

Matt. 16:13-18 The Triumph of the Church

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[0 : 00] Well, it's very good to be here with all of you. We pray for you regularly at our church and we love you very much. And I try to pray for the church on a regular basis in my own private times of prayer. And we're very excited and very encouraged as to what's going on here.

I know at times it may seem a bit discouraging when you see other big churches in town and you think, well, we're just a handful. Well, when we started back in 1997, we were just a small handful and now we're bursting at the seams. Just kidding.

As far as God's faithfulness, I just want to encourage and commend the church to consistently make much of Jesus Christ and his gospel and focus on the things that God has given for the church to do.

I've seen many churches get sort of sidetracked and they take on things that God never intended. And I've always been convinced that we need to do what God's called us to do and seek to do it well and faithfully and earnestly.

And so this morning I want to speak specifically concerning the church. So you can turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 16. Matthew chapter 16. I hope a familiar passage of scripture where Jesus speaks concerning the church.

[1 : 16] Just a bit of context. Jesus has been in the northern part of Israel in the section called Galilee and he's been ministering. And we find him up in Caesarea Philippi. That's in probably the northernmost part of Galilee.

This marks the end of the Galilean mission. He then tells his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem. And then we see that constant move toward Jerusalem for the crucifixion.

So we'll pick up reading in chapter 16 at verse 13. It says, 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? So they said, Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. 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.

Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter.

[2 : 22] And on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.

And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Then he commanded his disciples that they should tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised the third day.

Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, Far be it from you, Lord. This shall not happen to you. But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan.

You are an offense to me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men. Amen. Well, let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for this wonderful day.

We thank you for the fellowship of the saints and for the privilege to gather together as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that your Holy Spirit would guide us now as we consider this section of scripture. Cause us to focus upon our Lord and his words concerning the church.

[3 : 31] We thank you that we are blessed above all men and that we know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. That we have been forgiven of our sins, that we have received his righteousness. We thank you that you've prepared us for heaven.

We pray for your blessing upon us here on earth, that we would be faithful as individuals, faithful in our families, faithful in our churches, and that we may shine as lights in a crooked and perverse generation.

And give us that boldness and courage to hold forth your word of truth. Forgive us now for all of our sins and unrighteousness. And again, please guide us by the Holy Spirit. And we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. It's a bit arbitrary, but we're only going to look at verses 13 to 18 because Jesus speaks there about the church. And in verse 19, he deals more with the authority of the church. And that would take us probably another bit of time to deal with that. So I want to look first at the question concerning his identity in verses 13 to 15. Secondly, the confession concerning his person in verses 16 and 17.

[4 : 34] And then thirdly, the declaration concerning his church there in verse 18. But if you look specifically at verses 13 to 15, Jesus asks his disciples in verse 13, who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

And it's an appropriate question at this time in our Lord's ministry. He's becoming more popular. Word is getting out. People are drawing near to hear him. There's multitudes assembling to listen to his teaching.

If you go back in Matthew's gospel in chapters 5 to 7, you have what's called the Sermon on the Mount. And there, multitudes draw near to him to hear what he has to say concerning the kingdom of God.

And so this is a very appropriate question. Jesus wants to get sort of a finger on the pulse in terms of how people are receiving him. So he says, who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

And that title, Son of Man, he uses it of himself many, many times in Matthew's gospel. And we know, as our brother prayed, that Jesus is one person in two natures.

[5 : 34] He is both divine, the Son of God, and he is man, the Son of Man. But I'm not sure that is what the significance of his use of Son of Man is. There's a reference to Son of Man in the book of Daniel.

And it speaks of an exalted one, a glorious one, a wonderful one. As well, the prophet Ezekiel was often referred to as Son of Man. So it might highlight our Lord's prophetic ministry.

Matthew records several instances where Jesus teaches at length. So that might be why Jesus uses that term so often about himself. So who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

And they answer in verse 14. So they said, some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. In other words, there's something different about this Jesus.

He's not a regular, ordinary sort of fellow that just sort of goes around the countryside teaching and preaching. But he's certainly someone of significance. So this idea that he's associated with John the Baptist or Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets indicates that people saw him a bit differently than they would see the rank and file sort of Israelite in those particular days.

[6 : 47] But I love what Jesus then does. He starts out there. Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And then he comes specifically to his disciples. He comes to those hand-chosen by himself, according to Matthew 10.

And he asks them. So notice in verse 15, he said to them, but who do you say that I am? And I think that's the biggest question that every one of us has to wrestle with or deal with.

Who do we say that Jesus is? Jesus was a religious teacher. There's no falsity in that. Jesus was a great teacher of ethics.

Jesus modeled not only that teaching, but by living that pattern of ethics. He was faithful. He was holy. He was harmless. He was undefiled.

And all of those answers are right. But Peter gets right to the sum and substance of the matter when he says, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. So it's not just that Jesus is a bit different than the ordinary rank and file.

[7 : 48] It's not that Jesus is just a bit of a cut above the rest of the people that were living in that time at that age or in that place. But Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It's a statement that encompasses much of what the Bible has taught prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, there's a promise made in the garden that a seed born of woman would crush the head of the serpent.

And then we see that promise unfolded all throughout the Old Testament until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle summarizes it in Galatians 4. He says, in the fullness of the time, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who are under the law.

And so when Peter says, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, he gets right to the point. This is a blessed and a wonderful confession of faith. And it's right to confess Jesus as a good teacher.

It's right to confess Jesus as a good man. It's right to confess Jesus as the beginner of a new religion. But what we need to confess is that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the one promised by God to save his people from their sins.

[9 : 00] In fact, if you look back in Matthew's gospel, in Matthew chapter 1, at the birth scene of our Lord, or the nativity scene of our Lord, it's announced there at the very beginning what the purpose of Jesus would be.

And notice in Matthew 1, 21, it says, picking up in verse 20, So that's the emphasis in our Lord's ministry.

Yes, teaching. Yes, holy living. Yes, a good pattern. Yes, a good example. But he will take away the sins of his people. And I think that if you get that in your mind, it helps us to understand what we read there in Matthew chapter 16.

In Matthew 16, after our section, it says in verse 21, From that time, Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and must suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised the third day.

If you read Matthew's gospel, you will see a man who was always wholly harmless and undefiled. You will see a man who was innocent. You will see a man who taught good things. And by the time you get to the end of the gospel of Matthew, you might ask the question, well, why is he being put on a cross?

[10 : 33] Why is he being crucified? Why is he dying? That seems so incongruent to everything we know. You don't typically kill people in society that aren't criminals. You don't typically kill people in society that are good teachers.

You don't typically just put bullets in people's head for random reasons. And so you ask the question, why must he die? Well, he must die because he will save his people from their sins.

And that whole idea, again, encompasses much of the Old Testament. If you're familiar with the Old Testament, you'll know that the Old Covenant people sacrificed to God.

And that sacrifice admitted several things. One, we've sinned against a holy God. Two, we cannot come into the presence of that holy God without a sacrifice, without blood atonement, without our sins being forgiven, without a righteousness to prepare us to enter into his presence.

It's no accident that in John's gospel, John the Baptist says to Jesus, or with reference to Jesus, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He wasn't making that up.

[11 : 37] It wasn't just something that he thought might be appropriate to our Lord. No, all those Old Covenant sacrifices pointed forward to this Jesus, this Lamb of God, this one who takes away the sin of the world by his own death and resurrection.

So back to our text, Jesus focuses in upon the disciple group. He focuses in upon the confession made by the disciples concerning who men say that I am.

And then he narrows it down, and then Peter answers, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now Christ is equivalent to the Old Testament's Messiah, and it simply means the anointed one.

And it's not unique to the Son of God. Cyrus, king of Persia, is identified by God as my anointed, my Messiah, my Christ. It means one that is set apart and sanctified for a particular use.

And of course, Jesus Christ is set apart and sanctified for a particular use. What is that use? To save his people from their sins. So he makes this statement, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[12 : 44] And then on the heels of that, we see, we're moving in now to the confession concerning his person. We see the previous instances in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus has been referred to as Son of God.

Again, oftentimes Son of Man, but also Son of God. He's referred to in Matthew chapter 2 at verse 15. He's the firstborn Son of God Almighty. Announced by the Father at his baptism.

When the Son goes into the water, he comes up out of the water. And the Father says, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. As well, he's acknowledged the Son of God by the devil. Not in a confession sort of way unto salvation, but if you are the Son of God, then do this. The devil tempts him or tests him by using that title Son of God.

He's recognized as Son of God by the demoniacs, those men that were demon-possessed. They understood and they saw all too well that this wasn't just Elijah or one of the prophets or John the Baptist, but he was in fact the Son of God.

[13 : 45] And as well, prior to this, the apostles themselves had confessed that he was the Son of God. But here specifically, this has the nature of a particular confession.

Who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. On the heels of that, Jesus pronounces him blessed. Look at what it says in verse 17. Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you. That means happy. You see that in the Beatitudes in Matthew's Gospel in chapter 5. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the peacemakers. That means happy. If you're in this disposition or if you have this attitude, you're this kind of a kingdom citizen, you're going to be blessed.

And so here Jesus pronounces this blessedness upon Simon Peter. Blessed are you, Simon bar Jonah. That means son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

[14 : 45] So this pronouncement of Beatitude upon Peter is intimately connected to Peter's confession of faith. So I think there's a good lesson there. Wherein does blessing lie?

It lies in our relationship to the Lord of glory. We look around the world and we see what appears to be happiness. We see people with, you know, nice houses and nice cars and big bank accounts and maybe, you know, a safe full of gold.

And we think, oh, they must be happy. And I would say, you know, at least a surface way, they are happy. But true happiness, true blessedness, true joy, true delight is found in our relation to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, there's an Old Testament psalmist by the name of Asaph. And Asaph had a bit of a conundrum according to Psalm 73. In Psalm 73, Asaph gets real with us.

I don't know that we're as real as the Bible authors are at times in our prayer. But Asaph says, you know, I was meandering about. I'm giving you the Jim Butler paraphrase here. I was meandering about and I saw that the wicked seemed to abound.

[15 : 55] There's no problems in their lives. There was no hardships. There was no affliction. There was no trial. And then I looked at the righteous and they suffer. I looked at the righteous and they have affliction.

They have difficulty. They have challenges. They are like, you know, pilgrims in a land that is contrary to that. And this did perplex Asaph until, he says, I went into the sanctuary.

In other words, when I got God's perspective on life, when I thought through the things of God and applied them to this particular situation, I realized that I've got it all wrong.

It's not the wicked that are blessed and happy. It's the righteous. It's not the righteous that are destitute and forlorn. It's the wicked. And that's precisely because the righteous are rightly related to God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so when Jesus pronounces blessedness upon Simon Peter, it's not just because Simon Peter got an A in Sunday school that week. You made the right confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[17 : 06] But it's that you know me, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. It is a blessed occasion for Jesus in terms of pronouncing this beatitude upon him.

But notice as well in verse 17, he says, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. In other words, Peter didn't just develop this mindset.

Peter didn't just stumble upon this. Peter didn't just, you know, study the Bible better than everybody else and come to this on his own. No, the Father revealed this to you. In fact, look back in Matthew 11 for just a moment.

Matthew chapter 11. It's another instance of this where we see that it's God who must open our eyes to behold the truth concerning our Lord Jesus. And the reason for that is quite simple.

Because of sin, because of depravity, because of our hardness of heart, we don't see divine things. Because of our rebellion and transgression against God, we don't see him as altogether lovely and chief among 10,000.

[18:08] Unless God opens our eyes, unless God changes our hearts, unless God shows us the glory of Jesus Christ, we will perish in our sin. So notice in Matthew 11 at verse 25, At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

I should just explain that a bit. Jesus is not acknowledging a class of people out there that are wise and prudent. It is the Pharisees. It is the transgressors of God's law. It is the rejecters of Jesus and his identification as the Son of God.

So it's not that the wise and prudent are a class of people a step above others. No, it's those who are wise and prudent in their own eyes. It's those whose self-assessment is such that, I don't need Jesus.

I can do it on my own. I don't need Jesus. I just need a little bit of reform. I don't need Jesus. I just need to stop doing this and start doing that and then everything's going to be okay. That's Pharisaic religion.

Just polish it up. Make it a little bit more commendable and off I go into heaven. No. He says, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent. One more comment there before we move on.

[19:22] Some read that and they say, well, that's not fair. What do you mean God hides gospel truth from the wise and prudent? How can that be fair? It's not fair. It's just. It's justice.

It's righteousness. Persons who transgress God's law, who lack conformity unto it, who reject and resist the Messiah that he sent to save his people from their sins.

It's an act of justice and judgment for God to close their eyes or keep their eyes closed. But the glory of the passage is not the justice of God. I mean, it is.

The justice of God in hiding these things from the wise and prudent. But the glory of the gospel is that thou didst reveal them unto babes. That there is a class of people.

There are those God has chosen to give this knowledge, this saving realization of who Christ is, the Son of the living God. And notice that Jesus ascribes that or attributes that to the Father's pleasure or to the Father's purpose.

[20:24] Notice in verse 26. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight. All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal him.

That's theology. That's the groundwork. That's the foundation. That's the superstructure, if you will, that the promise of verse 28 is rested upon.

He goes on to say, Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Now, that doesn't mean you had a busy work week. You worked 80, 90, 100 hours, and your back is breaking because you've had a rough week.

No, the labor and heavy laden, it refers to sin. It refers to Pharisaic religion. It refers to those things by which people are weighed down.

When we come to that recognition or realization that we have transgressed God, that we are justly liable to his punishment and to his judgment, that produces a weariness and a heavy laden-ness that we need relief from.

[21:31] And so where do we get relief? Well, verse 28, Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And in this context, it would have meant walking near to Jesus.

In our context, it means to believe on him, to look to him in faith, to receive the promises of God with that hand of faith, and to capitalize upon them as our own.

So come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

That's where we know it's not a rest from your physical labors, your back-breaking work, 80 hours of the week. No, you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

So back to our passage. When Jesus says to Simon Peter, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven, all God's people should give all glory and praise and honor to God for having opened our eyes, for having caused us to see Jesus Christ as altogether lovely and chief among 10,000, and as that one in whom there is

forgiveness and a righteousness by which we can enter in to the very presence of God Almighty. [22 : 49] Because if it were not that way, what would we do? The day we entered into heaven, we'd say, thank you, God, and we'd pat ourselves on the back. We'd say, thank you, God, and commend ourselves.

I was smarter than my neighbor. I was wiser than the Joneses. I hope nobody hears name Jones. I was better than my fellows and my contemporaries. We would try to steal credit. We would try to steal glory. But the blessedness of the Christian message is that all glory goes to God. It's by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves. It is the gift of God, lest anyone should boast in his sight. So that brings us then to the declaration concerning his church. Notice in verse 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. Now, the word church is a word that we've all heard many, many times. Interestingly, it's only used three times in the Gospels, and those three times are in Matthew, Matthew 16, and then twice in Matthew 18.

[24 : 03] And here it's being used of what we might call the universal church. That doesn't mean that everybody in the cosmos is a part of the universal church. It simply means men, women, boys, girls from every tribe, every tongue, every kindred, every ethnic group, throughout all the ages.

So when Jesus says, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it, he's talking about the universal church, the collected body of his people throughout all ages. In Matthew 18, it's used with reference to the local church in the context of discipline. If your brother sins against you, go to him. If he hears you, you've won him. If he doesn't hear you, then take two or three witnesses, and if he doesn't listen to the two or three witnesses, then tell it to the church. He doesn't mean every single local church in the world. He means the local church to whom that person belongs. You tell that church about their sinning brother so that they can lay some pressure on him, not physically, if that looked like physical pressure.

I didn't mean it. But we want to make sure that we call him to repentance and restoration in and through our blessed Savior. So church is not a word that's used a lot in the Gospels.

[25 : 14] When you get to the epistles, it's all over the place because Paul's writing, or Peter's writing, or James is writing to specific local churches. Now, our English word church is more connected to the Scottish kirk.

You've probably heard in Scotland, they call churches kirk. And that Greek word, or that word kirk, comes from a particular Greek word that's only used twice in the New Testament. It's used in 1 Corinthians 11, where it talks about the Lord's table, and it's used in Revelation 1.10, where it talks about the Lord's day.

Now, God owns every table. When we eat today, God provided that, and God has blessed us with that provision. But the church celebrates the Lord's Supper. In our church, we do it once a month. Lots of churches do it every week. The numbers specified, it's not given to us in the New Testament. But it's something that pertains specifically, or belongs specifically to our Lord. And then the Lord's day in Revelation 1.10, there was a specific day. God owns Monday through Saturday as well, but he has a special relation to Sunday.

[26 : 19] That's when the people of God gather together for corporate worship. So kirk is related to kuriake, which means belonging to or owned by the Lord. Now, the Greek word ekklesia is probably something that some of you have heard.

That's what we translate into church. And it's common to define it ekklesia according to its etymology. I don't want to bore anybody here, but we usually hear sort of definitions like it means the called out ones.

That's not necessarily wrong or problematic or bad, but ekklesia relates more to the Hebrew word kahal. And basically, it means assembly, convocation, or congregation.

It never refers to a building. I'll give you a kind of a humorous illustration of this. The people of God are the church, the living stones that make up that temple.

Well, when we went through our troubles with the government with reference to COVID, we finally got our day in court, and one of the crown counselors said, well, did you know that you could have met outside?

[27 : 21] There was special permission given that 25 of you could have met out in your parking lot for corporate worship. Did you ever consider that? And I said, well, no. He said, we had a perfectly

good and warm building sitting there that would keep the rain off our heads.

So it's not the church, that building. The church is the people. There's nothing wrong with the people going inside to not be rained on or snowed on if you happen to live in Dryden.

But we oftentimes say, well, that church, or this church, or that church, or this church. Technically speaking, there's one church. It's the people of God. Every tribe, every tongue, every people, every nation, through all ages.

But again, nobody's policing the use of church. Well, that church or that church, that's fine. But it answers to what we see in Old Covenant Israel, that convocation, that congregation, that body that is bound together in covenant under Yahweh.

So that's what Jesus means here. It's the universal church. And then there's some question. This is what differentiates Protestants and Roman Catholics when it comes to church government.

[28 : 26] If you're familiar at all with the Roman Catholic Church, and I guess you don't even need to be familiar with him because he's a political figure as well, the Roman Catholic Church has a pope. And pope literally means papa.

And he is the vicar or the substitute of Christ on earth, according to Roman Catholic theology. So guess where Roman Catholics go to find their doctrine of the pope? Well, they go to this particular passage because Jesus says, you are Simon Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.

So the Roman Catholics say, Peter is that rock upon whom Jesus built the church, and everybody who succeeds Peter in that office of the Bishop of Rome is that rock.

I don't think that's what Jesus is doing in this particular instance. So the Roman Catholic Church will say very unequivocally, the rock was Peter, which again, that's problematic for a whole host of reasons.

You can't be married if you're a pope or a priest, but Peter was married. How do we know that? Because Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law. Peter was not infallible. Peter was rebuked by the Apostle Paul, according to Galatians chapter 2.

[29 : 37] Peter was first among equals to be sure. He was a very useful man in God's kingdom, but he ain't the foundation for the church. He's not the rock upon which the church is founded.

So back to the text in verse 18, and I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church. It's not on Peter. It's on the Christ that Peter confessed.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. An old Puritan brother wrote, it is not the person of Peter who confessed Christ, but the person of Christ whom Peter confessed.

That is the rock on which the church is built. So it's Jesus' house. It's Jesus' structure. It's Jesus' people. It's Jesus' living stones. It's Jesus' house.

And in a moment we're going to see, I don't want to take us too far. I know sometimes that's what I hear from the grandkids. He preaches a long time. Every pastor likes to hear that. So I'll try to be mindful of that.

[30 : 39] So hopefully I'll get asked back. I can come back sometime in the future. But this whole idea with reference to this confession that on this rock I will build my church.

We need to understand that when we adopt this interpretation, it doesn't minimize the role of the apostles. I think we should esteem the apostles.

I think we should esteem Peter. I think we should esteem Paul. I think we should understand that Christ is the chief cornerstone. Christ is the foundation. But these apostles were instrumental.

As we've gone through, and I think you're tuning into that through John's gospel, we spent a considerable amount of time in the upper room discourse. And oftentimes people, you know, 21st century Christians living in Chilliwack or Dryden or wherever they might be, personalize all those things in John 13 to 16.

Now, there's a way that we can do that, but we can't neglect that Jesus was talking specifically to his apostles, those men that would be given the particular commission to go and turn the world upside down for Jesus.

[31 : 45] That is the specific application. And so when Jesus addresses those men, he's addressing those men who are going to function in his physical absence.

He's presently with them or spiritually with them from the right hand of the throne of God. But when those apostles go out into the Roman Empire, when Paul the apostle goes to various synagogues in Asia Minor and preaches that Jesus is the Christ, they needed some upbuilding.

They needed some encouragement. They needed the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit to withstand all of the things that they would face. I mean, when you trace through the book of Acts and you see what 12 men did for our Lord Jesus, you have to conclude they were supernaturally helped.

They couldn't have done this on their own. Paul couldn't have saved himself, according to Acts 9. That must be Jesus. But after he begins preaching, again, he goes right into enemy territory. He goes into Jewish synagogues to preach to them that this Jesus, whom you crucified, is the Christ. That took guts. That took a familiarity and an understanding of Old Testament Scripture. [32 : 52] And so Jesus used those apostles instrumentally in a most wonderful way. So we don't have any problems with Peter, but we don't see Peter as the Pope of Rome establishing a succession of popes.

And quite honestly, at least in our lifetime, some of those popes have not been what I might call orthodox sound theologians. They've certainly been way off politically.

So I'm not looking to that guy for my marching orders for life on earth. So this is a famous passage in the history of interpretation that does separate Protestants from Roman Catholics at that particular level of church government.

But if you look back to verse 18, I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

I love this language where it says, I will build my church. I've always found great comfort and encouragement in that. If it's up to us, it's going to fail. If it's up to us, it's going to fail, right?

[34 : 02] We just have a natural propensity to mess things up. If you doubt that, just think about your life over the last few days, right? We have a propensity to ruin things.

If Jesus doesn't build the church, there's not a church that extends throughout all generations. Jesus is the builder, not men. Men certainly used instrumentally to preach and teach and do those things that Jesus calls for men to do in the church.

But our hope for success, our hope for blessing, our hope for benefit, our hope for protection and defense lay in Jesus. It's Christ's church, and that ought to as well affect us.

And I've often thought, and one of the things I want to encourage you about is having a good, robust understanding of the church. I mentioned earlier, sometimes the church tries to do too much and doesn't do what she's supposed to do well.

That's a problem. This isn't supposed to be entertainment time. You know, if you're going to church because you're going to get sort of the Christian version of Metallica, yeah, that's not why the church is there.

[35 : 06] The church is very narrow in terms of its focus. What is the church's function? To preach the word of God. That's a primary one. Another primary one is to administer the sacraments, baptism and Lord's Supper.

And another one is to exercise church discipline. And we hear that church discipline, and we think, wow, that's fiendish and cruel. They're going to put us out of the church. It's for our good. There are sanctions.

You come to God by grace, through faith in Jesus, and you receive all the blessings that Jesus has promised to give to needy sinners. And then he puts you in churches, and we have relationships with one another.

We have duties before our God. If we get out of line, if we do go astray, God has mechanisms in place for our well-being. I have heard many instances where persons were facing excommunication or had been excommunicated, and that's what God used to bring them out of the distant country. It's kind of like thinking, your kids are going to just turn out fine if I never discipline them. How well does that go? It just doesn't. Discipline is crucial. So if you're thinking with me, those three things are what the marks of the church are.

[36 : 20] Preaching, sacraments, discipline. Not entertainment. Not, you know, benevolence throughout the world. Benevolence is great. It's a great way to pave the way, to show sinners the glory of Christ.

But the primary emphasis in terms of church life, preaching, sacraments, and discipline. So here, Jesus says, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Again, there's some questions as to the reference to Hades. We'll just use the old King James here and translate it as hell for the sake of argument. But basically, what it means is that there is going to be some problems between the world and the church as we continue on.

Right? The assumption is that the gates of Hades, or the promise is that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. But the assumption is that the gates of Hades is going to try.

The apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3 says at verse 12, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus shall what? Be rewarded by the world? Be given cars?

[37 : 30] No, will be persecuted. There's a great sort of pattern in the scriptures. Look at the gospels. How'd they treat Jesus? They crucified him.

Go to the book of Acts. How did they treat the apostles? Well, they stoned them. They arrested them. They delivered them up to the civil magistrate to be incarcerated and hopefully executed. There's a pattern. When we, as Christ's people, try to live in a manner that's consistent with Christ's word, it's going to upset the status quo. And the status quo does everything it can to try to upbraid the very church that Jesus is building.

Make no mistake about it. There is gross opposition to the church of our Lord in this present evil age. And Jesus assumes that here. But something that I think oftentimes goes under noticed is look at the way he says it.

The gates of Hades or gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So we've got a promise. The triumph and victory of Christ's church. We've got an assumption. The gates of Hades, they're going to put up a fight.

[38 : 38] But there's this reality. It's the gates of Hades. Why would you put a gate up at your house to let people through the wall or fence, right?

Why do you put a wall or a fence around your house to defend your house? The image that Jesus is using here is not that the church is behind the fence.

The church is behind the gates. And the church is just holed up in her little corner hoping everything turns up. That's not the imagery. It's the gates of Hades that shall not prevail against what?

Against the church. In other words, when the church is faithfully engaged in preaching, in sacraments, and in discipline, she has the confidence and the promise of her blessed Savior that she's going to march onward.

Doesn't mean there's not going to be hardships. Doesn't mean there's not going to be government encroachments. It doesn't mean that there's not going to be problems within context or in local churches. It doesn't mean that.

[39 : 43] But it does mean that the way the Bible or the New Testament sort of sees the church age is that the church goes forth conquering and to conquer. Not as church, but because of Christ whose church it is.

Gates are defensive. And I think that the reference that I like to use in terms of a parallel passage is in Colossians chapter 1. In Colossians 1, 13, and 14, Paul the Apostle extols and encourages the people of God to thank the Father, to be full of gratitude.

In our community, it's very Dutch, and the Dutch are reformed, and the Dutch have a catechism, and that catechism is sort of boiled down into three ways. You've got guilt, grace, gratitude.

Guilt deals with our sin before God, our transgression before the Holy One. Grace has to do with God's application of mercy in and through Jesus Christ to us, and then the response of God's people is what?

Gratitude, praise, worship, singing, hymns, and psalms, gathering together, extolling the goodness of God Most High. So Paul is exhorting the church in Colossae to do that very thing, and one of the reasons why he says we should praise the Father is because He, the Father, has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

[41 : 07] I think that's a great parallel passage. How is the devil's kingdom frustrated? Through the preaching of the gospel. It's through sinners believing the gospel.

It is through God's application of grace to transfer or translate us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. So when Jesus promises the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it, yeah, He's assuming some opposition from the gates of Hades, but He's also assuming victory and triumph and extension on the part of the church.

Jesus says, I will build it, and there is nothing that man can do to ultimately destroy it or to hinder it. If you look at Ephesians 3 for just a moment, Ephesians chapter 3, I think this, you know, is very encouraging when we consider the state of the church.

And brothers and sisters, I am mindful. There's a lot to lament about the state of the church. When churches look like Metallica concerts, yeah, I got a problem with that. Or churches are filled with puppets and ponies and programs and, you know, all kinds of things that aren't preaching and sacrament and discipline.

When churches have become entertainment centers or churches have become therapy centers or churches have only become sort of social interaction centers, yeah, there's a lot to lament. But the promise of Christ is that there will be a church and that church will extend to the very end.

[42 : 33] And I think you see that in Ephesians 3. Look at Ephesians 3 at verse 14. Again, Paul at prayer, and he says, For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

As I told our church as I preached through this, I never understood what Paul meant at that last part in verse 19, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. I would usually explain that as saying, whatever it is, it sounds great.

You know, whatever it means, it sounds great. I don't know, you know, how to explain it. But having worked through Ephesians recently, I think Paul's pointing back to the temple. He's pointing back to what you see in the Old Testament.

Remember when they build the tabernacle, which was the sort of mobile temple before the temple was built. They build this tabernacle and what happens? God's glory comes down and fills the tabernacle.

In 1 Kings chapter 8, Solomon finishes the temple and what do they do? They offer up sacrifice to Yahweh and God comes and all his fullness is found in the midst of the temple.

[43 : 58] Paul is using an Old Testament picture to describe New Testament realities. The church, the people of God, that's where God's fullness dwells. It's with us on the Lord's Day when we gather in places like this.

It may not feel like that, it may not always seem like that, but I bet it didn't feel like that or seem like that out in the desert standing outside the tabernacle, right? We walk by faith, not by sight.

And on the heels of this, he then says in verse 20, Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

Amen. What does that indicate? That until the second coming of our Lord, there will be churches. There will be the people of God. Muslims don't win.

Jews don't win. The civil state doesn't win. And by win, I mean exterminate the life of the church. Christ builds it. Christ perpetuates it.

[45 : 01] Christ supplies her needs. Christ gives the spirit. Christ gives gifts to men, to churches in the shape of men who preach and teach and administer the sacraments and discipline.

So Christ's promise here is blessed and it's sure. So you can go back to Matthew and we're going to just finish up here. Matthew 16. I just want to show you one connection.

I got lots of other stuff, but as I said, I don't want to outlive my welcome here. There's lots of good food. I'm already smelling it. But the connection that I think we need to make here is something with the Old Testament.

Again, Jesus wasn't sort of a plan B. Jesus wasn't sort of a, well, you know, this is the next best sort of plan. No, Jesus is the purpose, the focus, the scope of the Old Testament.

So if you want to leave your, you know, your finger and just remember what he says there in Matthew 16, turn back to 1 Samuel 7. 1 Samuel 7.

[46 : 02] And this is where we'll end. I just want to make this connection because I think it's very important and I hope very valuable. 1 Samuel chapter 7. This is what's called the Davidic covenant.

So a covenant in its most basic definition is an agreement between two or more persons. And it's an agreement with teeth. There's usually promises or sanctions or threats.

All those things are sort of wrapped up in a covenant. So it's more than, yeah, honey, I promise I'll be home at 5.30 for dinner. It has teeth. If we're going to put that in covenantal form and if I'm not, go ahead and, you know, send me to the gulag.

There's some sort of a sanction attached when it comes to covenant. Well, in 1 Samuel chapter 7, you've got David and you've got a covenant that God, I'm sorry, 2 Samuel 7. Please forgive me. 2 Samuel chapter 7.

And the particular scene is that David's doing well here. As you might know in the study, in your studies with reference to David, it was a tough slug for him. He gets, you know, anointed as king and instead of immediately assuming the throne, he has to run.

[47:10] He has to hide. He has to hide from Saul, the king, in his own country. He has to fight Philistines. He's just got a lot going on. You think your life is busy? Well, it is, but David certainly knew what it was like as well.

So by the time 2 Samuel 7 rolls around, David has effectively carried out his mission in terms of administering the kingdom of God on earth. And so David is then sitting in his own palace.

And David says, you know, I'm in a palace. I've been blessed. I've got resources. I've got all kinds of good things. And the house of God is still in this tent.

This was when it was tabernacle. It was temporary. It was mobile. It wasn't the temple that would be built by David's son, Solomon. So the particular context, David is saying, you know, I want to build a house for God, which is good, right?

God built a kingdom for David to administer. So let's just drop down then to verse 12. 2 Samuel 7, 12. When your days are fulfilled, this is Yahweh speaking to David, and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you.

[48:16] Now, if you've got a New Testament mindset in your head, you'll think about Luke 1 and the nativity scene there about Jesus sitting on the throne of David and ruling and reigning forever and ever.

You see that in Acts 2, verse 30 as well. So when your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.

But my mercy shall not depart from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

I think it's helpful for us to see Matthew 16 as being a direct fulfillment of the promise made to David. David says, God, I want to make a house for your name. What does God say?

[49:12] No, I'm going to make the house. And it's going to be a son that comes from your line, a son of God, unique, uniquely, and that one is going to ascend the throne, build the house for God, and rule and reign over it, world without end.

Amen. So when Simon Peter confesses, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God, and then Jesus promises to build his church, we see 2 Samuel 7 come to fulfillment, come to fruition.

We've got a house building, son of God, is going to reign eternally, world without end. Amen. So Matthew chapter 16 is the promise of the builder that he is going to build this church, that it's going to be for the glory of his father that sent him into this world to save us from our sins, and he has promised that that church will be sustained by his power to the end of the ages.

Notwithstanding the assaults, the affliction, the hardship, the battles that rage in this present evil age, Christ will emerge victorious, he is victorious, at the right hand of the father, but he will bring his church gathered from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, from every age in the history of the world, he will assemble us together, and as the book of Revelation says, there is a multitude there which no man can number.

I find there's a lot of pessimism amongst the people of God, and again, there's reasons for that, I get it, I'm naturally the half-empty guy, or no, I'm actually the half-cup, you know, there's those who see it as half-full, and others who see it as half-empty, I've been accused of being a half-emptier, I like to think I'm a realist, but I also think it's a matter of perspective, right, but there is this pessimism among the church that, you know, the gospel, contrary to what Paul says, really isn't the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, no it is, we gotta believe that, we gotta understand

that, a great multitude that no man can number, assembled before the throne of God in that age to come, Matthew 16, I hope, is an encouragement for all of you to see this work as something to pray for, something to be a part of, and something to encourage others with reference to, hey, I know it seems odd, we meet in a hotel room, there's only a handful of us, but we're trying to do what God has called us to do in terms of preaching, sacraments, and discipline in a way that's faithful to scripture,

[51 : 46] I was sharing with Josh, we have a young man, well, young to me, a new man in our church, and he was just reading the Bible about a year and a half ago, and he got saved, and he lives in, you know, near Vancouver, so he thought, I want to go to a church, right, I get saved, I go to a church, that's the natural sort of order of things, and this fellow went to church, and he saw so many things that, you know, he's already been reading his Bible, he's converted, he understands his sin, he understands that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, he's looked to him, he's received forgiveness, he has that righteousness, but he goes into churches and they feel like entertainment, he goes into churches and they got women in the pulpit, he goes into churches and they got things backwards with reference to the Word of God, and he, as a relatively new Christian, had the wherewithal to say, you know what, I just figured that whatever it says in this book is what I think a church needs to look like, and that's the essence of what we're trying to do in terms of planting churches, it's what does the scripture say, we're not going to add to that, we're not going to make up things, we're not going to, you know, bring Rebecca up to preach, the Bible forbids that, and it's getting more difficult as the ages go on for churches to be faithful in this,

I just don't know how we got here, I just don't understand how we got to the place where women in ministry and sodomy, and I'm not saying sodomites can't be saved, but that somehow it's an alternate lifestyle within the church, no, we've got to be men and women committed to the book, committed to the scriptures, we've got to be men and women that keep our churches open when the government says not to, no, give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God what is God's, and religious worship and obligation to him is not Caesar's, that's not his prerogative, faithfulness, earnestness, perseverance, and commitment to scripture, that's what you should want in a church, not who has the best, you know, nursery service, I remember when we first got saved, we started going to the church we were at in Southern California, and I happened to work, shift work, and was able to stop by the building in the morning and get it ready, you know, get the hymn books out, similar to what you're doing here, and the nursery where we had our children, I'd have to go on spider patrol, these were some big nasty spiders that would roam the old rug there, and I'd go there and I'd want to make sure that it was all cleaned up, so, you know, my kids at the time didn't want Josh to have some spider running over his head, you know, kind father that way, but there's churches that advertise, oh, we've got clean nursery care, we've got this music, we've got these programs, you know what your issue is when it comes to church, do they hold to the scriptures as the infallible, inerrant,

God-breathed word, and if so, that is what is most important, and do they emphasize preaching, sacraments, and discipline, if so, I'm home, that's what you want to be, that's what Dryden needs, that's what Ontario needs, that's what BC needs, that's what Canada needs, that's what the uttermost parts of the earth need, we don't need to give entertainment-saturated people more entertainment, imagine that, we're going to church on Sunday for more entertainment, we are the most entertained generation, that has ever lived, and half the time, people are sitting in church, looking at cat videos, on their phone, for additional entertainment, that can't be the direction, that y'all go, are persevering for, and I think it's valuable, and I think it's great, and as I said, you know, our church is very excited, about this group, and yes, you can be part of the association, you've always been recognized, as members of the association, we love you, we pray for you, we're committed to helping, insofar as we are able, bit of a distance, but we can overcome that, through Air Canada, that I understand, is going on strikes, soon, so I may not get home, on Thursday, I may be back next Sunday, but brethren, we're here for lunch, if anybody has, we'll take you, okay, all right, we're here for lunch, any questions, about anything, I'm happy to talk, so let me pray, our Father in heaven, thank you for your word, thank you for, Jesus promised, concerning the church, that he would build it, and that the gates of Hades, shall not prevail against it, may we walk in faith, trusting your promises, trusting your headship, trusting the provision, of the Holy Spirit, to guide, to direct, to lead us, in this present evil age, and I pray for all the brothers, and the sisters here, that they would be faithful, that they would be, what Dryden needs, not because they're entertainers, but

because they're faithful, and committed, to the scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, and we ask this, in the name, and for the glory, of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.
Amen. Amen. We'll stand and sing.