

“I Will Build My Church – Part 3”
Mark 8:27-29; Matthew 16:13-20
(Preached at Trinity, October 12, 2011)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. For several Wednesday night sermons I've directed your attention to **Matt. 16:18**
Matthew 16:18 NAU - "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."
 - A. I stressed that the Roman Catholic position that Peter is the rock upon which the church was built cannot be. The church rests upon no mere man. Rather, the church is built upon the true Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus alone is the bedrock upon which the church is built. It is upon this foundation that the church stands invincible and victorious until the end – "the gates of Hades will not overpower it."
 - B. There is a sense, however in which the church was built upon Peter. In the sense that he could be seen as the first stone of a multitude of those making this grand profession.
1 Peter 2:5 NAS - "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."But the great Rock upon which the church is built is Jesus Christ
"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"
 - C. We are now narrowing our focus to the phrase, I will build My church
 1. This is a topic of great importance today. Few, very few today have an adequate understanding of the church. Because of this few today see the importance of the church and few today give the church a place of any particular significance in their lives.
 2. I decided to spend some time on this great topic.
2. First, I distinguished between the church universal and the local church. As the church is presented in the NT the distinction between the Church Universal and the Local Church often fades. Most of the NT is directed to local churches. In the first three chapters of Revelation we find Christ dwelling in the midst of His churches – local churches. The church is primarily a visible organization
3. Second, I've given some particular attention to our Lord's use of personal pronouns here - "I will build My church"
 - A. "I will build" - Jesus is the master builder of the church – both universal and local. It is of His making. Churches find their existence in Christ. Every church is formed under His authority and with His blessing. Without His authority and blessing a church cannot be said to be a church.
 - B. "My church" – On one hand this implies ownership – possession. Last time we looked at the church as the beloved Bride of Christ, chosen in eternity and the great object of Christ's love as He came to die upon the cross.

Ephesians 5:26-27 NAS - "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless."

"upon this rock I will build My church"

"My Church, My bride, My beloved"

Jesus came with intensity, He came intentionally with His church upon His heart. He came with a motivation of unconditional love.

4. Tonight I want to begin looking more particularly at the nature of the church. First, we'll look at the nature of the word itself.

- I. We can glean some additional information from the Greek word translated "church"

- A. Often attention is given to the etymology of the word:

1. ἐκκλησία - from a compound of ἐκ – from out of, and καλέω – to call; The church is the called out ones. But we have to guard against giving too much attention on the etymology. The word ἐκκλησία was used for several hundred years before the Christian era.
2. In classical Greek or pre-New Testament Greek the word was often used to describe a group of citizens gathering into some public place as an assembly. It was even used to describe legislative assemblies.

- B. In the New Testament, however, the word did take on a particular meaning

1. In the most basic sense, the church is an assembly of people like many other assemblies – but the church is NOT just any assembly like a Union meeting, PTA, AA, Lions, etc.
2. The Church used in the NT sense is an assembly of God's people.
 - a. Last time I took you on a brief tour of eternity when God forged the Covenant of Redemption. We are a particular people chosen and given to Christ as His beloved bride.

2 Timothy 1:9 – "who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity," - KJV – "before the world began,"

2 Thessalonians 2:13 NAS - "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."

- b. As an assembly of God's called out ones we share a unique unity completely different from any other assembly.
** We have been drawn together as an interactive and interdependent body. As we consider the church the idea of corporate unity must never be overlooked.
3. As we consider the nature of Christ's church we have to understand the unique unity that binds us together.

- II. Our ultimate unity rests upon our union with Christ
 Jesus says, "Upon this Rock I will build my church"
- A. We have been joined to Christ
1. That which pertains to Him now pertains to us
 (Not in an absolute sense of deity)
 2. Yet, we have become partakers of the Divine nature – we are holy
 3. Through adoption we are the sons of God - We are heirs and joint heirs with Christ
 4. Most important, His death has become our death, His life our life
Romans 6:4-5 NAS - "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also *in the likeness* of His resurrection,"
 5. As members of the church of Christ we share in this glorious union
- B. We also enjoy union with one another
- Romans 12:4-5 NAS** - "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."
1. We enjoy an intimate familial relationship – part of the same family
 2. We enjoy an intimate corporeal relationship – there is a unique oneness so that the condition of one of us affects the whole.
 3. We share in all things – I can see it in the map upstairs
1 Corinthians 12:26 NAS - "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."
- III. The Bible also describes this union in other ways.
- A. We have listed seven distinctives that describe our church.
1. Although we describe them as particular to our church they really provide a description that should mark every local church.
 2. Christ Centered, Sound Doctrine, Biblical Worship, Expository Preaching, Personal Holiness, Loving Community, Commitment to Evangelism.
 3. These are actually Biblical descriptors of the unity a local church should enjoy
 4. Let me describe more particularly how these distinctives define the Biblical unity of the church
- B. Christ Centered – the church is entirely different from any other assembly in the focus of our existence
1. Again, the church is built upon Christ
 We have this common bond that holds us together?
 2. He is the Lord of the Church, the focus, the ultimate motive for in all that we do. As our great Bridegroom we can't take our eyes off of Him
 He is the focus of everything
Colossians 1:18 – "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."

- C. Sound Doctrine – the church is entirely different from any other assembly in the system of truth to which we hold
 - 1. In Christ, we are also united under a particular system of doctrine – The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” Jesus said, “Upon this Rock I will build my church”
He is the Rock but He also linked this solid foundation with the foundation of truth.
Matthew 7:24 – “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:”
 - 2. In this sense we are said to be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets – we are built upon objective truth. We are built upon the Word of God.
 - 3. To be Christ centered demands that we be Scripture centered
Ephesians 4:13 NAS - "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ."
- C. Biblical Worship - the church is entirely different from any other assembly in the focus of our adoration-- in our worship
 - 1. The Church is a worshipping body
John 4:23 NAS - "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."
 - 2. How we worship is important to God – In Spirit and Truth
Mohler – “Worshipping God is truth is fundamentally a matter of theology. The purpose of the theologian and the preacher is to serve the church so that the people of God worship Him more faithfully” (*He is Not Silent* p. 24).
 - 3. Paul tied his worship to his belief in sound doctrine
Acts 24:14 KJV - "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:"
 - 4. Biblical worship is worship God’s way.
- D. Expository Preaching - the church is entirely different from any other assembly in the focus of our power – preaching Christ.
 - 1. Both the NT and OT maintain the centrality of preaching. One of the marks of a true church is the true exposition of the Word of God. No other method of preaching maintains the centrality of the Word of God quite like expository preaching.
 - 2. Preaching builds the church as the body of Christ.
Paul told Timothy – “Preach the Word”
Preaching displays the glory of God, proclaims the Gospel of Christ, exposes and confronts sin and presses confession and repentance.

- E. Personal Holiness - the church is entirely different from any other assembly in our great passion to be like our Master.
 - 1. As one body in Christ we are striving to be holy
 - 2. This is the great work of the Church of Christ

Hebrews 10:24 NAS - "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds," KJV – "provoke"

 - 3. This is the great work of the pastor – to continually challenge the body to holiness. Paul to the Church of Corinth:

2 Corinthians 11:2 NAS - "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."
- F. Loving Community - the church is entirely different from any other assembly in the love we show towards one another
 - 1. The early church enjoyed wonderful unity

Acts 2:44-46 NAS - "And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common;⁴⁵ and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.⁴⁶ And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart."

 - 2. Love is the chief attribute of Christians
 - 3. We are joined to Christ and thus joined to one another. As one body we pray for one another, watch over one another – our Covenant
- G. Commitment to Evangelism - the church is entirely different from any other assembly in the substance of its labor.
 - 1. Evangelism is a shared work

1 Corinthians 3:7-9 NAS - "So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building."

 - 2. Our great work is to display Christ before the nations

Conclusion:

- 1. The church is a wonderful body that enjoys glorious unity in Christ.
 - 2. Because of our union with Christ there is cohesion to the Church. We have a unique union with one another. Paul described it as being "fitted together"
- Ephesians 2:20-22 NAU** - "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
- 3. May God grant us to understand the unique nature of our church.
We are a part of the great building of God, the Holy Temple that we might show forth the glory of Christ.