

# I will build my Church

## Matthew 16:13-20

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah,<sup>[c]</sup> the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter,<sup>[c]</sup> and on this rock<sup>[e]</sup> I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you 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.” <sup>20</sup> Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

### Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we join our prayer with the Psalmist: Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Now may the words of my lips and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

### Introduction:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the words of Jesus as recorded by the Evangelist Matthew? **I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.**
2. Do these words excite you? Or do cry out the phrase from the martyrs in the Book of Revelation: **When O LORD?**
3. As we emerge out of lockdown, how will the LORD Jesus build his Church while we still live with the pandemic?
4. Or are you feeling so down, you wonder if these words of Jesus: **I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.** Seem like a dream, a wish, a desire that seems so distant?

### Map:

This morning

1. I will be leading us through the context of these words of Jesus;
2. What is the Church
3. What are the implications, challenge and promise for you and I

### Context:

Jesus has moved into correcting the misconception of what the Messiah that the people had come to understand. He does this first by asking his disciples a series of short questions regarding the long-awaited Messiah the LORD promised. After asking “who the people say I am,” he turns the attention to the disciples, those whom he had chosen and who had followed him in his itinerate ministry.

<sup>15</sup> *Jesus said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”* <sup>16</sup> *Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah,<sup>[c]</sup> the Son of the living God.”*

Could you imagine how Peter felt as Jesus continued:

<sup>17</sup> **“Blessed are you, Simon, Son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.**

There is no doubt that Peter would have felt many mixed emotions, which come from being affirmed, but not just confirmed, that the Heavenly Father had revealed this truth to him. Humility

may have also flowed: then comes a remarkable statement which must have been a tremendous jolt to both Peter and the Other disciples:

**<sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter,<sup>[d]</sup> and on this rock<sup>[e]</sup> I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.**

In your own mind, what did Jesus mean when He said **you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my Church?**

There is no doubt that Peter was a leader, and he would become the leader within the Church: The account of the Gift of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, as proclaimed and explained by Peter's first Sermon, testifies to his leadership. Indeed, the first half of the books of Acts gives testimony to Peter's Apostolic teaching and leadership.

Before running after a red herring, why Peter and not one of the other disciples: what did Peter do? What is the context of this great affirmation?

**<sup>15</sup> Jesus said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah,<sup>[c]</sup> the Son of the living God."**

Not only did Peter articulate that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, he linked the office of Messiah to be the Son of the living God. Today, you and I take this for granted. Yet when Peter articulated this truth, Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus is the promised Saviour of the world, he was declaring he understood the mission of reconciliation between God and humanity. His depth of understanding this perception was honoured by Jesus.

**<sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter,<sup>[d]</sup> and on this rock<sup>[e]</sup> I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.**

Peter's apostolic authority was shining through with the declaration of who Jesus is. Those words of that declaration are what the Church has continued to proclaim. And those who affirmingly respond in acceptance of those words are being grafted into the Church of God.

I encourage us not to miss the reality of that acclamation of how Jesus is revealing Peter's Apostolic credentials. Peter's declaration was indeed making known who Jesus was.

### **What is the Church?**

The Church can be viewed as living – in which every member functions and associates with other members – as the Body of Christ in which we all exercise our gifts and talents.

We believe in one holy and apostolic Church: apostolic refers to the foundation teaching of the apostles. Ephesians 3:

**The mystery has now been revealed  
to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit**

The Church is not just a gathering of like-minded people; rather, the Church is genuinely identified by both the Sacraments and the proclamation of the Word.

Today we can give thanks to God for our rich faithful heritage: where both the sacraments and the proclamation of the Word is highly valued and appreciated. One of the downsides of those who have not returned to Church, all for good reasons, is them enjoying the fellowship of taking the sacrament of Holy Communion together as the body of Christ. I hope we are all working to come together as the Body of Christ, the Church of St John the evangelist Gordon.

### **What are the implications, challenge and promise for you and I?**

**I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.**

We have seen that God uses the people of God in the proclamation of the Gospel to spread the Good News. Jesus is building his Church through His faithful people. This truth obviously has a challenge for all of us:

1. How are we in the task of proclaiming who Jesus is?
2. Are we praying that people come to know Jesus?
3. Are we being true too of the Baptismal calling of making disciples for Christ?
4. Are we welcoming people into the life of the Church?

Thanks be to God for what he is doing in our midst. I am encouraged by the keenest further to promote the Christian Faith in Gordon and beyond.

I ask that you join with me in praying to Jesus – asking Him to build His Church at St. John’s Gordon,

To God be glory forever Amen.

**Resources:**

**Leon Morris:** The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Matthew.