

I Will Build My Church

The Church 2020

Matthew 16:13-20; 18:15-20

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I. Dismissing the Church

By definition, the Church is a corporate entity, an *assembly*. Hence, *to forsake assembling together, as is the habit of some*, is to deny the very essence of the Church (cf. Heb 10:25).

II. Jesus and the Universal Church (Mt. 16:13-19)

¹³When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And 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."

A. Is built by the Triune God

First, the Church is built by the Triune God. The _____ founds the Church and _____ builds the Church by the power of the _____.

B. Is one throughout the earth (Eph 4:1-6; Acts 8:3; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6)

Second, the Church is one throughout the earth. Note that Jesus establishes His *Church* (singular) *on the rock* (18). As Paul writes in Ephesians 4:4-6:

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

C. Is founded on apostolic teaching (Eph 2:19ff; Rev 21:14)

Third, the church is founded upon apostolic teaching. Jesus declares, "*You are Peter and upon this rock – Peter as spokesman of the apostles – I will build my church*" (18). The Church is built "*on the _____ of the apostles and prophets*" (Eph 2:20).

D. Shall be victorious over her foes (Eph 3:10 cf. Is 60)

Fourth, note that Jesus insists that the Church shall be victorious over her enemies. The *gates of hell* – a defensive feature – *shall not be able to withstand* the onslaught of the Church (18b). Jesus shall triumph over His foes through the Church (cf. Eph 3:10).

E. Exercises Christ's authority on earth (Eph 1:22; 1 Cor 3:16-17; 12:28)

Finally, the Church exercises Christ's authority on earth. Even as a king imparts to an ambassador a measure of his authority to act on his behalf, so Christ entrusted a measure of His authority to the Church. Therefore, churches are accountable to Him.

III. Jesus and the Local Church (Mt. 18:15-20)

¹⁵“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. ¹⁸Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

A. Is a visible organization to which we can report (cf. 1 Cor 6:1ff; Heb 13:7, 17)

First, the church of which Jesus speaks here must be a visible organization to which we can report. When a brother or sister sins against us and we cannot effect reconciliation then what are we to do? We are to “tell it to the _____” (17).

B. Has borders

Second, the *local church* of which Jesus speaks has borders; there are those _____ *the church* and those _____ *of the church*: the unrepentant brother is to be *put* _____ (17).

C. Contains a mixture of true and false believers

Third, what Jesus’ words indicate, therefore, is that the local church, *contains a mixture of true and false believers*. The church of which Jesus speaks here, in other words, is not the company of God’s elect. The *visible church* is the company of those who _____ faith in Christ. The *invisible church* is the company of the elect. It is called “*invisible*” because it is *visible to God alone*. The visible church will never be absolutely pure.

...there have always been those who, imbued with a false conviction of their own perfect sanctity, as if they had already become a sort of airy spirits, spurned association with all men in whom they discern any remnant of human nature... Indeed, because they think no church exists where there are not perfect purity and integrity of life, they depart out of hatred of wickedness from the lawful church, while they fancy themselves turning aside from the faction of the wicked...

D. Exercises Christ’s authority on earth

But it is this *visible church* of mixed company that Jesus vests with His authority. Notice Jesus’ promise: “*Wherever two or three are gathered in my name*” – representing My authority and applying My Word to an unrepentant brother – “*there am I in the midst of them*” (20).

IV. Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus

If we claim that we’ve been joined to the *universal church* through faith in Christ, then we legitimize that claim by committing to a *local church*, being an integral part of the *visible church*. A failure to invest in the *visible church* calls into question our claim to be part of the *universal church*. This is why the *Westminster Confession of Faith* declares, “*The visible church... is the ... house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of _____*” (XXV.2).

V. Conclusion