

I Will Build My Church Everything revolves around Him

Matthew 16:13-19

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^[e] loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 16:18 (NIV)

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Introduction

- Last week: the Father reveals the Son.
- Now Jesus says: I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH.
- The church belongs to Jesus because everything belongs to Jesus.
- He is not one department of the universe.
- **HE IS THE CENTER.**

A stunning claim - Staggering promise

I. Jesus is the exclusive builder.

A. “I will build my church.” Who is this “I” who made this promise?

1. This is a stunning promise.
2. An astounding claim.
3. A massive declaration.

B. Take one scene as the answer from Revelation 5

1. We are in heaven beholding the throne of God.
2. In his hand is a scroll—the unfolding of the end of history and the destiny of the church of Christ.
3. At first, no one is seen worthy to open the scroll—that is to bring history to its appointed to consummation.
4. A mighty angel proclaims in a loud voice.

- “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”
- 5. John weeps that none is found.
- 6. Then one the 24 elders says...
 - “Weep no more because the Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered and is worthy to open the scroll.”
- 7. Then the Lion-like Lamb **AND** the Lamb-like Lion takes the scroll.
- 8. And the elders and creatures around the throne sing...

Revelation 9:9b-10, 14

⁹ “You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

because you were slain,

and with your blood you purchased for God

persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,

and they will reign on the earth.”

- 9. One person is worthy to bring history to its appointed consummation
- 10. The Christ, the Son of the living God who has a ransomed people in every ethnic group on the planet.

C. And then two astonishing things happened

- 1. Millions of angels and talking birds and horses and fish confirmed the greatness of Christ.

[I heard] the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands [that’s at least 2 million], saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven (birds and butterflies) and on earth (horses and tigers and squirrels) and under the earth (worms and moles and groundhogs) and in the sea (fish and squid and lobsters), and all that is in them, saying...

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

This is the one who said, “I will build my church.” It is going to happen.

Question

- With what authority can he make this statement?

Colossians 1:16–18 (NIV)

¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Jesus has absolute authority because

- Everything came through Him
- Everything exists for Him
- Everything is held together by Him

D. Unpack Colossians 1:16

1. Paul piles up comprehensive language.
 - a. Things in heaven
 - b. Things on earth
 - c. Visible
 - d. Invisible
 - e. Thrones
 - f. Powers
 - g. Rulers
 - h. Authorities
2. Then Paul gives direction and purpose.

Through Him — Greek - *dia autou*.

- The preposition *dia* with the genitive carries the idea of “**through,**” “**by means of,**” or “**through the agency of.**”
- Paul is saying that Christ was not simply present when creation occurred
- **He was the divine agent through whom creation came into existence.**
- Everything from the visible physical world to the invisible spiritual realm came into being through Him.
- That gives enormous weight to Christ's authority
- **THE One who exercises authority over creation is the very One through whom creation came to be.**

For Him — Greek - *eis auton*.

- The preposition *eis* normally expresses movement **toward, into, or unto** something.
- Here it communicates **goal, purpose, or destination**: creation is not merely *through* Christ; it is ultimately **for Christ**.
- He is therefore not only the agent of creation but its **goal**.

- Everything ultimately moves toward the fulfillment of God's purposes in Christ.

Jesus is not merely present in creation.

- Creation came THROUGH Him and exists FOR Him.

“in him all things hold together.” - Greek *synistēmi*

- *Synistēmi* can mean “to hold together,” “to cohere,” “to consist,” or “to continue in an ordered state.”
- In Colossians 1:17, Paul uses it to describe the continuing relationship of all creation to Christ.
- His point is not merely that Jesus **created** everything in the past; creation continues to **hold together in Him** in the present.
- The tense is significant as well. Paul uses the perfect form *synestēken*, which points to an established condition with continuing results: **all things have been brought into coherence and continue to hold together in Christ.**
- Christ is therefore not a distant Creator who started the universe and then stepped away from it.
- He is its **sustaining and unifying center.**

Jesus has absolute authority because

- Everything came through Him
- Everything exists for Him
- Everything is held together by Him

Jesus isn't merely the Creator at the beginning of the story
He is the One holding the story together.

GREAT NEWS

- When Jesus becomes the center of your life, your life becomes centered on the One who is already at the center of everything.

TERRIBLE NEWS

- When you reject the lordship of Christ, you are attempting to build your life around something other than the One for whom you were created.

Straw Man

Colossians does not describe Jesus as one important planet in your solar system.
He is the center around which everything else must orbit.

Illustration

1. Solar system: Chaos would follow if every planet tried to become the center. Spiritual disorder begins when something created takes the place reserved for Christ.

2. Architect: The architect understands the design and purpose of every room. Creation's purpose is not self-invented; it is found in the Creator.
3. Manufacturer: A product functions best according to the design of its maker. Human freedom does not eliminate created purpose.
4. Author: Characters do not get to overrule the author about the story's ultimate meaning.
5. Compass: A compass is useful because it has a fixed reference. Christ provides the fixed center by which every other direction is judged.

Application

1. What area of my life treats Jesus as adviser instead of Lord?
2. Bring money, relationships, sexuality, career, entertainment, politics and ambition under Christ's authority.
3. Replace "What do I want?" with "What is Christ's will?"
4. Replace "What does culture permit?" with "What has the King said?"

- **Jesus is the exclusive builder.**

II. Jesus builds his church on one exclusive confession.

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church

Question

What is the "Rock" that Jesus is building his Church on?

- Is it Peter that Jesus is building his church?
- Is it Peter's confession that Jesus is building his church.
 - A. Jesus established His church upon the revealed truth that He is the Messiah
 1. The Son of the living God.
 2. And He still builds His church the same way today.
 - B. **Wherever Jesus is revealed as the Messiah...**
 1. **Wherever that truth is believed.**
 2. **Wherever that confession is made.**
 3. **Wherever that declaration is proclaimed...**

Jesus builds His church.

Matthew 16:16–18

Peter declares, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus responds that this truth was not discovered merely by human reasoning
“this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.”

Then immediately Jesus says, **“on this rock I will build my church.”**

That sequence matters.

Revelation → Confession → Church

- C. Jesus did not begin by giving Peter an organizational structure.
 - 1. He did not give him a building program.
 - 2. Denominational structure.
 - 3. Marketing strategy
 - 4. Institutional plan.
- D. Jesus gave him a revelation of Himself.
 - 1. And when that revelation became Peter's confession
 - 2. **“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”**
 - 3. Jesus said, in effect, *Now we can talk about My church.*

Jesus builds His church upon the revealed truth of who He is

- E. The church begins with a revelation of Jesus.
 - 1. Peter does not merely know facts *about* Jesus.
 - 2. He recognizes who Jesus actually is.
 - 3. Jesus identifies the source: “my Father in heaven” revealed it.
 - 4. What the Father revealed in verse 17 becomes foundational to what Jesus announces in verse 18.

Christianity did not begin by discovering a better religion.

Christianity began by discovering who Jesus is.

- F. Jesus builds His church wherever that revelation becomes confession.
 - 1. Peter doesn't keep the revelation internal.
 - 2. He **says it: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”**

You could trace that pattern through Acts.

The geographical location changes.

The people change.

The cultures change.

But the center doesn't change.

Acts 2 — Peter proclaims Jesus as **“both Lord and Messiah.”**

Acts 8 — Philip goes to Samaria and “**proclaimed the Messiah there.**”

Acts 9 — after Saul encounters Jesus, he begins preaching that “**Jesus is the Son of God.**”

Acts 17 — Paul reasons from Scripture that “**This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah.**”

Jerusalem.

Samaria.

Damascus.

Thessalonica.

Different cities. Different audiences. **Same confession. And the church keeps growing.**

Application

- Every time somebody realizes, “Jesus is the Messiah,” the church is being built.
- Every time somebody confesses, “Jesus is Lord,” the church is being built.
- Every time the gospel enters a home, a neighborhood, a city, or a nation and somebody declares, “Jesus is the Son of the living God,”
Jesus is doing exactly what He promised: “I will build my church.”

• **Jesus is the exclusive builder.**

• **Jesus builds his church on one exclusive confession.**

III. Jesus is the exclusive head and owner of the Church.

A. Matthew 16:18 — “I will build **MY church.**”

1. Greek *ekklēsia* — assembly, congregation, gathered people.
2. Jesus claims the assembly as His own.
 - a. Not my church
 - b. Not your church.
 - c. Not the denomination’s church.
 - d. Not the board’s church.
 - e. Not the culture’s church.

B. His Church

Colossians 1:18

He is the head of the body, the church

- The body receives life, identity and direction in relation to the Head.

Ephesians 1:22–23

²² God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body...

C. If Jesus is Head, the church does not hand Him an agenda.

1. We discern His agenda.
2. We submit to His Word.
3. We follow His Spirit.
4. We measure success by faithfulness to His mission.

Church History

- Across history, the church has repeatedly been tempted to attach itself too closely to political power, national identity, wealth or cultural approval.
- Every generation has to hear Matthew 16 again: Jesus says **MY church**.

Illustration

1. Human body: The hand may be talented, but it cannot declare independence from the head and remain healthy.
2. Orchestra: Many instruments, one conductor. Unity does not require sameness; it requires shared submission.
3. Military command: A unit can be highly trained and still fail if everyone runs a private mission.
4. Business owner: Employees may have expertise, but ownership establishes who sets the ultimate mission.
5. Church sign: Imagine replacing every church name with one sign for a Sunday: "PROPERTY OF JESUS CHRIST." It would change how we think about preferences and power.

Application

1. Commit to the local church as a functioning member of Christ's body not merely a consumer of religious services.
2. When preference conflicts with biblical mission, preference must yield.

The question is not

- "Will people like this?"

The question is

- "Is this faithful to Christ?"
- "Where am I serving, giving, praying, witnessing and carrying responsibility in His body?"

- **Jesus is the exclusive builder.**
- **Jesus builds his church on one exclusive confession.**
- **Jesus is the exclusive head and owner of the Church.**

IV. Jesus is actively building a Church that cannot be stopped.

A. "I will build"

1. Greek oikodomeō — to build, construct, edify.
2. Jesus is not maintaining a museum.
3. Jesus is constructing a people.
4. Saving people
5. Transforming people
6. Joining people together
7. Equipping people
8. Sending people

B. "The gates of Hades will not overcome it."

1. Hades refers to the realm of the dead.
2. Gates are normally defensive structures.
3. At minimum, death and the powers arrayed against Christ will not finally defeat the church He builds.

Current global reality

- Open Doors' 2026 World Watch List reports that more than 388 million Christians face high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith.
- It reports 4,849 Christians killed for faith-related reasons during its latest reporting period.
- Persecution is real.
- Suffering is real.
- Martyrdom is real.

Persecution has never been able to issue the final verdict on the church of Jesus Christ.

World history

- The Roman Empire executed Christians.
- Communist governments restricted churches.
- Dictators closed buildings.
- Missionaries were expelled.
- Yet Christ's church repeatedly appeared in places rulers believed they had controlled.
- Vietnam: prisons, underground revival, pastors who suffered, churches planted, leaders trained

The Church of Jesus Christ is Unstoppable

Illustration

1. Vietnam: Reuse one carefully chosen story from Pastor Samuel or the underground church. Connect it directly to "I will build My church."

2. Seed under concrete: A plant can exploit the smallest crack and push toward light. Life has a way of appearing where people assumed nothing could grow.
3. Roman persecution: Emperors had armies, courts and prisons; the church often had no buildings or political power. The empire that persecuted Christians eventually disappeared while the Gospel continued.
4. Open Doors statistics: Put 388 million into scale — roughly more people than the entire U.S. population — then remind the church that suffering believers are still worshiping.
5. Construction site: During construction, the site can look chaotic. The builder sees the plan that observers cannot yet see.

Application

1. Do not measure Christ's faithfulness by the absence of opposition.
2. Do not interpret cultural resistance as proof that the Gospel has lost its power.
3. Pray for persecuted believers as members of the same body.
4. Expect Jesus to build people in difficult places — including difficult people and difficult neighborhoods. Ask what Christ is trying to build in you right now.

Revelation / Praise

Jesus has absolute authority.

Jesus is Head of the church.

Jesus is building His church.

The gates of Hades cannot issue the final verdict.

The Holy Spirit empowers the church for witness.

Request / Petition

Strengthen us to identify our Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria harvest.

Reveal Your strategic plan to reach our local, regional, cross-cultural and world harvests.

Empower us to become effective harvesters.

Give us faith to receive Your divine plan of salvation for the world.

Help us submit every church agenda to the Head of the church.

Closing Declaration

EVERYTHING IS THROUGH HIM. EVERYTHING IS FOR HIM. THE CHURCH BELONGS TO HIM. THE MISSION COMES FROM HIM. THE POWER COMES FROM HIM. THE HARVEST BELONGS TO HIM.