

**Subject: *The Church's One Foundation***

**Scripture: *Matthew 16:13-20***

I am preaching some messages on the church for several reasons:

- 1) We need to understand what the church is
- 2) We need to understand what the church does
- 3) We need to understand our role and responsibility in the church

There is a lot of misunderstanding about the church today. Some people say they love the Lord, but they have little use for the church. How can that be? That kind of attitude shows a real ignorance of the Bible. Someone asked a little boy, "Son, when was your church *founded*?" He said, "I didn't know it was *lost*." The importance of the church has been lost. The identity of the church has been lost. The purpose of the church has been lost.

Nine of Paul's thirteen letters in the NT were written to local churches. Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation were messages sent to seven local churches. God's Word reveals a lot about the church and just how important it is in the life of God's children. We need to get back to some basic truth. In this message I want to focus on the church's foundation.

### **1. The church has a perfect foundation**

Jesus said "upon this rock I will build my church." What did He mean? First of all, He certainly did not mean Peter, because he was so volatile and impulsive. He was anything but a solid rock. In this passage Jesus used a play on words. He gave Simon the nickname of Peter meaning "rock." But the word Jesus used of Peter was a small rock like a pebble. When Jesus said "upon this rock I will build my church" He used another word for rock that means bedrock or a large solid slab of rock. What is that rock foundation of the church? It is the truth about Christ. Jesus is the one and only perfect foundation of the church.

- Vs. 13-14 – human speculation about Christ

Some of the people probably thought Jesus was John the Baptist because His preaching was the same, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Some of them saw in Him the fire and intensity of Elijah. Some thought He might have been Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, because Jesus was in fact "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

- Vs. 15-17 – divine revelation about Christ

The church is not built on human speculation about Christ. It is built on divine revelation about Christ. The foundation for the church is the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Other institutions are built on men, but the church is built on Christ. The church has a divine foundation, a perfect foundation. The church is not perfect, but it has a perfect foundation.

We can be sure this is the meaning here because of other verses that confirm that fact.

**1 Corinthians 3:10-11** <sup>10</sup> *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.* <sup>11</sup> *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

**Ephesians 2:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; <sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

There is a sense in which the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets because they had a foundational role in the church. Like Paul they taught the truth about Christ and the gospel.

**Acts 2:42** *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Just because a church has Christ in its name doesn't make it a true church. For example, there is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church). The Mormon Church is not a true church at all because they teach heresy about the person and work of Christ. There is the Roman Catholic Church which is not a true church because it teaches heresy about the gospel and the way of salvation.

**Galatians 1:6-9** <sup>6</sup> I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: <sup>7</sup> Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup> As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

## **2. The church has a personal foundation**

In verse 18 Christ says "I will build my church." He is not only the foundation of the church. He is the designer and builder of the church. It is His church, not man's church. It is not our job to build the church. Christ said He would build it. Any person who attempts to build the church is competing with Christ, not serving Him. If a church in one place grows cold, disobedient, or indifferent, Christ doesn't stop building, but He just works somewhere else. He is always building His church.

**Acts 2:47** *And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

**Acts 20:28** *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

We have seen a lot take place in churches across our nation that is hard to comprehend. Some churches that don't even believe the Bible is the Word of God. Some churches ordain women as pastors and deacons. Some churches support and even perform gay marriage. We need to understand something. Not all churches are true churches. These are the false churches of men, not the church of Christ. Christ builds His church and His church has nothing to do with that nonsense. Christ's church is based on Biblical truth. Christ's church stands for holiness.

**Ephesians 5:22-27** <sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. <sup>24</sup> Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the

church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

### **3. The church has a precious foundation**

That precious foundation is Christ. All believers are living stones built on Christ, who is the foundation and chief corner stone. He is the chosen and precious corner stone.

***1 Peter 2:5-7*** <sup>5</sup> *Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* <sup>6</sup> *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* <sup>7</sup> *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed (rejected), the same is made the head of the corner.*

The foundation is the most important part of any building, but it is the unseen part. By faith we are built on Christ. The most important part of our church is the part you don't see, Christ. Without Him we are nothing and we have nothing. There would be no church, no salvation, and no hope without Him. To us who believe He is precious (of infinite value). But to unbelievers and those who don't obey Him He is rejected and considered unimportant. When unbelievers think of us they wonder why being part of a church is such a big deal. It's a big deal because Jesus is a big deal. We trust in Him and we obey Him and we love Him and we worship Him. He is the precious foundation and corner stone of the church.

### **4. The church has a permanent foundation**

In verse 18 Christ said "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (overpower it)." He promised that the church could not be destroyed. The gates of hell represent the entry point and power of death which cannot defeat or destroy the church. The church will be victorious. In Christ we overcome sin, Satan, death, hell, and the grave.

Some people give themselves to great causes and there's nothing wrong with that. Some people give themselves to Christ and His church and there's nothing close to that. Jesus never promised to build any human institutions, but He did promise to build His church. The Bible says, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it."

#### ***The Church's One Foundation***

*The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord  
She is His new creation by water and the Word  
From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride  
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.*

*Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war  
She waits the consummation of peace forevermore  
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blessed  
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.*

One day the Church will be at perfect rest in heaven because we rested by faith on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ.