as a gift to the church
    - d. We must also help one another in our Christian journey  
**Hebrews 10:24** – “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,”  
**1 Thessalonians 5:11** – “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

Conclusion:

1. The church is the most glorious institution upon the face of the earth. She is the bride of Christ.  
**Ephesians 5:27** – “that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”
2. May we give ourselves to building up our Lord’s Bride for His glory and delight.