

The Church Today (Part 1) The Founder of the Church

(Matthew 16:13-19)

Introduction: Today, we begin a new sermon series, I am calling “The Church Today.” Because I want us to come back to basic understandings about the church today that I think have gotten lost, mis-understood and maybe even mis-represented, over the years. I want us to think today about the founder of the church. Jesus Christ is the founder. He said, *“Upon this rock I will build my church.”* As we look at this passage together, there are some important things that our founder (Jesus Christ) has said to us.

I. The cornerstone of the church: (v.16)

- A. The question** - Jesus disciples were given a test question.
- B. The answer** - which Peter answered and he said, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”*.
1. And Jesus said congratulations Peter you passed the test.
 2. But it was because God revealed it unto you. And He said, *“You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church”*. What was Jesus saying?
- C. Christ is the corner stone** - What is the cornerstone upon which His church is going to be built?
1. When Jesus said to Peter “You are Peter”, He used the word *petros*, which means a little stone.
 - a. You see, he had been known as Simon. And the word Simon means unstable.
 - b. But Jesus was predicting that his faith was going to become a rock like faith.
 - c. But then Jesus said, *“upon this rock I will build my church.”*
 2. Jesus was saying that He Himself would be the foundation, the cornerstone of His church. And that Peter would be a little part of that rock. Peter would have a place in that rock. He would be a little piece of that rock, petros. (1Cor. 3:11; 1 Pe. 2:4)

The church is to be built upon Jesus who is the foundation and the chief cornerstone. Without Jesus, we have no church!

II. The construction of the church: (v.18)

- A. Who does Jesus say will build the church?**
1. The pastors?
 2. The people?
 3. The denominational leaders?!

You see, the Bible teaches us that Jesus is the builder of the church and that we are His instruments, and that we are members of His body, and we are a part of that and that each of us fulfill a certain function.

We are little stones in the building of that church and there are all kinds of odd shaped stones and all kinds of different stone.

Every stone (every one of us) has a purpose and a part, but Jesus Christ is the builder of the church.

B. Who runs the church?

1. **Do the people run the church?**
2. **Does the pastor run the church??**
3. **Jesus said, “I will build my church.”** The Bible says, *“unto Him be all the glory in the church.”* (Eph. 3:21) Jesus runs the church.

How does He do that? Well, He has given us His word, His Spirit, and His wisdom. Before every decision is made and before everything is done, we ask the question as we pray together, what would the Lord have us to do for He is the head of the church. *He is in charge of the construction of the church.*

III. The character of the church: (v.18)

- A. The definition of the church - The word “church” in verse 18** that is the Greek word *ecclesia*. What does it mean?
1. It means a called-out group of people, those who have been called out.
 2. If you have been saved, you have been called out of the world.
 3. The church is those who have been called out by the Holy Spirit to become the children of God. (Gal.3:23-28; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor.12:13)

- B. The New Testament church in the Bible was a detectable church.** *We are talking about a visible, organized, empowered, body of believers.* The church is the visible body of Christ on earth we read about in (1 Cor. 12).

So that means you are a part of something bigger than yourself, you are part of a fellowship of believers. You are not just here to get a sermon. You are here to minister to others. (Eph. 4:11-12) You are here to use your abilities, talents, and gifts. You are here to submit yourself to the Lord. *You are here to be a part of what God is doing in this visible body known as Tanglewood Community Church!*

When we talk about the character of the church; the church is a called-out group of believers who have been bonded together in Spirit and love.

IV. The conquest of the church: (v. 19)

- A. Wrong picture** - *all right Lord Jesus, we are going to hang on. Because Lord, we know you said hell wouldn't prevail against us.*
- B. The right picture** -
1. Gates are not a weapon of offense; they are weapons of defense.
 2. Jesus says, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. *If anyone is in the castle hunkered down and holding on for dear life – it's the devil and his army!* (Mt 28:18-20; Act 1:8)
- C. The picture of a conquering church - Christians ought to have confidence.** They ought to hold up their head for what is true of the church collective is also true of your life, your home, your family, and your business individually.

We have the power and authority to attack the gates of hell and to share Jesus Christ so that men would be freed from their sin. (And He will give us the victory!)