

Life Together - Part 1
I Will Build My Church – Matt. 16:13-19
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – September 12th, 2021

Intro:

- Our new series starts today, where we will be focusing on the life of the church and your place within it. Our main passage will be Ephesians, chapter four. However, before we dive into that passage, we are going to dial it back and look at the passage where the word “church” is first mentioned in the New Testament.
- The first time the word “church” is used, it comes out of the mouth of Jesus, which tells us that the church was His idea. It was not just a construct of men but the work of God Himself. Jesus uses the word “church” to respond to Peter when Peter recognized who Jesus really was. And from that revelation, Jesus said that He would build His church, the gates of hell would never overcome it, and the church would have power in both heaven and earth.
- The church is not a fortress; it is a force. The church is not a place; it is a person. The church is not an organization; it is an organism that has life and moves and grows and changes and thinks and responds. The church is His, and He loves it. It is built on Jesus, it is built by Jesus, and it is built for Jesus. And if you understand who Jesus really is and choose to join Him by His invitation, He will wash you, change you and make you in His image so that you can join Him in doing His work in the world.
- I want to elevate your idea of what the church is. It is beyond programs and places. It is powerful and eternal. It changes the whole world. It is alive and active and making a difference. This is the “life together” that we are called to. And the church is worth giving your life to and giving your life for, because Jesus Himself did so, and asks us to do the same.
- Up until the point of our passage this morning, people were trying to figure out who Jesus was. There were many rumors about who He was and what He was up to. He was the talk of the town and the talk of the nation. People were trying to get a glimpse of Him, and they were pressing into places where He was.
- Jesus had drawn together His disciples and was ministering to them and through them. They were also trying to figure out who He was. So, as they were traveling north of the sea of Galilee to a city where there was a temple to the “god-man” Caesar, Jesus asked His disciples to tell Him who people said that He was.

Matt 16:13-14 ESV

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

- There are many opinions of who Jesus is. Some think He is a myth or a legend. Others think that He was a good moral teacher. Others think He was a prophet sent from God, and still others think He was God Himself. There were various opinions about Him in His day, and there are a variety of opinions of who He is in our day.
- You and I cannot base our opinion on what others say. We have to make up our own minds, each one of us, as to who we think He is. This is the question that God Himself asks us, and that is the question that He is asking you this morning.

Matt 16:15-17 ESV

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

- Simon, whose name was changed to Peter, identified Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. He was the Word that became flesh. He was the hope of the nations. He was the one who came to save His people from their sins. He was the gentle healer, the author of life, the forgiver of sins, the one and only begotten Son of the Father, the true King over every king, over all times, places, people, and nations.
- This understanding does not come by pure observation or calculation. It is a revelation given by the living God who is in heaven. No one stumbles into finding Christ; God reveals His true identity to hearts and minds. The work of God is seen in the opening of hearts and minds of people to the true identity of the Son of God. It is a miracle every time someone recognizes who Jesus is. If you have this understanding, you are a miracle. His identity changes your identity. You go from death to life. You go from lost to found. You go from forgotten to forgiven. You go from temporal to eternal. You go from bound to being set free. You have a new name and a new identity because He gives these things to you from the revelation of who He truly is.

Matt 16:18 ESV

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The church is built on Jesus

- Who Jesus says you are is who you truly are. It does not matter what name your parents gave you, or what people call you. Who God says you are is who you truly are. He changed Simon “one who hears” to Peter “stone.” He tells us what we are, not what we do. Because Peter understood the true identity of Jesus, God changed his identity. He was now a “stone.” He was solid and one who was to be built into the church as a “living stone,” built upon the “cornerstone,” the “rock,” the massive Rock who is Christ the Rock.
- Jesus is the foundation of the church. He is the one on which it is built. His identity is the Son of God, the Christ, the cornerstone. The church has the only foundation which will stand the test of time. It is the only “building” that will stand the test of time. The church has its foundation on Christ. His identity is what we are built upon, and it is a solid and sure foundation because it is the Rock that has not been formed by human hands. It is eternal, and eternal it will stand.
- The church is built on Jesus, not on the system and wisdom of man. It is not built on the platform of people or celebrity pastors, but by the will of the King. The church is His idea, and He is the one who gives the church its sure foundation. He is the one it is built upon. His reputation, His faithfulness, His righteousness, His love, His protection, His perfection. And this Rock will never be moved. All who stumble on Him will be broken to pieces, and all on whom He falls will be scattered like dust (Matt. 21:44).

The church is built by Jesus

- “*I will build my church.*” He is the one who builds His church. He is the one who gives to us what we need when we need it. He is the one who puts the pieces together. He is the one who brings us gifts. It is His doing and His building. I remind Him of it on a weekly basis.
- This truth helps those who feel the responsibility of overseeing the church. Ultimately, the church is built by Him, which takes some of the pressure off of those who have the responsibility of the church. That helps us to rest and to trust that He is the one who is building the church. It helps us to call on Him, lean on Him, look to Him and trust in Him. This provides a lot of comfort and confidence.
- And because He is the one who builds the church, He is the one who deserves the credit for the church. He is the one in church, providing the part and giving the direction. We are the ones who have the responsibility to listen and do what He is asking us to do with what He is building. This means that again we need to be looking to Him and listening to Him.

The church is built for Jesus

- “*I will build my church.*” The church is His. It is built on Him and by Him and for Him. He is the one that it is for, and He is the one who owns the church. God help us from thinking that it is ours, that it is something that we build, and that it is for us. Like we own it. You and I don’t own the church. We are part of the church, and we are His and He is ours.
- This understanding keeps us from “me and mine.” We serve at His pleasure. We work because it is His work. We serve at His pleasure. The day that we think the church is ours is the day that we cut off a piece of the vine and disconnect it from the source of life and what we hold in our hands will die. You are given the privilege of being a part of the church and perhaps being responsible for some portion of it, but it is never yours and it is never mine. We don’t own it. It owns us, because we are a part of it, but it is His, because we are His. He can do with it as He pleases, and He will deal with all those who try to take it over. He deals with a strong hand those who take what is His as their own.
- *The church will prevail.* The gates of hell will not prevail against it. There is no other group of people who will be able to stand against the gates of hell. All groups, companies, governments, and man-made monuments will not be able to stand against the gates of hell. *The church will not be dismantled, defeated, or destroyed by the devil, demons, or even death.* It will never be destroyed. It will never be dismantled. It will never be defeated. The great destroyer of all things, even death itself, will not destroy the people of God and the kingdom of God. Try as they might, they will never prevail.
- Not only will the church prevail, but it also has power that affects both heaven and earth.

Matt 16:19 ESV

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

- *The church will unlock the kingdom.* The church has been given the keys to the kingdom of heaven. The keys to the kingdom of heaven is the message of the gospel itself, empowered by the work of the Spirit, revealed by the Father, and completed by the Son. We have the message of the kingdom, and only those who enter through the door of the gospel, which is provided by the church, will enter the kingdom. You can open the kingdom of heaven for people by communicating the gospel of the King.

- *The church will affect both heaven and earth.* The church is the channel, conduit, or corridor of the kingdom. Whatever we withhold from earth will be withheld from heaven, and whatever we give to earth will be given from heaven. Heaven is the source, and we are the course that He uses. It is by His provision and His power in response to our interaction and involvement. He is sovereign and He will do as He pleases, and He uses His people, empowered by His Spirit, to do the work of Heaven in the stuff of earth.
- What you say has power. What you do has power. When you work with the words and the work of the gospel, you and I have the position and the power to make a difference in the world because we are the body of Christ. We are His body on earth. He has no body on earth besides ours. Collectively, we move in response to the head—who is Christ—to do His will for the good of the world, and the Glory of the Father.

Conclusion

- The church is built on Jesus, built by Jesus, built for Jesus. We are His when He is ours. You are part of the most precious, powerful, and prevailing people of the universe. We will last forever, because it is forever. We will have life eternal, because He is life eternal. We are precious, because we are precious to Him.
- I want you to understand what a miracle you are, and what a miracle we are. Let us thank God for His glory, for connecting us to what He is doing and has done through all time and eternity.
- Value what God has given us. Give yourself to what He is doing, and understand what a privilege it is for us to be in the church and have a part to play. Let us give thanks to the Lord for the gift of being a part of the building He is building. Let give thanks for the invitation to join Him and His family that extends across all generations and all people groups in all nations for all time. The church is built on Him and by Him and for Him, for His glory and our joy.
- Pray for people and pray that God will be greatly glorified through Crosspoint and His church around the world.