

## **The Church Matters!**

Matthew 16:13-20

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Maybe you have heard people say that they love Jesus, but don't like the church. There are people who think they can have a relationship with Jesus apart from his church. They want to love Jesus and believe in him but don't want anything to do with the church. The sad reality is that according to the Bible, this sentiment goes against God. There is even a book written entitled "*They like Jesus, but not the church*" by *Dan Kimball*. I understand some of us have been hurt by churches and for some, this is the reason why some leave the church and others vow to never set foot at a church building. When it comes to God's church you and I should know that Jesus' church matters. Toward the end of his ministry Jesus began to disclose to his apostles how his mission will unfold. They had followed Jesus for about three years, but their expectation did not match Jesus' expectation. On one occasion Jesus asked the question "***Who do people say the Son of Man is? Who Do you say I am?***" ***Matt.16:13-20***

In response, the disciples gave Jesus the public opinion of the day. *People saw Jesus as a prophet* (Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist)

When Jesus asked them: **Who do you say I am?** Peter's reply tells us what the apostles thought about Jesus.

***You are the Christ (Messiah) the Son of the Living God.***

Jesus commended Peter for the answer and it is in this context that Jesus talks about building his church or establishing his church.

***The church matters because it first mattered to God!***

**Matthew 16:13-18**

Jesus said that he will build, establish his church. Jesus is the pioneer of the church, its founder, the one who started the process. The church belongs to Jesus. He said my church.

**What is the church?** Definition!

The word church never refers to a building or business. The word here is ***Ekklesia: assembly, (Called out ones), congregation.*** *The church is the gathering, assembly of those who profess (believe) Jesus as Lord.*

The church of Jesus Christ began with the preaching of the apostles in the first century, during the day of Pentecost. With the very words of Peter: "***you are the Christ***" ***Acts 2:36 This Jesus has become Lord and Christ.***

**Jesus had said that he would give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven.**

When you read the book of Acts you see how Peter used these keys to unleash God's kingdom on earth

Peter called people to repent and choose Jesus. *Acts 2:38*

Those who received Peter's message were baptized and added to the number of disciples. (v.41). Those who became followers of Jesus became the church.

**Jesus paid a high price of the church. His own blood.**

**Acts 20:28** ...which he purchased by his own blood

**Revelation 5:9** ....with your blood you purchased people for God.

**1 Peter 1:18-19** ....redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

**1 Cor.6:20** ...honor God with your bodies because you were bought by a price, you belong to the one who purchased you.

Christ loved the church so much that he sacrificed himself to present her holy and blameless. **Eph.5:25**

If the church mattered that much to God, then it should matter to us as well.

**The church of Jesus Christ will transcend time.** (v.18) It will live forever. Our history as a nation will one day come to an end. The church will continue. It is promised a kingdom with Christ. **The church's destiny is eternal.** The church of Jesus Christ prevails through obstacles, and even hell won't be able to stop her. **The gates of hell will not overcome it. (Matt.16:18).** **The church has an enemy;** Satan and his dominion; he will try to stop Jesus' church from advancing in the world.

**Christ's church cannot be stopped by the forces of evil.** Nevertheless, churches in the world who are no longer centered on Jesus, they no longer function as church. When a church is no longer functioning as an agent of God's kingdom, then it is in danger of closing its doors. Jesus warned a church in Ephesus that he was going to remove it unless they changed their ways. **Rev.2**

*When the church continues to keep Jesus at the center and continues to be about Jesus' kingdom business. Nothing will be able to stop it because what Jesus establishes cannot be undone by the devil.*

**The church matters to Jesus and it should surely matter to us today. It is here to fulfill his mission.**

Peter says "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. **1 Peter 2:9**

The church matters to Jesus, it should matter to us.