

I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

Matthew 16:13-17

Intro. Little boy and his dad coming to church. “Bet you it won’t do me any good either.”

Could also use the idea of the childhood dream of being a super-hero and saving the earth or even the galaxy. Our assignment is even greater. We are a royal priesthood intended to advance God’s kingdom until He returns. We often don’t think of the church as a gathering of Kingdom agents whose role is more critical than any earthly profession.

The Context. Speculation about identity of Jesus has been escalating. The Pharisees and Sadducees want to see Him work another miracle (16:1). Miracle-working Messiah.

In that context, but in private meeting with His disciples, Jesus asks who people believe Him to be. Speculation is rampant. The Key question is what His disciples have come to believe. They utter most radical declaration ever to come from human tongue—“You are the Christ (Messiah King) son of the Living God.” This confession changes everything. If you believe this all of life’s focus must be altered by this truth.

It is in the context of the confession of His messianic identity that He declares His intention of building the church. Don’t miss the significance—we cannot declare that Christ is our King and not love His church. It is His bride, His field, His building. He came to establish it, He died to redeem it, He sent His Holy Spirit to empower it, and He will come again to take His royal bride to Himself.

1. “Upon This Rock”—The Firm Foundation

Use any illustration about the foundation of a building to indicate that the foundation is priority. It is built first and determines the size and dimensions of what can be built upon it. Just what is the foundation of the church? I believe that Paul comments on this truth in 1 Corinthians 3:5-11 where he speaks of the roles of Apollos and himself in the planting of the church at Corinth. Note verse 11—“For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Christ alone is the foundation. Peter’s confession to the Christ is the foundational truth that is at the very basis of all we are and do. (Dominion Tower Illustration). If God laid His Son in the ditch, what do you think He must desire to build upon it? Nothing small about the work of the church.

Paul issues a word of warning based on this foundational material. Read 1 Cor. 3:12. Every believer is called to build. This is not optional. The only question is the quality of the material. Wood, hay, and stubble have no value and no permanence. Gold, silver, and precious stone speak of value and permanence. Has anyone told you that all of our service to the King will be tested by fire (3:13). We will be rewarded for all that remains.

Caution: Paul is not talking about someone losing their salvation (15) but he is warning about wasting a lifetime of opportunity.

2. “I Will Build”—Supernatural Empowering

What do you do for the King that requires supernatural empowering? Are you living in the “safety zone” of what I know I can do? Quit! The Holy Spirit has empowered you to participate in the supernatural invasion of the planet. In Eph. 1:19 Paul prays that we would know the full empowering available to us which is based on the power that raised Christ from the dead.

3. “My Church”—The Intimate Identification

Greek word “ecclesia” is used for church. First part is “ek” from which we derive word “exit.” Second is from “kaleo” which means “called out.” When OT was translated from Hebrew to Greek (Septuagint Translation), the word for congregation of Israel was “ecclesia.” We are God’s called out people. We have been redeemed by Him for service to Him. The intimacy is found in the pronoun “my.” We are His! We can call Him “abba, Father.”

We belong to the King and thus have been called to a royal service. (Illus. Cousteau Center)

4. “The Keys of the Kingdom”—Royal Responsibility

Keys represent honor, authority, and responsibility. (use illustration of getting car keys or being given keys to the city). We have not being given the keys to an earthly city but to the kingdom of God. We understand that keys provide or prevent access. What are the keys? Simple—The Good News of the King. King came to earth, shed His royal authority, took upon Himself human flesh, becoming obedient unto death—death on the cross—that we might become His children.

There is no message more critical and no responsibility more awesome. We lock people out of the kingdom when we fail to get outside the building that houses the church and declare this Good News of the kingdom.

5. “The Gates of Hell Will Not Overpower It”—The King’s Promise

There is nothing that can stop the advance of the Kingdom. The image is of the church plucking lost humanity from the grasp of Hell itself. The church’s mission is too important for us to play our church games. This earth and all that is in it is passing away, but we have been called to an “unshakeable Kingdom” (Heb. 12:26) and for that reason we must serve the King acceptably.