

“THE GATES OF HELL (HADES) SHALL NOT PREVAIL”

Matthew 16:13-19

INTRODUCTION

- A. Our study comes from Matthew where Jesus promised to build the church of Christ. The title of our lesson comes from verse 18.
- B. This is the first time in the NT that the word “church” (ἐκκλησία [ekklesia /ek·klay·see·ah/]) is specifically used.
- C. All mankind should be interested in what God has said about the “church.”
- D. Let us consider in our lesson today:
 - 1. The FOUNDER of the church.
 - 2. The FOES of the church.
 - 3. The FUTURE of the church.

DISCUSSION

I. THE FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH.

- A. The “PERSON.”
 - 1. It was Jesus who came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. It was Jesus who asked the question of the disciples. And it was Jesus who said verse 18.
 - 2. It is vitally important to understand that Jesus is the person who said He would build the church. It was not John the Baptist. It was not Elijah. It was not Jeremiah. It was not one of the prophets – Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, David, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos... It was not Peter. It was not Andrew. It was not James. It was not Judas, or Paul. It was not Martin Luther, or John Wesley, or Mary Baker or Joseph Smith, or Ellen G. White, or Charles Russell, or Alexander Campbell, or any other mere man. It was Jesus Christ – the Son of the living God.
 - 3. While some thought that He (Jesus) was John – possibly because of His courage. And while some thought that He was Elijah – possible because of His conviction. And while some thought He was Jeremiah – possibly because of His compassion. And while some thought He was one of the prophets – possibly because of His characteristics. He was neither, but greater than all of them put together and then some. He was “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” He is the person who said He would build the church.
- B. The “PROMISE.”
 - 1. The second thing we need to notice about the Founder is the promise that He made to build the church. He promised Peter that He would.
 - 2. The “rock” on which He promised to build the church is the fact that Peter had just confessed – “thou....the Christ.” The church would be built on Jesus. He would be the Founder and the Foundation of the church. 1 CO 3:11; 10:4; 1 PE 2:8; EP 2:20.
 - 3. Also, the statement, “I will build...” clearly shows that the church was still future when this promise was made and stresses the fact that the church would definitely be built at some future time
- C. The “PRICE.”
 - 1. Finally, we need to look at the price that the Founder paid for it. Jesus knew that He was going to have to go through the very door of death itself to pay the price for the church and that’s why He talked about the “gates of Hell (Hades).”
 - 2. The “gates of Hell (Hades)” would not prevail against the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. He would be put to death for His claim and He would enter the Hadean world – Acts 2:27, but it would not prevail against His claim. He would

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be resurrected and build the church like He had promised. Neither the doors of death, nor the devices of the devil, would stop Him doing what had been determined – Acts 2:23.

3. We need desperately to understand that Jesus not only built the church, He also bought it. 1 CO 1:2; 6:20. He not only planned it, He purchased it – Acts 20:28. He not only said He would start it, He also said He would save it – EP 5:23-27. That's why He said, "I will build MY church..." MT 16:18. It is His Building, His Body, and His Bride. 1 CO 3:9; EP 2:21-22; CO 1:18; EP 5:30-32; RE 21:9; RO 16:16.
4. When we realized that Jesus died for the church we will never make statements like "The church is not important," or "One church is as good as another," or "Just join the church of your choice." Because Jesus shed His blood for the church it must be important, and no other can be as good as His, and we don't have a choice in this matter. JN 10:16; EP 4:4; 1 CO 12:13.

II. THE FOES OF THE CHURCH.

The foes of the church would be many. Satan would not only try to stop Jesus from building the church, he would also use all of the forces he could muster to prevail against after it was built. And to face these foes we must be on our toes. That is, we must "watch" and not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Acts 20:31; 2 CO 2:11. Foes will face:

A. "DECEPTION."

1. One foe that we should know is deception. Jesus warned of false teachers. MT 7:15. John said, 1 JN 4:1.
2. The church has always had to fight deceivers and deception. Paul feared that the church in Corinth might be "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" – 2 CO 11:3. The church in Thyatira was plagued by a deceiver name Jezebel – RE 2:18-24. Paul marveled at how the Galatians had been influenced by those who perverted the Gospel. GA 1:6-9. Cf. RO 16:17-18; Jude 4; 2 PE 2:1.
3. The church in this and every age must watch and remember that we have been warned about the wolves. MT 7:15; Acts 20:29-31. We must remember our obligation to uphold and support the truth, 1 TI 3:14-15, by earnestly contending for the faith once delivered, Jude 3.
4. Let's not be deceived by what we believe. Let's see! IS 34:16. Let's search! JN 5:39. Let's study! 2 TI 2:15. Let's find out if the things we're being told are the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. PR 22:22; JN 8:32; 1 PE 1:22-23. The gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail if we will study our Bibles well.

B. "DIVISION."

1. Another foe we need to know is division. Division among God's people is both serious and sinful, and those who cause it will surely suffer. Listen to Paul in RO 16:17. For one to uphold division is an unhealthy decision.
2. Many times it is deception that causes division. It is those who teach "contrary to the doctrine" and "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" who are responsible for most of the division that exists in the religious world. RO 16:17-18. Deception leads to division.
3. However, we know that God both desires and demands unity among His disciples. In the Bible He praised unity – PS 133:1. Prayed for unity – JN 17:20-21. Pleaded for unity – 1 CO 1:10. And Provided for unity – EP 4:4-16. He encouraged the saints in Ephesus, through Paul, EP 4:3. Unity among disciples causes others to believe – JN 17:21.

4. What is really said is when the church is divided over positions, personalities, or other petty problems. We need to realize that keeping unity is something that we “endeavor to do” – EP 4:3 – and not something that we “ease into.”
 5. We need to remember that we are one body – 1 CO 12:12-27 – and that we are all on the same team if we follow Christ – 1 CO 11:1.
- C. “DIVERSION.”
1. A third foe we need to know is diversion. A turning aside from our main goal. The primary mission of the Lord’s church is the saving of souls through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel – LK 19:10; 1 TI 3:14-15. And we must never lose sight of this fact.
 2. Our main work is not social or political, but spiritual. And we must never allow ourselves to be diverted from this work. MT 6:33; PH 1:21; 3:3; MT 4:4.
 3. Many times it is division that leads to diversion. In fact, sometimes deception leads to division which then leads to diversion. Because of divisions among ourselves we are distracted from our main goal. We start fighting among ourselves and are thus diverted from our main mission. We then have to spend too much of our time arguing over matters that should never, in many cases, have been a problem in the first place.
 4. Jesus said to the apostles to “go” – “make disciples” – by “baptizing” and “teaching”. MT 28:18-20. Let’s make sure that we do our part, so that we can have Jesus in our heart – EP 3:17.
- D. “DISCOURAGEMENT.”
1. A fourth foe we need to know is discouragement. This is an enemy that has probably affected every congregation of God’s people, as well as every Christian, at one time or another. Many times it is deception, division, and diversion that leads to discouragement.
 2. Paul said, HE 12:12, which indicates they were having a problem with discouragement. When writing to the churches of Galatia Paul said, GA 6:9. Discouragement has been, and many times still is, a major problem for the church.
 3. Lack of attendance, lack of appreciation, apathy, and a host of other things can also be cited as causes for discouragement. Every Christian has the responsibility of helping others to fight this foe. We need to “exhort one another daily...” as we have the opportunity – HE 3:13; 10:24-25.
- E. “DISBELIEF.”
1. The final foe is disbelief. Many times deception, division, diversion, and discouragement leads to the sin of unbelief – JN 17:20-21.
 2. It seems that this is the sin that “doth so easily beset us” – HE 12:1. That’s why it is so important for Christians to, HE 3:12. There’s no relief in unbelief, only grief, HE 3:19; MK 16:14. This has stopped many congregations cold.
 3. Therefore we need to, HE 10:22. We must not give up, let up, shut up, or back up until the church of our Lord is either built up or taken up. We need to strive more, study more, serve more, and sacrifice more. The gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail because we have the Lord and He cannot fail!
- III. THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH.
- A. “PERSECUTED.”
1. The foes of the church would continue to fight against the faithful. The gates of hell (Hades) would continue to try to prevail against it – MT 16:18.

2. Jesus told His disciples, JN 15:20. He further warned, JN 16:33. Observed that He said ye “shall have” – not “might” or “may,” but “shall” have tribulation.
 3. Paul further warned in 2 TI 3:12. Also the book of Revelation teaches that the church would be persecuted by Satan.
 4. Therefore, concerning the future of the church, the Bible clearly teaches that as long as the church is in this world she will be persecuted and troubled.
- B. “PRESERVED.”
1. However, the Bible also teaches that in spite of the persecution, the church would be preserved and protected throughout the persecution brought against it. The gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail.
 2. The church is built on a “Rock” – MT 16:18. And the word used by Jesus “denotes a mass of rock, as distinct from... a stone that might be thrown or easily moved” (Vine p. 984). The church is built on Jesus the Rock that cannot be moved.
 3. Jesus taught that a house built on a rock would not fall despite the fact that winds, rains, and floods beat against it – MT 7:24-27. And this is certainly true of the “spiritual house” – 1 PE 2:5 – which is built on the “foundation” laid by the apostles and prophets – EP 2:20 – which is Jesus Christ – 1 CO 3:11.
 4. That’s the reason that the Bible teaches that the church or kingdom “shall never be destroyed” and “shall stand forever” – DA 2:44. It “cannot be moved” – HE 12:28. And “there shall be no end” – LK 1:33 – of it. God is going to be glorified, EP 3:21. The gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail because the church is “preserved in Christ” – Jude 1.
- C. “PRESENTED.”
1. Not only will the church be preserved. It will also be presented. Christ will, EP 5:27.
 2. It will be presented pure to Christ – 2 CO 11:3.
 3. It will be presented faultless to God – Jude 24.
 4. The faithful church is kept clean by the blood of Jesus – 1 JN 1:7, and will be presented fadeless, flawless, and faultless to God at the end of this age. The gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail because what God does, He does well.

CONCLUSION

- A. We have discussed the “Founder,” the “Foes,” and the “Future” of the church that belongs to Christ.
- B. We have learned that the “Future” of the church is secure because of its “Founder” and in spite of its “Foes.”
- C. The “gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail because God’s promises never fail.