

sermon study guide

February 13/14, 2021

Press On: The Church Christ Is Building

Dr. Henry Schorr

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is the highest point on which you have ever stood?
2. When is a time that you have been able to experience the support of the church by having your needs met?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Matthew 16:13-20

3. People had various ideas about who Jesus was. Peter confessed that He is the Son of the living God. Why is the correct view of Christ crucial for the building of His Church?
4. According to this Scripture what/who is the rock? Why does it matter?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. If someone were to ask you, 'Why does the church matter?' how would you respond? How would you address some of the negative things the church has been responsible for?
6. How can your group give someone a positive experience of the church Christ has established?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Reflect on and pray through the experiences you've had in the church. What can you celebrate? What challenges have you faced? Find someone with whom you can share your journey in the church and ask them about their journey.

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 16:13-20

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 loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

sermon study summary

Press On: The Church Christ Is Building Dr. Henry Schorr

Modern society tends to have a low opinion of Christians and the church. Some Christians wonder whether it is necessary to be part of the church or whether an organized church is even needed. Does the church and its mission really matter? Matthew 16:13-20 gives us some answers.

Firstly, the church matters because she matters to Jesus. The Bible refers to the church as His bride whom He loved so much that He died for her. At Caesarea Phillipi, where Greeks had sacrificed to Pan and Herod the Great built a temple to worship Caesar Augustus as a Roman god, Jesus asked his disciples who people thought he was. After a vague response, He asks Peter directly: "Who do you say I am?" Peter courageously declares, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Our response affects every part of our lives including how we see the church and engage in its mission and community. If Jesus is Lord, being part of the church is not optional (Hebrews 10:24-25). As Jesus partnered with Peter, so He partners with everyone who loves him to build His church.

Secondly, the church matters because it directs attention to eternal issues. We are challenged to have an eternal perspective and give our life to what really matters, because this life is not all there is (Matthew 16:26). The church reminds us that we are created with an eternal soul in a physical body. Everything earthly is left behind when we die; what matters then is where we stand with God.

Thirdly, the church matters because Christ chose this community to bring His Kingdom to earth, building his church with everyone who embraces Him as Lord and King. We are shaped by, and become like, the God we worship. God loved his creation so much that He left the glory of heaven, became one of us and died for us. When we worship him, we reflect Him in our lives. Granted, there have been people and churches who have misrepresented Christ; but the church is made of fallible human beings, as is the rest of humanity. Though we mourn our failures, Jesus is not any less real nor is his church no longer relevant. God continues to raise up people to bring correction where needed to gather people back to Himself and the truth.

Historically, the church has devoted itself to loving God and one another as themselves. Christians cherish life as sacred. They risk their lives to care for the sick, disadvantaged and hurting; rescuing unwanted babies, building hospitals and establishing schools and orphanages. Christ and His church hold as truth that every person has dignity, is valuable and needs to be treated like a child of the King. Jesus chose the church to ensure that His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Our faith is not a private matter; we come together in His name to pray, pool our resources and work in community. He calls us to join Him in invading enemy territory, proclaiming the Good News, setting people free and giving us His authority to do so. We also need others' encouragement to fulfill our mission. Together, we are the church that Jesus started: a community standing for 2000 years that will never die. Church is not just something that we go to; but a spiritual family that links together to make the invisible Christ visible for all the world to see.