

September 11th, 2022
I Love My Church: Week 1

It's Bill Hybel's quote that sets the tone for our entire series this month... The Local Church is the HOPE of the World!

Welcome to our 14th year as a church! We're going to spend the majority of the month not only talking about our past, but continuing to prepare for an amazing future as well!

Matthew 16:18-19 (ESV)

"... and on this ROCK I will build my CHURCH, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

I. The PERSON of the Church

Few verses have caused more controversy than the verse I just read!

- It has led to disagreements over the proper type of church government
- The role of an ultimate church leader
- And how things in Heaven can happen here on Earth!

In the context of this verse, and the ones that precede it, Jesus probes his disciples for what the people around Jerusalem think about Him.

Then Jesus asks his followers specifically:
"But who do you [plural = the disciples] say I am?"

Enter the controversy...

(v. 15). Simon responds FOR the Twelve: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!

Jesus approves Simon for rightly identifying him, underscoring that *his disciple couldn't humanly figure out this truth. Rather, it came as divine revelation.*

With Simon's confession, he gets a New Name & a New Mission- Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter (Greek *petros- pebble*) and releases him to be a world changer!

Why two ROCKS?

A. The Rock the Church is Built Upon

The Roman Catholic Church interprets "this rock" in reference to Peter as the first pope and the beginning of apostolic succession: They believe Jesus authoritatively instituted an unbroken line of successors from Peter and the other apostles to the current bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. Ultimately, the Pope becomes the vicar (or earthly representative) of Christ who exercises Christ's authority in teaching, ruling, and sanctifying the Church.

B. Rock as Peter By Virtue of His Confession

We believe Peter is still the small pebble... but the ROCK (petra-Bedrock) is revealed *by virtue of his confession (important)*.

We see this in the prominent salvation-historical role that Peter plays in the New Testament.

- He's the first to announce the gospel to the Jews (*Acts 2:14–41*).
- Together with John, he confirms the inclusion of the Samaritans in the church (*Acts 8:14–25*).
- Finally, he is instrumental in the conversion of the first Gentiles (*Acts 10–11*).

1. Building the Church

Peter would be the catalyst- (petros- pebble)

Peter's confession would be the Bedrock (petra) of the Kingdom directive!

Jesus used the same directive word in Matthew 7 when he said the WISE MAN builds his house on the PETRA... a firm foundation

There is no real controversy because Peter himself uses the same verbiage in *1 Peter 2:5* when he declared... the church is built of numerous small petros "living stones" who, like Peter, confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and those confessions of faith are the bedrock of the church, of which the gates of Hell will never prevail!

Make no mistake about it, the New Testament makes it abundantly clear that Christ is *both* the Foundation (*Acts 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 3:11*) and the Head (*Ephesians 5:23*) of the church!

Furthermore, scripture declares Him...

2. The Chief Cornerstone

And Christ Himself is called the "chief cornerstone" (*1 Peter 2:6-7*).

The Fundamental Truth is- If Christ is declared as the cornerstone, how could Peter be the rock upon which the church was built?

It is most likely that all believers, of whom Peter is one, are the stones (Petros') which make up the church, anchored upon the Cornerstone.

The ROCK is the Gospel, our confession that there is no one else but Christ, the Son of the Living God!

II. The PROMISE to the Church (v.19)

Jesus continued the seeming controversy...

Matthew 16:19 (NIV)

"I will give you the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

The Church is God's program for this present age, and the Kingdom is God's program for the future, which will be inaugurated at the Second Coming of Christ.

The Church is to be proclaiming the message of a victorious King, the soon coming Kingdom of Christ!

Here is Christ's Promise to Peter and each one of us.

A KEY was a symbol of Authority. And one of the main functions of a Key is to grant ACCESS!

Peter's mission was to give people access to the Kingdom by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

We have to be careful with this controversial next part!

Peter was told that he would have 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."

The confusion around binding and loosing is because we have lost the cultural connotation and the idea of the words used.

Binding and Loosing were expressions that were used by the rabbis that mean to exclude or include/to forbid or permit.

The CONTEXT is the Gospel...

- Builds and it Breaks
- Restores and it Offends
- Draws and it pushes Away
- Commends and it Condemns
- Brings Life or it banishes to Darkness

Our MISSION is to promote the Gospel! Live the Gospel. Share the Gospel... whether people choose to respond or not!

III. The PRESENCE of the Church

Matthew 24:1-2 (NIV)

Jesus left the TEMPLE and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one STONE here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

Matthew 25:31-40 (NIV)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

This is how we are to represent the Gospel, our hearts moved by the things that move the heart of God!