

I Will Build My Church

Sermon delivered on November 2nd, 2014

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Text: *Matthew 16:13-19*

During this time our Lord had been in the public ministry and had been laboring for two and a half years. He had preached His sermon on the Mount. He had healed the lame, blind, mute, crippled and raised the dead Lazarus many others

Matthew 15:30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

He had fed the five thousand (*Matthew 15:32-39*) and because of the miracles and the bread they ate **many were attracted to Him and followed Him.** But **when our Lord identified Himself as the Son of God and the very Christ, many of them rejected His claims and went away.**

Then Jesus asked His disciples, "*Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?*"

As you walk down the streets of Jerusalem, as you go to the synagogue, as you go to the temple, as you go to the market place, as you engage with your community, **what do you hear people say when they talk about me?** What do people **say** and **think** and **believe** about me?

The answer of the disciples was not encouraging...

14: And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

After all the preaching, the miracles, and mighty works, *"Some don't believe you are the Christ. Others don't even know who you are. Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."*

But our Lord Jesus Christ was not discouraged. He was not depressed. He was calm and confident! We will see in this conversation with His disciples, how our Lord tried to encourage and comfort them and then inform them of His mission.

So our Lord turn to His disciples and asked them and what about you, whom do you say that I am?

15: He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16: And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

We know that sometimes Peter speaks without thinking and get himself into trouble, but in this instance, Peter was right on.

17: And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

There are those who say that Christianity in America is dying. We are becoming more and more a secular society and churches are emptying out and they have statistics to prove it.

Others say that the Church age is over. Church is irrelevant. They say that Christians should abandon the visible local churches because the Spirit of God is no longer in the church.

But in this account we will see how the Lord shows how all these teachings are false and blasphemy against the Word of God and against Son of God.

18: And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

After a not so encouraging answer from the disciples regarding what people think and say about Jesus, our Lord Jesus Christ gave an **encouraging and confident statement....**

18: ... I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I love this statement from our Lord? Because I can sense confidence, strength and certainty in these words. This statement is what gave me confidence and still is, as we set out to plant GTB-BC here in Murrieta. **This verse is my confidence, my mission, my goal, and my prayer.**

I am asking our Lord to do it. I am asking Him to do for people what I cannot do. I cannot save anybody. I cannot grow anybody. I cannot establish a church.

These words of Jesus Christ are tremendous **words of comfort and encouragement**. To those who **love the church and know what the church represents** on earth and **who are aware of all that is against it**, we need to hear these words of Jesus.

I - What is Christ's Mission?

18: ... I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Christ declares Peter and the other disciples what is the heart of His mission. We know the reason why He came into the world is to seek and to save the wandering lost sheep. But here, He tells Peter that His intention is **not for these saved sheep to live isolated lives**. His purpose for searching them out and saving them, is that **they will be drawn close to Himself and that they would be drawn close to one another**, bounded together in this **amazing community called the Church**. His plan after they are saved is to gather them and to bring them into a community of believers called **the Church where He could shepherd them**.

This reminds me of the Psalm 23, where David said, The Lord is my shepherd ...

I am a sheep I need a shepherd.

The Lord who made us knows that. **He knows that we cannot live our lives as Christians in isolation.** We need to be part of the assembly of believers called the Church, where we could be constantly be **nourished, instructed, encouraged, rebuked** and **corrected** when we drift away, **comforted** when we are in the midst of dark valley.

II - Who owns the Church?

18: ... I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I love it. He did not say I am going to build your church, nor did He say, I will help you build your church. No! I will build My church!

It is **Christ's church**. It is **His sheep**. It is **His lambs**. It belongs to Him. It is His idea. It is **His plan**. It is **His purpose**. It is **His authority**.

In the Old Testament, when Solomon built the Temple, the first thing he did was to obtain from God, directions how to build the Temple. Solomon maybe **exceeding wise, but he was not wise enough** to come up with the blueprint and plan how to build the Temple. **He must obtain the pattern and plan from God** as Moses did when he build the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

We, like Solomon must carry out, implement those plans. **We are not to tamper or rewrite the plans nor redraw the blueprints.**

III - Where is Christ Going to Build His Church?

18: ... I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Christ will build His church in the midst of Satan's domain. He will build it right in the middle of Satan's territory.

He will gather a people who have been captives of Satan. Christ will rescue the captives of Satan in Satan's territory and then build His church in the midst of the enemy's territory.

IV - Who is going to stop Him?

18: ... I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Christ will build His church right at the center where Satan holds his captives and nobody is stopping Christ. He is not asking for permission. He is going to build His church and even the gates of hell is not stopping Him.

Our Lord did not say the gates of Heaven will not prevail against the power and forces of Satan. It is not Satan that is on the offensive but the Church is. The gates of Hell will not prevail against the attack of Christ's church. That is what the Church is called to do. **Christ's did not call us just to survive.** We are not just trying to hold the fort. We are not just to sit on the

premises. We are deployed. We are to move on. We are to advance. That's what mission is. It is the advancement of Christ's church in the power of Christ's name and for His glory.

We are to take the Gospel on the offensive and we are to attack the gates of Hell **with confidence that the Gospel will prevail**. People will be saved. Satan will be frustrated.

It is time to get into the offensive. Go forward! March into the stronghold.

Christ is building His church for His name's sake. Hell will try to stop Him but even hell will fail because He is God and there is no other.

Hell and the Devil will fail, not because of you and me but because of Jesus Christ. Because of the power that raised Him up from the dead is in us.

Therefore Church **do not be afraid** or **do not be dismayed** by reason of that great enemy, for **the battle is not yours but the Lord's**.

The Church is not going away

Religion may be dying but the church is not dying. The church is alive. The church will continue to exist as long as God is God.

As long as Jesus Christ is alive the church is not going away. **As long as He has the power and authority** both in heaven and on earth.

V - How is Christ going to build His church?

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

So if Christ owns the Church and He is the Builder then we don't have to do anything, right? **Wrong!** It is true that Jesus is the owner of the Church, He is the builder of the church but in these passages He talks to the disciples about their part in this great work of building the Church. **We get to be part in that great work that Jesus had been doing for 2000+ years.** We are co-laborers with Him as He builds His church.

This is an amazing thing because, just think who we are and what we were!

Psalm 8:1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. 2: Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

We were **formerly captives of Satan** but now rescued from Satan's domain. We **used to walk in darkness** but are now we walk in the light. We were **once blind** but now we see. We who **once lived for solely themselves** but now counted not their lives dear unto themselves. Those who knew not the Lord but now knows and loves the Lord.

19: And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

VI - Closing thoughts

Time is short. A time is coming where no man can work. But time is not yet up! God is still working. God still has mission. And He is inviting us to be part of that mission. **God has honored us by inviting us to be a part of what He is trying to do on this earth.**

The Gospel is to be proclaimed while it is day because the night is coming where no man can work. So it is time for us to be about what God had commission us to do.

"I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

That is our confidence. Let us labor, then, dependently and faithfully. **Let us stick close to the church in our lives.**

Stick close to the church. **Center your life in the church.** Insist upon the preaching of the truth. Cherish the church. Give yourself for the church. **Christ died for the church.** The church is precious to Christ.

Psalms 92:12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13: Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14: They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; 15: To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

The church is where Christ manifest His glory and presence. It is the pillar of truth. It is where He blesses His people.

It is not enough that we say we love the gospel and we love Jesus but we must demonstrate our love for Jesus by engagement in a local church. The local church is what God is doing during this time. And we love Him by loving His flock even if His flock is flawed and we know it will be. **But there is coming a day that Christ will present His Bride the Church,**

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.