
Sermon Notes

January 10, 2016

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

I Will Build My Church

Matthew 16:18

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Moving Forward

- ❖ God is actively at work in preparing a new place for our congregation's "home base"
- ❖ Christ is setting an open door in front of us through which He calls us to step and become
 - a church that is more effectively engaged in building up believers
 - a church that is better equipped and better prepared to meet the needs of our community
 - a church that has a better grasp on what it means to know Christ and make Him known

- ❖ The planning and preparation that goes into welcoming a new baby into the family
 - "we're expecting!"
 - we need to prepare ourselves with a renewed understanding of what it means to be the people of God

I Will Build My Church

- ❖ God, the Father, gives Peter divine revelation so that he can know Christ
 - it all starts with knowing Christ
 - thanks to God's grace and enlightenment, Peter is able to accurately assess Jesus' identity
 - Jesus says Peter has been blessed by receiving this special gift of revelation
- ❖ Jesus says His church is built on the rock-solid, unshakable conviction that He, is God's Messiah, the Savior of the world, the Son of the Living God
 - only Jesus can build His church
 - the church is not an organization it is an organism

The Church Will Triumph

- ❖ Jesus' promise stands secure: *I will build my church*
 - it is a divine promise from the lips of the One who is faithful and true and who cannot lie
 - Jesus expresses His promise in the future tense!
 - Jesus has begun a process which He will continue to guide and direct until its completion

- ❖ God creates and builds His church to be a holy people, a people set apart for His special purposes
 - edifying (building up) believers
 - evangelizing the lost
 - encouraging the faint hearted, the broken hearted, the downcast and lowly, those who are despised, rejected, and thrown away by the world

God's Purpose in Salvation

- ❖ God's primary purpose in extending saving grace to us is not to keep us out of hell or to make us happy
- ❖ God's purpose in salvation is to make us holy and to incorporate us into His body
 - Ephesians 5:25-27
 - Jesus died to create the church
 - He ***gave himself up for her, that He might sanctify her***
- ❖ Christianity is not a personal faith, it is a shared faith, a corporate faith
 - Christianity is not about what Jesus has done for me, it is about what Jesus is doing for US
 - the gospel is not about YOU, the gospel is about US

A Striking Testimony

- ❖ Nabeel Qureshi
 - raised in a close-knit Pakistani-American family that was devoted to the teaching of Islam

- over time, Qureshi began to conclude that there were compelling historical truths contained in the Bible
- ❖ Though Qureshi became convinced of the truth of Scripture, he hesitated turning his life over to Christ knowing the ramifications it would have on his relationships with family in friends
 - the importance of community in Islamic culture
 - when he did come to faith, Nabeel was cut off from his family and the Islamic culture of which he had formerly been a part
- ❖ Qureshi perceives that "individualist tendencies" are the biggest challenge facing the American church

Personal Application

1. The Lord will build His church. It will be what He wants it to be. Yet Jesus asks us to participate in the building process and partner with Him. How is He using you to build His church?
2. Are you more inclined to think of your faith as a "personal faith" or a "corporate identity"? Why? Based on Jesus' words to us, does this need to change in any way? What will you do about that?
3. What will you do to cultivate a "we're expecting" mentality toward the new opportunities and challenges the Lord is extending to our congregation as we prepare to move into the new "deployment center" He is preparing for us?