

# Be the Church

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By Brian Flewelling; 2.4.18

Welcome! On this SUPER Sunday, where we're KICKING OFF a new teaching series. We hope to score a TOUCHDOWN with it. We hope to soar, LIKE EAGLES... (slide) Biblical justification to root for the Eagles.

## Introduction:

This morning we're beginning a six-week teaching series called "Be the Church!" (that is correct grammar)

Petra is not a perfect church. There's no such thing as a perfect church. The church us, doing our best to live up to these ideals that are so much bigger than us.

Over these next six weeks we want to pound out some of these ideas

1. God loves people – His favorite place to be is with people. We are his Temple/dwelling
2. Practical Habits
3. How we care for one another
4. How exactly we make disciples, and help other grow in our faith
5. The core passion of this local church. Why do we exist.

## Matthew 16:13-19

Vs 13 Caesarea of Philippi – A place of idols, lies, darkness, wickedness, confusion

**Slide:** Caesarea of Philippi

American culture is not unlike this place

- God of Evolutionary science – Science answers all our question. if a doctor says it, it must be true. If the scientist said it, it must be. Religion is superstitious.
- God of fitness, health, and beauty – weight room, anxious, their body is their god and the highest form of worship is when someone praises their body or lifestyle.
- Our culture bows down to God of sports – they are about proving something  
We spend more time training our children in athletics than we do training them in the ways of God.
- Gods in entertainment, success, greed, security, power, control
- Bow down to religion & control –it's the rules, conformity, getting in line, doing what you're supposed to – (we left Jesus way back there)
- Hard Work, Efficiency – we find our identity in how many hours we put in, or how hard we work, our blue-collar status is a badge of honor (god of self-sufficiency) lost how to trust.

Vs 14 One of the prophets – we like to fit Jesus into our lives. He's one voice we can manage in the carousel of our schedules.

Vs 15 **what about you...** - do you see how uncomfortably personal Jesus gets. Everyone has an opinion of me. Your teacher, your grandpa, your Bishop, your celebrity...

Vs 16 **You are the Christ...** you aren't one among many. You are the only.

Vs 17 **This was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.**

What people need is not a talk'n to.

They need a spiritual revelation in my life that Jesus isn't one among many. He's the only.

Vs 17-18a **You are Peter (Petros) and on this (Petra) I will build my church.**

**Slide:** Caesarea of Philippi

Jesus is saying, the revelation of who I am is not one among many, I am all of it, I am the whole of cliff, I am the entirety of truth, I am the Rock of your Salvation. I am the source of Life that you've been looking to all these lies to fulfill your life.

When you, little Peter (Petros) are built on me (Petra) you will be immovable.

30 years later, Peter is about ready to be hanged upside down on a Roman cross, he's still unmoved from his personal confession of who Jesus became in his life, he's writes these words in

### **1 Peter 2:4-5**

As you come to him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to God-you also like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.

### **Matthew 16:18 – on this rock I will build my church**

Secular word, it means "called-out ones", those who respond to a town hall meeting. Gather together.

### **Definition of Church according to this passage:**

**Slide:** The Church is the people who hear the voice of God and respond by building their lives on the Rock of Jesus, the one and only Son of God – the one source of truth and life to the world.

Summary: **We are followers of Jesus.** Continually following Jesus

You might be a Venezuelan Pentecostal. Chinese Baptist. Muslim background Saudi who met Jesus in a dream. An Amish man who got filled with the Spirit of Jesus.

The Church are those called out of darkness into His wonderful light. We have been rescued from the slums of sin, the empty promises of a sickening world, rescued from the vanity of our personal appetites or suffocating religion. We have been legally adopted off the streets into

God's prestigious family. Fully immersed into His wonderful and powerful nature. We are now being parented by a loving Father, who loves us enough to correct us and train us to stop thinking like slum dogs and grow up into the character of his Son.

Because God is getting a people ready to be his bride – of like mind and heart. He has always wanted a people He could call "mine". United to Him. Covenantally, Eternally, one with Him in Spirit. A people who enjoys time spent in His intimate confidence. Associating with Him. Who knows his ways. Who are persuaded by His passions. Who thinks His thoughts. Lives in concert with His plans.

**The Church is the only people on earth in concert with God's passions.**

When God wants to do something, He finds someone... He finds an Abraham. A David. He calls to himself a Bride set apart for His purposes.

**What is that something? What is God passionate about? What is His mission? What is He so excited to get you involved in?**

Jesus started the great rescue mission.

**John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**1 Timothy 2:4**

(God) wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

**2 Peter 3:9**

not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

**The Son was on a Rescue Mission.**

**Slide:** Caesarea of Philippi

There's a lot of lies in our culture. There's a lot of promises made by the Media. Family. Politicians. Educators. Artists. Religious Leaders. There's only one truth. I am Life. Without me you have none. Sin dislocated you from the Father, and you need restored to sonship.

**The Son commissioned His Bride of followers to finish the Great Rescue Mission He started.**

**Matthew 28:19**

go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Let's expand our layman's definition of the Church**

**We are followers of Jesus who help others follow Jesus.**

Whether they are halfway across the globe or live in Ephrata. We are a people contagious with Jesus. We talk about Jesus. We introduce people to Jesus. We help people take their next steps towards Jesus. We answer people's objections to Jesus. We are constantly praying for people to meet Jesus. It's all about Jesus. We are rationally radical for Jesus.

**Why is this important?** To speak up. To step out.

**Slide:** (Hindu girl) Because without Jesus this little girl will be strangled by Hinduism and its lies about who she is. And when she dies, her sins will still separate her from her heavenly father who loves her.

**Slide:** (2 photos – boy with gun) Because this young man will grow up to become something. And if the wrong people train him, he'll grow up to become the fullness of hate, and greed.

**Slide:** (middle age investor) Because this man will grow up in a golden cage, thinking that money answers all questions. He'll burn through three marriages, and destroy his own children before He even realizes that control and power are empty illusions.

**Slide:** (Muslims) Because these two young girls will grow up being trained in all the wrong kinds of belief. That says control and dominance are the way to peace. Freedom is something you experience only after you try harder. God wants nothing to do with you, only your allegiance. You have no voice.

**Slide:** By the time this young man goes to get a job at Yoder's restaurant he'll think that graphic horror movies and porn and maybe smoking a joint or two on the weekends are the simple comforts to help you forget about the chaos and pain of life's daily struggle. He'll never know the contentment and hope that comes with Jesus.

Without the church declaring and living the gospel, entire nations descend into Grossness. Debauch living or stringent codes. Injustice. Denigration of human life. Pain. Confusion of mind and morals.

Petra our primary calling is to be a barn for the harvest. That purpose is unflinching. Stay the course. That is the way, walk in it. In your ministries and families. In a few weeks we'll look, in more detail, at how exactly we make disciples.

**Prophetic word for this community: (for your prayerful consideration)**

**#1. Give me your sons and your daughters. I'm going to send them to the nations.**

(It is our destiny to shape nations. Shake nations. Our inheritance.)

**Psalms 2: "Ask me and I will make nations your inheritance."**

## #2. Expand in the secret place of prayer.

Intercession. There's a crying out. A mother's womb has to get bigger to make room for life. Before you reap nations, you need to...

### Matthew 16:19

God is giving us spiritual keys that unlock earthly realities.

### *Slide: Lake*

#### *Ill: Analogy of Dam*

Resources above regulated by the gatekeepers to determine how much flow reached below. The Church has been given spiritual authority to regulate spiritual realities that shape earthly realities.

When the Church gives up her spiritual position in prayer, we are left managing life below without resources from above.

We manage people. We manage systems. We manage churches, programs, policies. And we wonder why no one is hungry for God anymore. We wonder why there is no revival.

The church has the authority to stand in front of closed doors and tell them to open in Jesus' name. But it takes persistent prevailing prayer. When God wants to do something in the earth, He finds someone who will open the gate. An intercessor.

## Ministry Song: Even So Come

1. God is commissioning some of you. "I'm sending you"
2. God is burdening some of you to pray. "Join me in the secret place and cry out for salvation."

Make this a moment that we commit ourselves to his purposes in a fresh way.

## Practical Take Away

**For the next 6 weeks, find one person to pray with for 30 minutes a week.**

1. One person unsaved and their family
2. One secular school district in your area
3. One non-profit ministry either locally or globally that is reaching their community
4. One nation of people God is putting on your heart