

## ***The Foundation of Christ's Church***

*Matthew 16:13-20* - NCBC, September 20, 2020

### Main Point: **God's revelation is foundational to Christ's church**

- God's revelation builds a community that confesses Christ (13-17)
  - Our sin blinds us from being able to see Jesus as God (13-14)
  - Believing Jesus is God is the condition of His kingdom (15-16)
  - Our Heavenly Father gives us faith that Jesus is God (17)
- God's revelation empowers a community with the authority of Christ (18-20)
  - Jesus promises to build His people on the bedrock of the gospel and conquer death (18)
  - Jesus charges His people to proclaim His gospel with the authority of heaven (19)

### Application: **Praise God for His Word and His Spirit!**

- If you believe, you are blessed!
- Jesus wins! And He is the one who is building us for victory!
- The power of the church is in God's Word and God's Spirit!
- He has made us a gospel community to display His heavenly will on earth!

### Opening Announcements:

- **Please keep praying for our pastoral search** this month! Check out our FB page for daily prayer requests.
- **Remember to visit [mynCBC.org](http://mynCBC.org)** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of careful regathering.

<<On Christ the Solid Rock>>



**Jesus is God, He is the head of the church and the chief cornerstone upon which we stand.** What a privilege to confess Jesus as Lord together with each of you.

At this time please open your Bible and prepare to read from **Matthew chapter 16, verses 13-20.**

If you're joining us online, please notice the links alongside the livestream offer fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the preaching manuscript, and children's coloring pages to assist your worship. At any time you may pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

And while you're preparing for our Scripture reading, I want to share a quick status update on this year's neighboring and outreach initiative.

As you know, God commands His church to be a community of worship and witness. His indwelling Spirit calls us away from our self-love and apathy, and compels us to love our neighbors, even as He has loved us.

So during 2020, we're all seeking various neighboring initiatives to better obey Jesus and share His love with others. If you haven't yet read *The Art of Neighboring* book, there's still time to join us in loving our neighbors well! By God's grace, that book has just been the beginning of how God is working in and through us to better communicate His love with our neighbors this year!

I've been blown away by your testimonies of how God is helping you to initiate spiritual conversations with your unsaved neighbors in recent months. I really want to encourage us church!! God is working through us...all in spite of us...and it's amazing to see what He is doing for His Name's sake through our simple prayers and obedience.

From the Thursday night door-to-door ministry, to the summer neighboring initiatives, to extra priority on the lost in our prayers, God is changing us to be more like Him!

And now, I want you to be aware of our "Listening Campaign" which will roll out next month.

Throughout the entire month of October, we will be actively asking our closest neighbors in Mackinaw and Deer Creek to answer 2 questions for us.

Using Social media, specially designed websites, and physical survey boxes scattered around public areas, we want to ask our neighbors 2 questions next month:

**First, If a local church were to really love you, what would that look like?**

**And second, what do you currently believe is the greatest need in our community?**

Because as we seek to do a better job loving our neighbors, it just makes sense that we do a better job listening to them first, doesn't it?

So please begin praying now for God's favor upon next month's listening campaign. Pray for God to give us courageous faith as we seek to better love our unbelieving neighbors like Jesus has loved us.

Now please stand for the public reading of God's Word as I read the ESV translation from **Matthew 16 verse 13**:

*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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup> Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

This is God’s Word.

### Let’s Pray Together.

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Last week the 3 of us pastors enjoyed a day away together for rest, reading, and friendship. It was a refreshing retreat which was good for our souls!

And while we were enjoying a brief outdoor hike, we came across an old concrete foundation for a building. The entire building structure was gone, and the only thing remaining was a large concrete foundation. But the shape and size of the foundation told us that this used to be an old corn crib...where harvested ear corn would have been stored and naturally dried by an industrious farmer from yester-year.

After all, you can tell a lot about a building from its foundation. The foundation of a building shapes and secures it, and in many ways defines its purpose.

And in a similar way today our Bibles are open to **Matthew 16 verses 13-20** where we get to examine the foundation of Jesus’ church. This is the first time Jesus

mentions the concept of His church in the New Testament, and these Scriptures reveal the theological foundation for Christ’s church in His kingdom program.

As we study **Matthew 16**, we discover,



**God's revelation is foundational to Christ's church.** Both the worship of the church and the witness of the church rest squarely upon God’s self-revelation of Himself to the people of the church.

Now by revelation, I’m not speaking of the last book of the Bible. I’m referring to the work of God’s Word and God’s Spirit – the two means of God’s special revelation by which He discloses or reveals Himself to people.<sup>1</sup> God reveals Himself to His people through His Word by His Spirit. Apart from God making Himself known to us, there could never be a local church in this world.

Now before you check out and assume that this is a boring theological lecture that doesn’t have anything to do with you this morning...please listen carefully. What

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<sup>1</sup> God’s special revelation through His Word and His Spirit (c.f. Psalm 19:7-11; Romans 3:19-20), is distinct from God’s general revelation through

creation and the human conscience (c.f. Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:20; 2:15-16).

we're about to learn together has the power to encourage the faint, inspire joy, and motivate your holy living! Because the church of Jesus Christ is not a physical building – but rather a community of people! These truths are profoundly relevant to every one of us today, so first, in **verses 13-17**, let's discover how,

God's revelation **builds** a community that **confesses** Christ (13-17)

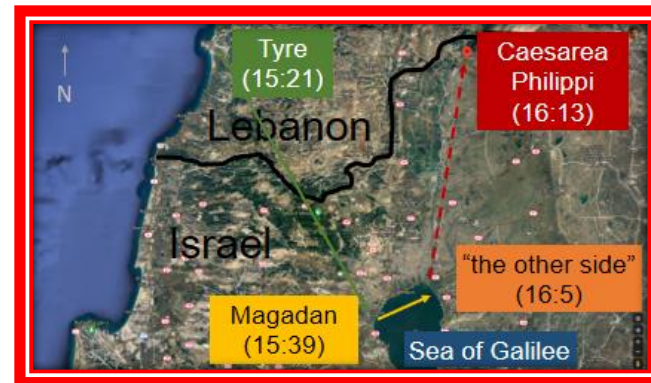
God's revelation builds a community that confesses Christ.

**Verse 13** tells us that Jesus and his disciples entered the district of Caesarea Philippi.

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<sup>2</sup> For many years, people in this area had worshipped false gods, including Baal (Joshua 11:16-17; 12:7). In the nearby city of Dan, the Israelite king Jeroboam had set up the golden calf at a "high place," and let the Israelites

Page **4a** of 14



Now remember that Caesarea Philippi was ~25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee – near the northern border of Israel – far removed from the religious influence of Jerusalem. Throughout Jewish history, this northern region was known for its idolatry and pagan influence.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, you could think of Caesarea Philippi like a modern-day Las Vegas or Hollywood, for the entire district was known for sexual sin and idol worship.

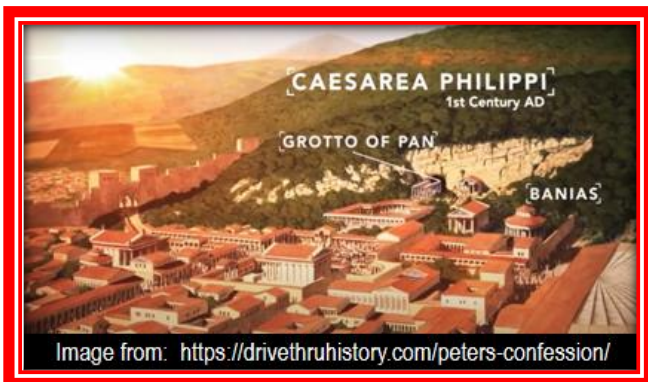
Caesarea Philippi was the capitol city of Philip the Tetrarch, one of the sons of Herod the Great. In fact, when Philip had inherited this city from his father, he had renamed it after the Emperor to gain political favors, and then added his own name to distinguish it from another town already named Caesarea on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>3</sup>

So put yourself in **verse 13**. Jesus had rebuked the Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees near Magadan, then you had rowed across the Sea of Galilee thinking about

to worship false gods (1 Kings 12:25-31).

<sup>3</sup> Caesarea Maritime

lunch while Jesus was trying to warn you about the dangers of earth-bound thinking, and now you've walked approximate 12 hours – perhaps over a couple of days – and you're entering one of your country's most wicked cities.



As you enter Caesarea Philippi, you can't miss its two large temples. First, Herod the Great had built a large white temple dedicated to the worship of the Emperor Augustus Caesar. So you are entering a place where the Emperor was literally worshipped as a god.

But most notably, the entire city of Caesarea Philippi was built against a 100' tall rocky cliff from which a river flowed out of a cave. And in front of that water-producing cave was a huge cult worship center to all kinds of false gods – most notably the fertility god from Greek Mythology named Pan.



These cliffs were known as the “Rock of the gods” or the Grotto of Pan, since carved into the rocky cliffs were all kinds of alcoves where different idols were positioned to receive the worship of the groveling crowds.

Sometime during the 1800s an earthquake collapsed part of the cave so that now the river no longer comes out the mouth of the cave, but we must understand that this space in front of the cliff had been turned into a large ½ acre temple site dedicated to a kind of fertility worship to Pan that was an unspeakable form of sexual perversion.





In fact, before Philip the Tetrarch had renamed the city Caesarea Philippi, it was called Banias, which was the Arabic way to say the city of Pan.

Caesarea Philippi was an entire city built around the gods of the underworld, and this cave was considered to be the entrance to the underworld – the very gate of hell itself! For as the priests of Pan oversaw all the sexual wickedness on this temple platform, the gods of fertility were supposedly convinced to emerge and bless the people with life for the year to come.

Now as you enter this city with Jesus, and are staggered by the grotesque idolatry and sin all around you, Jesus breaks the silence in **verse 13** with a question:

*Who do people say that the Son of Man is?*

In view of the rock of the gods, and the entrance to where the gods supposedly live in the underworld... Jesus repeatedly asks the disciples,<sup>4</sup> “What are people saying about Me?”<sup>5</sup>

It’s not that Jesus didn’t know the answer. He was testing the disciples. He wanted the twelve to think carefully about the world’s attitude towards Him.

And so **verse 14** gives their answers,

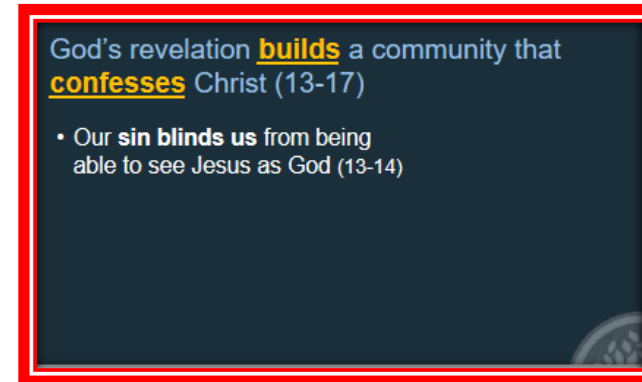
<sup>4</sup> The verb is in the imperfect tense, suggesting that Jesus asked repeatedly. Perhaps he went around the disciples, asking each disciple individually?

<sup>5</sup> We know from the parallel reference in 16:15, along with the parallel passages in Mark 8:27 and Luke 9:18, that Jesus was using the “Son of Man” title as a substitute for the personal pronoun, “I.” Son of Man is Jesus’ most common designation for Himself, and is used of Him some 80xs in the New Testament. The Jews recognized “Son of Man” to be a Messianic title from Daniel 7:13, but preferred not to use it since it

Some, like Herod Antipas,<sup>6</sup> say you are John the Baptist back from the dead. Others say you are Elijah,<sup>7</sup> or Jeremiah,<sup>8</sup> or one of the other prophets.

But notice, no one was saying that Jesus was the Messiah.

Popular opinion believed Jesus was just another prophet – but since He didn’t match any of their messianic expectations, no one believed anymore that He was actually God.



After all, **sin always blinds us from being able to see Jesus as God.**

Our society today is not that different than Caesarea Philippi. Still today, people worship politics, sex, and

emphasized the humanness of the Messiah.

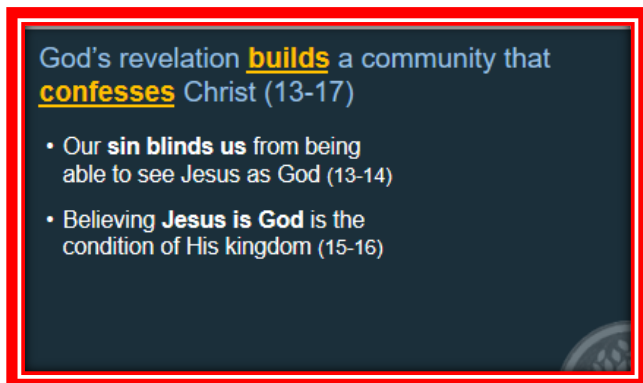
<sup>6</sup> Matthew 14:1-2

<sup>7</sup> C.f. Malachi 4:5 where Elijah was promised to come to announce the Messiah’s arrival

<sup>8</sup> Some Jews expected Jeremiah to appear and restore the Ark of the Covenant and the Altar of Incense which certain traditions alleged he had hidden before the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem (c.f. 2 Macc. 2:1-8)

prosperity. And whenever we seek our life's satisfaction in the creature more than the Creator, our sin distorts our understanding of who Jesus truly is.<sup>9</sup>

So we have a problem! Because we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.<sup>10</sup> And our sin has confused and darkened our souls with the same spiritual blindness as the worshippers of Caesarea Philippi. None of us seek to worship Jesus as God,<sup>11</sup> even though God clearly teaches that,



**Believing that Jesus is God is the condition of His kingdom.**

If you don't believe that Jesus is God, you will go to Hell when you die and be forever separated from the presence of God and His glory. Only those who believe that Jesus of Nazareth is truly your Lord will be given eternal life.<sup>12</sup>

So in **verse 15** Jesus gets personal, asking,

*But who do you all say that I am?*

And Simon Peter answers for the entire group in **verse 16** saying,

*You are the Christ* – the Messiah – the long-promised Prophet, Priest, and King – the Anointed Deliverer – *the Son of the living God!*

What a glorious confession of faith!

As Peter is surrounded by so much idolatry to dead, man-made gods... He boldly confesses, Jesus – you are God's Son and You share in God's living nature. Jesus – we say that you are God!

And isn't Jesus' response fascinating in **verse 17**,

*O how favored and happy are you, Simon – son of Jonah!* Your confession of faith is evidence that God Himself has blessed you!

*For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*

O don't miss this good news! **Verse 17** is as clear as it can be:

<sup>9</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4

<sup>10</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>11</sup> Romans 3:11; c.f. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:18-19

<sup>12</sup> John 14:6; Romans 10:9-11

God's revelation **builds** a community that **confesses** Christ (13-17)

- Our **sin blinds us** from being able to see Jesus as God (13-14)
- Believing **Jesus is God** is the condition of His kingdom (15-16)
- Our **Heavenly Father gives us faith** that Jesus is God (17)

**Our Heavenly Father gives us faith that Jesus is God.**  
Faith itself is a grace gift from God to every believer!

No one can say that Jesus is Lord apart from the Holy Spirit revealing such truth to your heart.<sup>13</sup> Peter didn't come to this understand because of all the miracles, or the 2 years of mentoring, or His Jewish upbringing.

Peter was a son of a sinner – Jonah by name...and so Peter had the nature of a sinner who was also blind to the fact that Jesus was worthy of worship. But the grace of God appeared in Peter's life,<sup>14</sup> bringing light to the darkness,<sup>15</sup> and granting him the desire to believe<sup>16</sup> that Jesus was truly his Lord and God.

Church, this is the Gospel – the good news. Out of a sinful people of worldliness our Heavenly Father uses His revelation – His Word and His Spirit – to give us faith in Jesus as God.<sup>17</sup>

God's gracious revelation of Himself to sinners like us builds a community that confesses Christ...and that community is called His church!

Let me say it another way: **Verses 13-17** teach us that Christ's church is a community of people who have been blessed by God's sovereign grace so that their spiritual eyes have been supernaturally opened to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!<sup>18</sup>

No amount of education, or parenting, or discipleship can ever be credited for a soul believing that Jesus is Lord.

It is the Word of God and the Spirit of God that mercifully cause souls to be born again<sup>19</sup> – recreated to believe that Jesus is Lord and worthy of our love and worship forever. This means that Jesus' church is a collection of people who have all been made spiritually alive! Jesus' church is supernatural, a building of God Himself – identified by our common miraculous confession of faith that Jesus is our living Lord. O may God reawaken us to the glories of Christ's church which is so radically distinct from all other earthly institutions.

But Jesus has more to teach us about the church's true foundation. For not only does God's special revelation of grace build a community that confesses Christ but,

<sup>13</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:3; c.f. John 1:12-13; 3:6; 6:63

<sup>14</sup> Titus 3:3ff

<sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:6

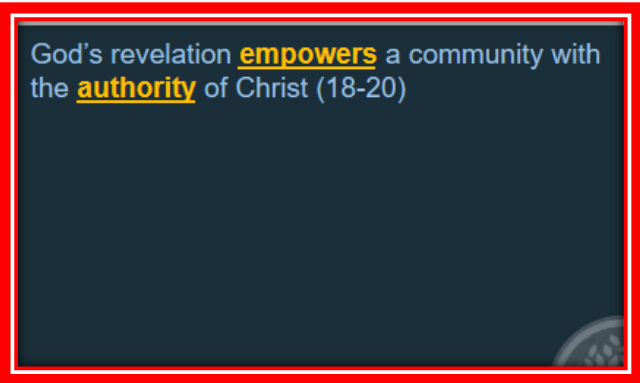
<sup>16</sup> Philippians 1:29

<sup>17</sup> C.f. Romans 10:17

<sup>18</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:6

<sup>19</sup> 1 Peter 1:3-5, 23-25





God's revelation **empowers** a community with the **authority** of Christ (18-20)

God's revelation **empowers** a community with the **authority** of Christ (18-20)

Jesus continues rejoicing in God's revelation to Peter in **verse 18**. In **verse 16**, Peter confessed Jesus' true identity, so here in **verse 18** Jesus playfully returns the favor,

*And I tell you, you are Peter.* This is the first time in **Matthew's** gospel Jesus uses the nickname He had given Simon earlier.<sup>20</sup> "Peter" is Simon's God-given identity – a nickname that meant "rocky."

You are Peter or *Petros* – which means a little stone, *and on this Petra* (a different Greek word that meant large bedrock or foundation stone) *I will build my church.*

Now what's Jesus saying? What's the foundational bedrock upon which Jesus promises to build His church in **verse 18**?

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<sup>20</sup> C.f. Mark 3:6; John 1:42; also Matthew had previously referred to Simon with this name back in Matthew 4:18 and 10:2.

<sup>21</sup> Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 21:14

<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-8

<sup>23</sup> Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18

The Roman Catholic church has taught for centuries that Jesus meant He will build His church on Peter. In other words, Peter is the first pope, in a long line of popes and thus is the head of the church of earth.

However, while Peter clearly was one of the twelve foundational apostles in the history of the church,<sup>21</sup> the New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus Himself is the chief cornerstone<sup>22</sup> and head of the church.<sup>23</sup> Not Peter. In fact, in **verse 23** Jesus even calls Peter Satan!<sup>24</sup>

While Jesus is clearly speaking to Peter in **verses 17-19**, it seems best to understand Peter as a representative for all twelve disciples, and in fact, all Christ-followers in general.<sup>25</sup>

So contrary to the Roman Catholic position, Protestants have traditionally understood that the foundational bedrock upon which Jesus promises to build His church is Peter's confession in **verse 16**.

In other words, Jesus will build His church on the foundation of faith in His divine nature. And while this is true, it may be a bit too far removed from Peter in the context.

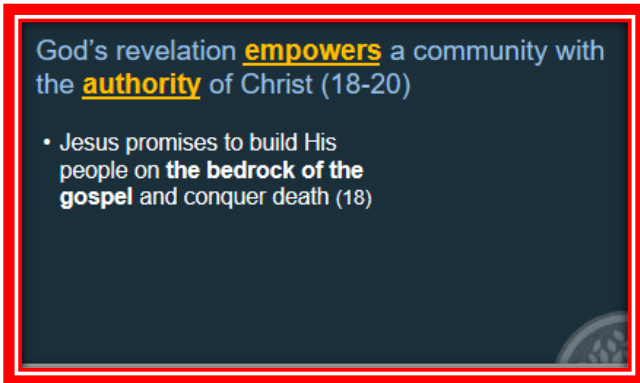
So if you're patient with me, I'd humbly suggest another possible interpretation. While I respect those who may teach that the foundation of the Church is faith, or Christ Himself, in the present context it seems most probable to

<sup>24</sup> C.f. how Peter was called into account by other church leaders in Acts 11:1-8 and Galatians 2:11-14

<sup>25</sup> The repetition of Matthew 16:19 in Matthew 18:18 proves that Jesus is applying these truths to His entire church, not just Peter or the apostles.

me to understand that Jesus is using a play-on-words with Peter's name to point back to the foundation of God's sovereign grace in **verse 17**, even more than He is referring to the confession in **verse 16**.

In other words, I understand **verse 18** to be teaching that,



Jesus promises to build His people on the bedrock of God's gospel and conquer death.

Because what is the gospel or good news of **verse 17**? That our Heavenly Father mercifully gives the gift of faith to sinful hearts who are otherwise completely blind to seeing Jesus as worthy of worship. God's revelation of Jesus as Lord is the gospel blessing!

Cheer up friends! You are far more sinful than you even think you are! But by the grace and mercy of our all-powerful Heavenly Father, He can cause your stiff-necked soul to be recreated and spiritually awakened so that you can truly believe that Jesus is your Lord!

<sup>26</sup> 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:9; c.f. 2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>27</sup> C.f. Romans 9:15-16

Rejoice in Jesus' promise here – I will build my church. No apostle or group of elders or flashy marketing strategy can build the church. Because it's Jesus' church. It's a people Jesus purchased out of sin's slavery with His blood for His own possession.<sup>26</sup> And He is building His community of worshippers on the bedrock of undeserved mercy.<sup>27</sup> The foundation of Jesus church is the gospel of God's sovereign grace in **verse 17**!

Therefore Peter – take heart. Because you are just a little rock – by yourself you're dead weight. But because of God's merciful revelation to you, you are now a living stone that is being built up as a spiritual house!<sup>28</sup> And when Jesus builds His church, the gates of hell shall not prevent it!!

Standing before the "gates of hell" in Caesarea Philippi helps us understand that Jesus here is referring to the entire realm of the spiritually dead. The gates of hell refer to the enslaving stronghold of all that is separated from real life in God. That hellish cave in the grotto of Pan represented the passageway into the fearful underworld of death and slavery to demons and sin.

And notice, Jesus is on the offense here, for the gates of hell, can't stand up to the advance of Christ's church.<sup>29</sup>

Jesus promises to build His people on the bedrock of the gospel and conquer death!

So rejoice friends. There's no addiction to sin that is so strong that the sovereign grace of the Heavenly Father can't set you free and make you new again! There's no

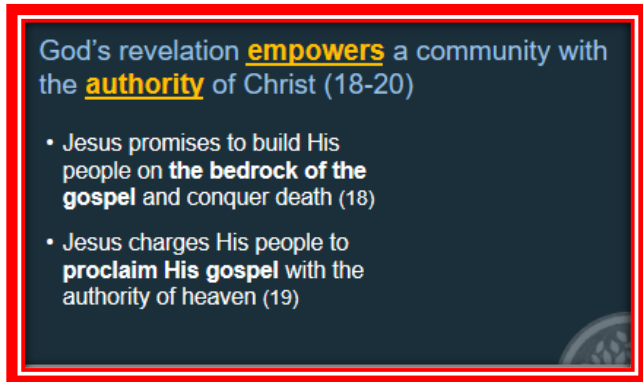
<sup>28</sup> 1 Peter 2:5

<sup>29</sup> C.f. 1 Corinthians 15:50ff; Hebrews 2:14-15

grave so deep that the power of Christ's resurrection cannot grant new life to your soul.

Be encouraged Christian! In the midst of an evil world where all you can see is spiritual darkness, idolatry, and perversion... the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes!<sup>30</sup> The revelation of God empowers our advance into this spiritually dead world with the authority of Christ Himself!

For **verse 19** makes it clear,



Jesus charges His people to proclaim His gospel with the authority of heaven. Jesus is empowering Peter, and by extension, all Christ-followers here,<sup>31</sup> when He says,

*I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...*

Now keys are instruments of entry and symbols of authority. So Jesus has given to His church the message

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<sup>30</sup> Romans 1:21

<sup>31</sup> C.f. Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23 where Christ uses the plural “y’all” showing that the authority was not given to only Peter.

of His gospel,<sup>32</sup> which invites all who have ears to hear to enter into His kingdom.

The keys to the kingdom of heaven is the understanding of the gospel of God by which men may be saved! The keys to the kingdom of heaven in **Matthew 16** refer to proclaiming God's gospel.

And Jesus is charging His disciples to proclaim this good news of God's saving grace with the very authority of heaven.

The binding and loosing verb tenses are very specific at the end of **verse 19** – literally it is best translated,

*And whatever you bind on earth has already been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth has already been loosed in heaven.*

In other words, through the preaching of God's gospel the church brings heaven's will to earth.

Jesus' community confidently assures every person who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ that they have eternal life with God Himself. And similarly, the church boldly warns everyone who refuses to believe Jesus is God of their eternal condemnation apart from Him. The people of God therefore proclaim the gospel of God with the very authority of God Himself.

<sup>32</sup> C.f. Luke 11:52 where Jesus again uses the concept of a key for spiritual truth. There Jesus rebuked the religious legalists for how their false teaching had taken away the “key of knowledge” and hindered those who were trying to enter God's kingdom.

So listen carefully – the authority of God’s people to preach the truth to sinners, and affirm the salvation of sinners in church membership, and discipline out of the church any false professors,<sup>33</sup> all comes back to **Matthew 16**. Because God’s special revelation of His Word and His Spirit empowers the church with the delegated authority of Jesus Himself.

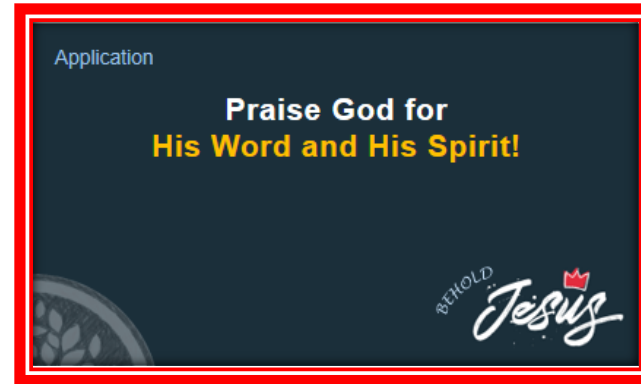
Whenever we are proclaiming Jesus’ Word by the power of His Spirit, we can be confident that God’s will is being done on earth even as it is already done in Heaven!

Therefore we conclude that,



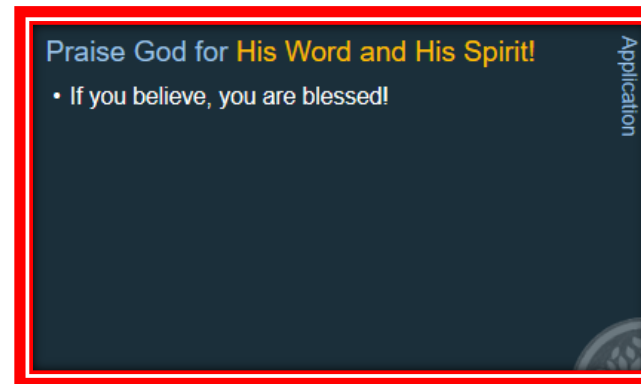
**God's revelation is foundational to Christ's church**  
For it is the work of God’s Word and God’s Spirit that builds a community that confesses Christ, and empowers a community with the authority of Christ.

So then I urge us today to,



**Praise God for His Word and His Spirit!**

It is the Spirit of God who has used the Word of God to reveal the Son of God to every child of God. So make no mistake today:



**If you believe that Jesus is God, you are blessed!**

You can take no credit for your own faith in our Lord. If your sins have been forgiven through your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior – you have no one to thank but our Heavenly Father Himself! It is the Spirit who gives

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 18:18 is just one specific application of the truths of Matthew  
Page **12a** of 14

16:19.

life, the flesh is no help at all!<sup>34</sup> It is His mercy that has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the living and abiding Word of God.<sup>35</sup>

So give all the glory and praise to God alone for your salvation. Praise God for His Word and His Spirit!

**Praise God for His Word and His Spirit!**

- If you believe, you are blessed!
- Jesus wins! And He is the one who is building us for victory!

Application

And rejoice that **Jesus wins! Jesus is building us for victory!** The future of Jesus' church is securely in His hands...not in the weak and feeble hands of imperfect and sinful men.

So when you wonder about all the evil of our modern day Caesarea Philippi, remember that Jesus promised that sin and its death would never be able to stand against the preaching of His gospel. The power is in God's Word and God's Spirit. He will build His church, and present us blameless before His presence with exceeding great joy on the last day!<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> John 6:63

<sup>35</sup> 1 Peter 1:23

BEHOLD  
**Jesus**

Matthew  
16:13-20

The Foundation of  
Christ's Church

**Let's pray.**

<<Our Song from Age to Age>>

*Remember to take advantage of the online Downloads and links!*

**Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.**

BEHOLD  
**Jesus**

Benediction

*"Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O **King of the nations!** <sup>4</sup> Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

Revelation 15:3b-4

*Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.*  
**Revelation 15:3b-4**

<sup>36</sup> Philippians 1:6; Jude 24



### **Recommended Resources on the Church's Foundation:**

- Matthew 11:25-27; 18:15-20
- Mark 8:27-30
- Luke 9:18-21
- John 6:37, 44
- Acts 2:39; 13:48-49
- 1 Corinthians 2:14; 3:11; 12:3
- Ephesians 2:19-22
- 1 Peter 2:4-10
- 1 John 4:14-15
  
- <https://drivethruhistory.com/peters-confession/>
- <https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/gates-of-hell-article>
- <https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/scenes-from-caesarea-philippithe-grotto-of-pan>
  
- *Creature of the Word*, Chandler, Patterson, Geiger
- *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, Dever
- *The Church in God's Program*, Saucy

### **Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions**

1. Review the historical and cultural background of Caesarea Philippi using the recommended links above. How does this background help inform your understanding of Jesus' teaching in Mt 16:13-20?
2. Review Matthew 16:15-16. Who do you believe Jesus really is? Is there a more important question that every human being will eventually be asked by God Himself? Is there any way that your practical living gives a different answer than your lips to this question?
3. Read Matthew 16:17. Compare this with Jn 1:12-13; 1 Cor 2:14; 2 Cor 4:4-6; and Eph 2:4-10. Do you believe that your faith in Christ is a grace-gift from God to you? Why or why not? How does God's sovereign grace in your salvation humble your pride and glorify God?
4. Read Matthew 16:18-19. How would you answer a Roman Catholic friend who believes that Peter was the first pope? (C.f. 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20; Mt 16:23; Gal 2:11-14)
5. Review Matthew 16:18-19. Whose church is it? (C.f. Col 1:18) Who promises to build His church? Is the church on the offense or the defense in this passage? How should this encourage our witness and disciple-making efforts in the midst of this broken world today?
6. Compare Matthew 16:19 with 18:18. How does Christ's delegated authority to His confessional community apply to local church membership and discipline?