

I Will Build My Church

Matthew 16:16-19

Preface

In college I took two semesters of homiletics. Homiletics is the practice of effective theological preaching or speaking. We prepared sermons and preached before the class each week and then we were critiqued by our classmates and the professor. In homiletics a good sermon usually has 2 to 4 points. Today's message has twelve points. It has so many points that it violates all the teachings of good homiletics.

But, the message today is about the building of God's church and the church doesn't fit into any man's mold or outline.

Scripture

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ,^a the Son of the living God."¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter,^b and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^c will not overcome it.^d ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be^e bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^f loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:18-19 NIV

Introduction

Before we look at the church and its work, I would like to point out four things the church is not.

1. The church is not a material building

Of the 140 times the word church is used in the New Testament, not once does it refer to a material building. The language used to apply to the church could not refer to a material building. "The Lord added to the church." "The church was persecuted." "Paul saluted the church." "The church had rest."

The church is the body of believers which might meet and worship wherever possible. The church is not the building.

2. The church is not a denomination

Christian denominations in many ways are evidence of divisions

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among believers. Usually denominations are formed around a doctrinal emphasis or influential leader.

I am not opposed to Christian denominations but we should encourage unity and working together as the church, the body of Jesus Christ. People who are a part of different denominations are our brothers and sisters in Christ and we are one body.

3. The church is not a club for your convenience

Too often people think of the church as their club or their place to go for recreation and fellowship. The Greek word for church is "ekklesia" and it literally means "assembly." Thus the church is the assembly of believers. The church is an assembly of God's people for the purpose of doing his work. You and I are not to love this building or the furnishing. We are not to get an ownership mentality. We are to love and sacrifice for our Lord and His assembly of believers.

4. The church is not "Plan B" in the mind of God

The church was not merely instituted after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church was prophesied throughout the Old Testament.

All nations were to be blessed by the seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:18)

All kindreds of the nations would worship the Lord (Psalms 22:27-28)

In the last days all nations would flow to the house of God (Isaiah 2:2-3)

The Gentiles would seek the Root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:10)

Many nations would be sprinkled with the blood of the Messiah (Isaiah 52:15)

Many nations would be joined to the Lord in that day (Zechariah 2:11)

The Name of the Lord would be great among the Gentiles (Malachi 1:11)

In His Name the Gentiles would trust (Matthew 12:21)

The church is not a material building, a denomination, a club or God's plan B. So what is the church?

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Content

1. The church is the centerpiece of the Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is the entire universe. The kingdom of God is more than you and I can see or imagine. It includes the heavens, the universe, the angelic hosts and the Old Testament saints. The kingdom of God is much larger than the church.

But, the church is the centerpiece of God's kingdom and it is the most important part.

Jesus said the prophets who gave the prophecies and even the angels would love to participate in the things happening in the age of the church. (Matthew 13:16-17)

2. The church is built on a message (a revelation) not on man

Men come and go. Men succeed and fail but the true revelation of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church. Peter said "Thou art the Christ." This is the foundation of the church that Jesus Christ is the son of God and the church exists on that truth.

The fuel that powers the church is the good news of Jesus Christ. The church exists by the very power of God himself.

3. The church is the only thing God ever had to buy

God created everything else but the church. The church cost him dearly! We are privileged beyond measure to be a part of the church of the living God.

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. Acts 20:28

You must be saved to be in the church. Our salvation was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. God paid dearly to purchase the church. We must support the church.

4. The church cannot be shaken

Individual believers and local assemblies will have problems but the church is as solid the rock of revelation upon which it is built.

According to God's word, the earth is to be shaken, the nation of Israel is to be shaken, the heavens and nations are to be shaken. But, the church cannot be shaken! The gates of hell cannot prevail against it, because Jesus is the builder of the church.

The church shall be triumphant.

5. The church must be built according to God's Blueprint

From our text, the words "bind" and "loose" are perfect passive participles in the Greek language. This means they have already been forbidden or permitted.

We can't just do whatever we want and expect God to bless it. We must do what He instructs us and leads us to do.

Illus: If a contractor is employed to build a home, he is given a blueprint and he is expected to follow that blueprint. If the owners have a blueprint for a ranch style house, they do not expect the contractor to go on out on his own and build a contemporary style home just because it suits his taste.

As believers, we are expected to follow God's plan for the church. Today churches are trying all sorts of things to bring people through the doors of their places of worship. I was once in a church that offered music and instrument lessons. I saw teens showing up for piano and violin lessons after school.

I am not going to judge the practices of other congregations. But I will say this, everything we do as a church must be for the purposes outlined in the word of God. Every program that we offer and every dime that we spend should be for the purpose of following God's blueprint for the church.

So what are the things we should do as the church? What does God's blueprint call for us to do.

1. Doing and Teaching

In Acts 1:1 Luke begins with the words, "*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach*".

Jesus was in the business of doing and teaching. Notice I did not say dining and teaching but doing and teaching. We can have dining and we are always assured of a crowd. But let us have a work day, bible study or something where we are doing not dining and the crowd quickly dwindles.

Jesus was always doing things that got the attention of the people which opened the doors of their heart for teaching. Jesus did not work miracles for miracles sake; he used them to teach doctrine. He healed a blind man and taught, "I am the light of the world." He fed 5000 and taught, "I am the bread of life."

We must do for the people in our area of mission but we must also teach. 1 Timothy 4:16 says, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”*

Teaching without doing is wrong and doing without teaching is wrong.

James 1:22 says, *“but be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”* ☞ God holds me responsible for doing what I can and teaching what I know.

2. Witness and Wait

“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:7-8 NIV

God’s word has two words for time: Chronos which means “time governed by the clock.” And Kairos which means “time measured by special moments.” I call kairos divine opportunities.

Our responsibility as a group of believers is to take advantage of the divine opportunities when they present themselves. We must do and teach at every opportunity before the opportunity is lost. We must teach our children while they are teachable. We must train our youth while they are trainable.

☞ “The key to revival is for the church to exercise its Ability until God exercises His Authority. We must witness and wait.

3. Rise above and go beyond

The church must learn to rise above its challenges and move beyond its disappointments.

Sometimes we mistakenly think the early church was somehow more spiritual and more blessed than the church today. But the book of Acts tells us that they had problems and setbacks too.

Outside the crucifixion of Jesus, probably nothing was harder on the disciples than the fall of Judas. He had been ordained as an

apostle, he was trusted and loved. And yet he backslid and betrayed the Lord and then committed suicide. This must have been a blow to the early believers.

But the disciples did not give up. Instead, they rose above the heartache and moved beyond the trial to embrace the future that God had before them.

☞ With God, failure is never fatal. God never wastes a hurt!

God has the resources and the plan to take us far beyond our current crisis to places we’ve never imagined. I believe that with my entire being and with all my heart.

Micah 7:8 says, *“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.”*

We must rise above and go beyond our past and our immediate problems to discover the experiences God has prepared for us.

We are the church. We have work to do. It won’t be easy and there will be obstacles, challenges and disappointments. But we are the church, the children of God. We represent the King.

Conclusion

I read a story this week about a pastor who was called to a new church in a suburb of Houston, Texas. When he caught the bus from the suburb to downtown, the driver gave him a quarter more in change than he was due.

As the pastor sat in his seat during the ride, he wrestled with returning the quarter. He knew the right thing to do was to return the money but he also reasoned that it was a small amount of money and the bus company would never notice the difference.

When he was about to step off the bus, he handed the quarter to the driver and said, "You gave me too much change."

The bus driver smiled and replied, "Aren't you the new preacher in town?" "Yes" he replied.

"Well, I have been thinking a lot lately that I need to go to church and I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I'll be in your church on Sunday"

When the preacher got off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole and said, "Oh God, I almost sold your son for a quarter."

You are the church. What each one of you do with your time, your money and your opportunities is so important.