

Building Something Beautiful
August 3, 2025
Matthew 16:13-20

Opening Illustration

Laying bricks or building a cathedral.

Introduction

Jesus' blueprint for His church revealed His heart's desire to honour His father and build His kingdom. This morning let's look at Jesus' blueprint for building His church.

A Picture of the Church Jesus is building

1. Jesus' church isn't built on opinions.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi He asked His disciples, "Who do the people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Matthew 16:13-14

Jesus chose a place called Caesarea Philippi to ask His disciples two questions. This place, at the headwaters of the Jordan river was about 25 miles north of Galilee in northern Israel. It was a stronghold of pagan worship of Baal, the Greek god Pan, and Caesar. There is a cave there that many believed was the entrance to the underworld or Hades.

It was here where Jesus calls for a decision about his own identity. His first question was general. “Who do the people say the Son of Man is? The disciples’ response revealed that the people believed Jesus was a prophet.

Everyone had their opinion of who would appear before Messiah would come, but they all believed a great prophet would arise before Messiah’s coming. In Jesus’ day, everyone had their opinion about the Messiah or Saviour and they had their opinions about who Jesus was.

On hearing His words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.” ⁴¹ Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee?” ⁴³ Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. John 7:40-41, 43

People today still have their opinions about Jesus and they are still divided about who He is. Many dismiss Him. Some see Him as a good moral person, a teacher or a prophet, but few truly accept Him as Lord and Saviour.

Illustration

Resisting the opinions of others.

2. Jesus' church is built on God's orderly plan.

"But what about you?" He asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven." Matthew 16:15-17

Beginning in creation, we see God had a plan or blueprint for how humans would live in the perfect garden He created. When Adam and Eve rebelled, His plans weren't thwarted. He had a plan to redeem fallen sinful human beings when He gave the first prophecy that Jesus would one day defeat Satan.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel." Genesis 3:15

Throughout history, His plans continued. He entered into covenant with Abraham and his descendants, He chose a people as His own, brought them to Egypt and then rescued them. While they wandered for forty years in the desert, He gave Moses a blueprint for the tabernacle.

Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. Exodus 25:9

Centuries later, David provided the resources for Solomon to build a temple, and he gave him the blueprint God gave to him.

He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the Lord and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. 1 Chronicles 28:12

Jesus also had a blueprint for His church, so He asked His followers a personal question. “*Who do you say I am?*” When its personal, our hearts are revealed. Peter responded quickly. “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

Peter declared that Jesus was “Son of the Living God.” This declaration was significance in the area of Caesarea Philippi with its shrines to Baal, Pan, and Caesar worship. Jesus is not like the stone figures of those mythical and superstitious figures or the human and imperfect Caesar, but He is the living God.

Jesus asks us the same question. Who do you and I say I am? Is He just a good man, a teacher, a wise and learned man, a prophet? Or is He your Lord and Saviour? Your response will reveal your heart and determine your actions.

Illustration

Robert Shirley built this church.

3. Jesus' church overcomes all resistance.

“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. 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. Then He warned His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ. Matthew 16:18-20

Jesus used a play on words about Peter. He said; “You are Rock, and on this rock, I will build my church.”

Three interpretations of Jesus' words exist. The Catholic Church at the Council of Trent declared that the Pope's authority as head of the church goes back to Peter as the first Pope.

The protestant churches point to Peter's confession, as what Jesus intended. It applies to all who confess Jesus as Lord.

The third view is that Peter would play a foundational role in the establishment of Jesus' church and once he fulfilled that role, he passed off the scene. Paul spoke of this in Ephesians.

...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. Ephesians 2:20

Jesus then declared, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Church means “called out ones”. Each one of us is a called out to confess Jesus as Lord.

Hades, or Sheol, is the realm of the dead. The expression “gates of Hades” means the “gates of death”. Even death has no power to stop Jesus’ church.

Next Jesus gave Peter the keys to the kingdom and told him that whatever he bound on earth would be bound in heaven and whatever he loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven. It is a metaphor that points to the authority given to Peter to admit entrance into the kingdom.

In Acts 2, Peter opened the door of the Kingdom to the Jews at Pentecost and in Acts 10, he opened the door to the Gentiles.

“Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. Acts 15:7

Peter opened the door to the kingdom and once it was opened it stayed open. We now have the privilege and responsibility of inviting others through that open door.

Will you invite others into that open door? That is the joy and privilege we all have today.

Closing Illustration

Building Bridges to Jesus.