

The Church that Jesus is Building

Matthew 16:13-20

Summary

Jesus is building His church. He is the architect who holds the blueprints, and so we should aim to be faithful to His design lest we drift away from His plans and purposes for it. In this passage, we see three essential aspects of His church:

1. It is founded on Him
2. It is dependent on His grace
3. It is mobilized for His mission

In order to avoid the drift and remain faithful to His design, we must continually:

1. Commit (and recommit) ourselves to the Builder
2. Depend (and redepend) on His grace
3. Mobilize (and remobilize) for His mission

Main takeaway: *The church that Jesus is building is founded on Him, dependent on His grace, and is mobilized for His mission.*

Sermon Outline

Intro: The Parable of the Lifesaving Station

- A small station devoted to saving lives gradually grew into a comfortable, exclusive club.
 - Members prioritized their own comfort over the difficult mission of rescuing the drowning.
- We must ask how Fellowship can avoid drifting away from Jesus' design for the church.

The Setting & The Ultimate Question (Matt. 16:13-15)

1. Jesus leads His disciples into Caesarea Philippi, a dark region known for idolatry and emperor worship.
 - a. God uses difficult paths and circumstances to reveal His character (Matt. 8:23-34; Psalm 25:10).
2. Jesus asks the disciples what the people are saying about the son of man.
 - a. The crowds highly respect Jesus as a prophet, but they completely miss His true identity as the promised Messiah.

- b. Like the crowds and modern day false religions, you can have a high, but inadequate, view of Jesus.
- 3. Jesus asks the most important, eternal question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Three essential aspects of the faithful church:

1. Founded on the King (Matt. 16:16-18a)

- a. Peter confidently declares that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed King, and the Son of the living God (2 Sam. 7:14).
 - i. Based on this confession, Peter is a foundation stone in the church (as are the other apostles, prophets, and anyone who keeps that confession Eph. 2:20)
- b. Jesus builds the church on those who hold this confession, with Himself as the ultimate cornerstone.
- c. The faithful church submits to Jesus' word and holds fast without wavering (Heb. 10:23).

2. Dependent on His Grace (Matt. 16:17)

- a. Peter's confession came by the Father's gracious revelation, not human intellect or moral superiority.
- b. God's kindness turns undeserving sinners into saints.
- c. We rely entirely on God's unmerited favor for all success, growth, and faithfulness (1 Cor. 15:9-10).

3. Mobilized for His Mission (Matt. 16:18b-20)

- a. The gates of hell are defensive structures. Jesus commands the church to go on the offensive to storm those gates and rescue captives.
- b. We use the keys of the kingdom to open the doors of salvation through preaching the Gospel.
 - i. Binding = forbidding. The gospel message given to the church *forbids* those who deny Jesus from entering.
 - ii. Loosing = allowing. The gospel message given to the church *allows* all who repent and believe to enter.
- c. The church operates as a heavenly outpost and a lifesaving station sending her members out into the darkness to rescue the lost.

Application: Avoiding the Drift

1. (Re)commit to the Builder

- a. Submit to His word over the culture. Fight the temptation to build the church on any other foundation,

2. (Re)depend on His Grace

- a. Embrace being a work in progress. Extend grace to one another. Trust His grace to transform and grow us.

3. (Re)mobilize for His Mission

- a. Operate as living stones and a royal priesthood declaring God's excellencies (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Make sacrifices so others can find life in Jesus.