

The Emerging Church

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Open Matthew 16 with me this morning, please, verse 13.

"13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona," Son of Jonah, that's what that means, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

No man knows the Father but the Son, no man knows the Son but the Father and to whom soever he shall reveal him. He just revealed his identity to Simon Peter. Now look at verse 18,

"18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Father, bless your holy word and the reading of your word. In thy name we pray. Amen.

Caesarea Philippi distinguished from Caesarea Maritima. Caesarea Maritima is by the Mediterranean Sea. Caesarea Philippi is north, way north in Israel at the springs of Banias. Here he asked his disciples if they had finally heard from God. He wanted the source to come from them. Who am I? Simon Peter made it very clear, "You're the Son of the living God." Then, of course, he told him in verse 17, "Simon, my Father in heaven revealed that to you," and so it to this very moment that if it doesn't come from your head but from your heart and if your heart speaks it, it came from God that he is the Son of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is God's Son. Many religions would deny that and try their dead level best to do away with it but it's a fact that cannot be changed. He's the Son of God.

But he said something here in verse 18 that much catch your attention: he said, "Peter, upon this rock I will build my church," ekklesia. That's the Greek word translated "church." It means "an assembly called out." He said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," telling you right off the bat that the church will have enemies and that the very gates of hell will do all they can to destroy the church of God but it's not going to happen. There have been those now for 2,000 years who have set about to build his church. God didn't tell us to build his church. He didn't tell me to build his church. I wouldn't know where to start. I wouldn't know how to do it. Well, you build buildings. That's not his church. His church is made up of the souls of men and it's God that builds that church. If you're in his body today, you have only one to thank for that and that's God the Father who drew you to the Son. The church of God is not a thing, it's not an organization, it's not a movement. It's certainly not a secular part of a government. It is a living organism. It has a life of its own. It has a life that it does not draw from this earth. It is separate in its identity. It's unique in what it is. It cannot be defined on a piece of paper. It certainly can't by no means be broken down and analyzed by some government agency whether it be from a parliament or a king or a president. The church is a mysterious thing that's made up of the souls of men and women that have been born again. I belong to the church of God.

Today in 2014, there's a lot going on in this country and around the world as it relates to the church. I want you to imagine this morning if the church didn't exist. Imagine if the only source of truth was the Bible that you get from the public school system or from the universities or whatever moral teaching you may get from the government or what have you. Or you had to turn a foreign religion: you had to turn to Buddhism or you had to turn to Confucius or you had to turn Hinduism to find out why you're here and the deeper truths of life and what you're about. What if the church did not exist? If Satan sets about to destroy the truth, he's going to destroy it in the foundation of the truth and that's the church. If Satan is going to do away with the souls of men, he's going to go to the heart of what it's about and that's the church. If he's going to create a false gospel, if he's going to pull the wool over, if he's going to pull darkness upon the people, he's going to go into the church to do it.

The church today has morphed; it's like a chameleon. It changes and it has changed so much that some people don't even recognize it. I saw an advertisement the other day for a local church and I thought, "Good night man, that's the theater." It was dark and all they had was big screens across the front of it and that's it. And when you go into this church, you're going into a theater; you're going in to be entertained and that's all it's about. I thought to myself, "The house of God, the church of God, it ought to be about light. It ought to be about the fact that a man or a woman comes into the house of God, the church of God and they come into this place like this and they find out who they are and what they're about before they walk out that back door, that they'll get truth in here that is absolute salient truth, the kind of truth that roots them and grounds them in what they are and when they walk out that back door, they're equipped to deal with all the lies of hell that come from every angle that you get them from today."

There is a new movement in church and it's called the Emerging Church. It's new but it's still old because the source of it is old. It has a name today that is new, it's called the Emerging Church but really and truthfully what it is, it's the old lie of Satan repackaged and fed to the people and it emerged about 30-40 years ago and it's what's called the New Age Movement and now since it emerged as the New Age Movement, it has taken on a new form and no longer calls itself a New Age Movement. Now it just simply calls itself the Emerging Church. I got on a website yesterday and here is some of the stuff they used to promote and package this church. It's a fad driven church. Whatever fad comes out: whatever new book, new program. For a while, everybody jumps on board and then after six months or a year, they abandon it and they move on to something else. It's a church full of mysticism. Mysticism. We're talking about delving in a spirit world that we're not equipped to deal with, that the Lord said to leave alone. He said, "Be not dismayed with the signs of the heathen."

It's a consumer driven Christianity. They have methods that appeal to the flesh. What will make you feel good when you come in here? We want you to feel good when you come to the house of God. We want you to get pumped up so that you can walk out with your ego built up and you can realize how wonderful you are. But you're not wonderful.

Evangelical leaders promote New Age and Eastern spiritual practices in the church. They get into Contemplative Prayer, yoga and channeling and all this stuff. It's going on right now inside the Emerging Church. The Emerging Church is something that is altogether different from anything you've known in the past. The Emerging Church, it's church incorporated. It is marketed to America. It's like they need to take lessons from Madison Avenue and they need to package the church and sell it to the world. I'm not selling anything. I'm not packaging the church. It's not my place to build the church. It's my place to preach the word of God but they want to package it so they hire people. They bring in consultants so that they know how to market and marketing is a big deal. You could have the finest product in the world but if you don't get it marketed correctly, people won't even know it exists so they feel like they need to market the church.

The issue of other religions as worship in the church, in other words, they pull from everything on this earth and they bring it into the Emerging Church. When you walk into some church houses today, you don't know if you're in a Christian church or a Buddhist temple. You don't know if you're going to hear a Hindu swami or what you're liable to see. The man-pleaser is pleasing man. It's making you feel good. "I want to get involved and what can I do to make you feel good about yourself?" That's what the Emerging Church is about. Schuller planted, Hybels watered and Warren gave the increase. That's true. There is a lot of truth in that.

Becoming transformed or transforming transformers, it's a buzzword. When you hear somebody that calls himself a Christian all the time using the word "transformed, transformed, transformed," watch him. It's a red flag. It's a buzzword and it means something to these people. They ignore eschatology. They have no use for the kind of preaching that goes on in the Christian church when it talks about the Second Coming of Christ, how that he could come at any moment and he could catch his saints up to meet

him in the air. Their life, their focus, their future is here. That ought to tell you something about them. It ought to tell you a lot about these people. They ignore eschatology. It's all about selling themselves. It's all about the people of the world receiving the church so I have to make it palatable to them. I have to make it what they want.

They butcher the Bible. They butcher the word of God. It's been a long time that they've gotten out of the issue of Bible translations. It doesn't matter to these people whether it's an NIV or whether it's an RV or what kind of a Bible translation it is. It doesn't mean anything to these people anymore. They just pull up from out of the air and borrow from a Hindu or a Buddhist and they put it in there and repackage it and put it in their own words and create doctrine from it. That's what's going on in the church now. There is no longer authority. The Bible is a meaningless thing. They don't care anything about translations. There used to be a battle over translations. There used to be a battle about, "Well, the NIV says this. KJV says this." That doesn't mean anything to these people. That's a meaningless book.

Their faith is not based on the Bible anymore. The Emerging Church has its own. A line has been crossed. "Programs. Programs. Programs. Get your program. Program. Program. Program." And so the programs go on. Christian leaders betray Christ for world peace. They're all headed back to Rome. It's an amazing thing to me at how the Emerging Church is certainly headed back to Rome.

Now, let's ask some simple questions. Who builds the church? He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." I don't need a marketing program. I don't need to figure out what it takes to get out here and reach people with some kind of a presentation that will make them feel good about coming. "We've got this to offer you at Temple. We can give you this for your kids. We can do this. We can do that." Folks, what you've done is put in your hands what God only can do. The message of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ can reach a sinner because they need to be saved. It's a message that is different from every other message on the face of this earth. It will not be compromised. Amen. It cannot be comprised.

But listen to them: "We must imagine, pursue, develop the new ways of being followers of Jesus. New ways of doing theology and living biblically. New understandings of missions. New ways of expressing compassion and seeking justice. New kinds of faith communities. New approaches to worship and service. New integrations in conversations and convergences and dreams." All new, new, new, new, new. I marvel at the arrogance of men. For 2,000 years the church of the living God has preached his word, they have prayed over his word, they've seen men and women saved, born again by the grace of God. For 2,000 years the word of God's been preached and now here we have a crowd rise up today and they're smarter than all the generations that went before us and they're going to change everything. New. New. New. New. What an arrogant crowd. Arrogant, my friend, you're dealing with arrogance to the very bone.

What is a church? It's an assembly of born again believers with sins forgiven in fellowship around a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. That person is the Lord Jesus Christ

supreme. He's not on the level with any. If it's a true Bible church, it comes together in the name of Jesus. It loves Jesus. It preaches Jesus. It's about Jesus. It's not about me. It's not about a movement. It's not about your denomination. It's about the Son of God. And if it's not about him, it's a piece of garbage. I don't even have the time to flip my finger, I have not time for it. If that church is not about the Lord Jesus Christ, it's not the church of the living God. He's everything. He's what it's about. He's what makes the difference in your life. He's who you'll find out who you are through him. He's the one that your soul is seeking right now. You've tried the New Age Movement, you've tried Emerging Churches, you've tried dope, you've tried drugs, you've tried sex, you've tried psychology and it has all failed you. But the Son of God will not fail you. He'll never fail you.

Here's what they say: "Every religion has a root and metaphor that gives it depth and substance. For the Chinese, it is Tao. For the Indians, it is Dharma. For the Egyptians, it is Mot. For the Jews, it is Berith or Torah. And for the Christians, it is Logos." To put the Lord Jesus Christ in the same grouping as a Chinese and a Hindu and all the rest of them is pure, rotten, dirty blasphemy yet this man that wrote that thinks he's a Christian. Do you know why? Because he follows the teachings of Jesus. Let me tell you something about following the teachings of Jesus: you'd better get him in your heart first. You'd better know who he is first. You'd better be born again first because you can follow the teachings of Jesus and it will never get you to heaven, folks. You have to have the Son, not the teachings. He that hath the Son hath life, not the teachings. His teachings are wonderful. They are wonderful but, folks, the teachings won't get you to glory, only the Son can get you into heaven. Amen.

"A globalization of evangelism in connection with others and a globally informed gospel is capable of talking across the fence with Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim, people from other so-called new religions, so forth and so on. It will take a decolonized theology for Christians to appreciate the genuineness of other faiths and to see and celebrate what is good, beautiful and true in their beliefs without any allusions that down deep we all are believers in the same thing." No we're not. But do you see where this is leading? Do you see where this globalization of religion is headed? Some folks are still asleep. Some of you still sleep. Some of you came in here asleep and you walk out the back door asleep and you'll get up next week asleep. You'll stay asleep. You'll be asleep when Christ comes.

Folks, we're not looking for a global religion, we're in the midst of a global religion and the roots of it run much deeper than people thought. All of the prophecy teachers 50 years ago, the only thing they could talk about was Roman communism and, my friend listen, I'm not here to support communism or Rome or either one but I'm going to tell you right now: there is a whole lot more going on than Rome and communism. You've got evangelicals, churches that call themselves Christian churches, that are deep into Luciferian doctrines and some of your family members are going to those churches and Knoxville has its share.

How does he get the message out? He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." How did he get the message out, Preacher?

Let me tell you how he'd do it. When the Lord Jesus Christ came, the Bible said he went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The Apostle Paul said, "Timothy, preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season." The Bible said that God chose the foolishness of preaching to save him that believes. There is something about preaching that is different from everything else on this earth. When God calls a man to preach, he calls him from heaven and he gives him a message. He becomes a messenger. To preach the word of God is the highest honor that God could ever give a man on the face of the earth. I feel humbled time and time and time again to think that God would reach down into this earth and save me and then call me to preach his word. "But the preaching of the word is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, to preach Christ and to preach him crucified." He chose the foolishness of preaching. A God-called preacher with a God-called message is something to stand up and proclaim to this world all about eternity, death, hell and the grave and the coming kingdom of our Lord Christ. There is something about preaching that stirs the heart of people. It reaches into the soul of a man and it moves him. There is preaching that gets a hold of you and that preaching is what God chose to get his word out.

I can't preach sitting on a stool. I can't do it. And if I tried to preach with a big robe on, you'd have me in heat stroke in about ten minutes. Couldn't make it. I'm not against robes but I couldn't wear a robe and preach, I'd be gone. Wouldn't make it long at all. There is just something about preaching where the old timers said the old boy came out from behind a plow, he'd come out of the mechanic's shop, he'd come out with the only thing that he had in his hand and it was his Bible. He'd get up in the pulpit and he'd preach until his shoes were filled with sweat. He soaked his clothes by preaching the word of God. The Bible said he calls it foolishness, the world laughs at it, they mock it. But I marvel at the stuff that they marvel at too. What they call good and what they rejoice and shout about to me is just a bunch of junk.

But there's something about preaching that grabs you. The preaching of the word of God. The greatest preacher that ever walked the face of this earth was our Lord Jesus Christ. I feel in good company. A preacher of the gospel. Christ was a preacher, folks. He preached his word. Not so anymore. Here's how they get their message out. "Features of all the world's religions, the language of light communicating the divine and symbolizing the human with the divine. Mohammed's light-filled cave. Moses' burning bush. Paul's blinding light. Fox's inner light. Krishna's lord of light. Bohme's light-filled cobbler shop. Plautinus' fire experiences. Bodhisattvas with the flow of kundalini fire erupting from their fontaneleess and so on." He put kundalini fire in the same list as the light that smote Paul on the road to Damascus. Do you see what I'm talking about? Do you see what I'm talking about? What is kundalini fire? You've heard me say it again and again. It's a snake coiled up at the base of your spine that rises up to the top of your head. Each one of the seven chakra points that you have in your body are colored with a different color and have a specific spiritual power associated with them and by the time this serpent rises up to the top of your head, it has reached the highest point in your being and is able to communicate with the divine. It brings you into a state of communication with the divine, with the Logos or with the pleroma and the thing we talked about, the dhimmiers. Some of you heard me in Sunday School talk about it. It's that rising up and that initiation into

the elitists. It's that spiritual experience that rises up from inside you and unleashes a world of power. Well, let me tell you something about it: what you do is unleash a world of demons. The insane asylums are full of people right now that have had kundalini power destroy their very lives. When you tap into that spirit world, you're not playing games with toys. You tap into the spirit world and there is a real spiritual presence in that world and if you've ever had a demon to possess you or come after you like that, you'll understand what fear is about. If a boy can walk up a wall backwards, if he can levitate in the air, if flies can bust out, blood come down walls. All of this stuff is documented: levitation, speaking in tongues, power. One little 90-year-old woman can flip five men off of her. That's not human power, that's demonic. Leave it alone. The only source for your spiritual life ought to be the blood of Jesus Christ on your knees, cleansing your soul and crying out to him for help as an unworthy sinner.

But these people, it's not preaching that they want. They want to look inward to the inner self and feel the spirit power and realize they're on a spiritual legacy and their spiritual heritage. In other words, it's all about them and it's all about their spirituality and so they go from one line to the next line. To one church to the next church. To one guru to the next guru to find the secret to unleash the spirit potential that's in all of them and sooner or later they'll come upon a spirit guide and that spirit guide begins to raise them higher and higher in spiritual consciousness and that spirit guide is a demon.

What does the preacher preach? Acts 20:21 says, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance for what, Preacher? Original sin, did my mother conceive me? Sin was handed down from Adam. Sin. But this Emerging Church doesn't use the word "sin." They don't like the idea of original sin. They have no need for salvation. It's all about the pursuit of a spiritual growth. They don't preach the gospel of the grace of God where you are a lost, guilty, hell bound sinner. There isn't anyone in this house, there's not a soul in this house, there's not a man walking the face of this earth that would let everybody follow him around for 24 hours a day, seven days a week and hear every word he said and discern every thought that went through his mind and everything he's ever done. You'd be so humiliated, you'd be ready to crawl under a rock and never show your face. And as far as my innate goodness, as far as my righteousness is concerned, that's where I belong, under a rock. But I don't have my righteousness. It's not about my goodness. It's not about who I am. It's never been about who I am. Hallelujah, it's about who he is.

Sin is my problem, not your sin, my sin. Sin is my problem. It hounds me day in and day out. When I would do good, evil is with me always. I find the law written and I cannot overcome it but all it takes is one look to Calvary, one pleading of the blood of Christ, "Lord Jesus, be merciful to me a sinner. Wash my sins away in your precious blood," and the sweetest peace comes over my soul. Power comes into my life and I can walk free again because I walk in fellowship and communion with my Lord Jesus Christ. I've never asked Buddha for a thing, don't intend to. I've never said a word to Mohammed. I've never said a thing to Kali, one of the many millions of Hindu gods and don't intend to. Why? Don't need them. Don't want them. I've got Jesus and I've got more than I need with him.

Some of you in here today don't realize that your pursuit of excellence and potential and to realize the greatness within yourself and how wonderful that you are spiritually. There is nothing in the world more than a lie that was belched out of hell. You are a sinner. Fallen in the sight of God. And the only way that a sinner can be restored in the sight of God is through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What he did on the cross for you can bring you back. I can't preach that in an Emerging Church. I can't preach that to those people. In the first place, you have the issue of the changing of the meaning of words, semantics. What does that mean? Well, if I say "faith" and they say "faith," faith defined to me means one thing, faith defined to them means another thing entirely. If I say "Jesus" and they say "Jesus," they may be talking about some demon straight out of hell. I'm talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, semantics. Semantics is the redefinition of words as you apply them, as you use them. There was a time 50-75 years ago when people said words that are used in the Christian church and everybody understood what they meant. They all meant the same thing. Not today. When one of these people tell you that they've been saved, have them define what that means to you. If they tell you they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, ask them which Christ and what does that mean to them to believe. That's what you have to do today. That's where we are today.

He said, "Upon this rock I'll build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." 1973, he put another brick in the wall. He went out into the field and cut down a tree then he dug a stone up out of the dirt, fashioned it and made it fit. He said, "I know exactly where it belongs." He brought that stone back and put it in the wall. He said, "That's where I want you. That's where you're going to be. That's what yours forever and from now on." I'm that stone. I was that tree. He called me by his grace. He put me into the body of Christ. He was building his church and no man intervened and no man could stop it. Hallelujah to God for that! I did not have to accept men's approval. I didn't even seek it. I just know that when I called upon his name, he did something inside me that changed me for the rest of my life. I don't need what men have.

He built his church. He reached into the lowest place to do it. He does it and he reaches in to do it and he reaches into where you are to do it and he calls you by his grace. Have you ever heard that call? Have you really ever heard it? Oh, I know you meditate and I know you've got your mantras and I know you've sat in the dark and burned candles and I know you've listened to your music and I know you've got your guru and your spirit guide and all that, but have you ever met the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you have a clue who is? He's the Son of the living God. He is God Almighty manifest in the flesh. He's the only Savior of mankind. He doesn't need one thing that any Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist that ever lived on the face of this earth has to offer. He doesn't need it. He's imminently, infinitely above it all. He's the Lord of glory.

Have you ever met him? Do you know who is? Has he ever forgiven you of your sins? Has he ever cleansed your soul? I'd like to invite you this morning in the name of Jesus to come to him. You don't need this new spirituality. The new spirituality is nothing in the world more than the old live Satan and here's the sad thing about all of this, folks: it's headed somewhere. Do you know where it's headed? Where do you think the Emerging

Church will take you? Where do you think this globalized religion is going? It's going straight to the antichrist and straight to hell. What a sad thing.

Father, in Jesus' name, I preached what you put on my heart this morning now and I pray for people. I pray for them. Father, the word now is in their hands. The truth is in their hands. It's up to them to do something about it. In Jesus' name I pray, for Jesus' sake I ask it. Amen.