

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

## Sunday Morning

Study 22

*I will Build My Church*

# I will Build My Church

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

**Objective** To show the students that no matter what happens in the world around us, Christ promises to build His Church and preserve it until the day of His coming.

## Key Verses

Matthew 16:13-23—Main Teaching Passage

## Memory Verse - 2 Thessalonians 3:3

"But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one."

## Hook

Review last week's memory verse, John 14:26.

Begin the class by asking the students about church. What do they like about church? What do they dislike? Ask them why we even come to church in the first place.

Now ask, "What would the world be like if the Church wasn't here?"

Tell them that there are certain groups of people in the world who would like to shut down all churches. Ask, "Could that ever happen?"

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

## BOOK

Last week, we began to look at some of the important promises that are given to the Church in the New Testament. This week, we'll continue by looking at Matthew 16. In the passage, Christ was questioning His disciples, first asking them who the crowd believed Him to be. Then He made the question more personal by asking the disciples who *they* said that Christ was. After stating that the crowd believe that Jesus was Elijah returned from Heaven or perhaps John the Baptist raised from the dead, Peter boldly proclaimed that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah whom they had been waiting for.

It was after this that Christ gave us His great promise, "On this Rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell will not overcome it." Christ here was not declaring Peter (*Petros*) the pope, or the apostle who would lead the Church after His ascension. Jesus used the word *petra*, which is Greek for a large boulder or side of a cliff, not the word *Petros*, which is a small pebble or stone you could throw. The Rock on which the Church would be built is the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is for that reason, and no other, that the Gates of Hell cannot possibly stand against it.

## LOOK

If you spend any time watching the news, you might be tempted to think that things are getting pretty difficult for the Church. The culture around us has changed quite dramatically. Things that society has always believed are being rethought, and if you disagree with some of those things (like the Church does), you are labeled as either a fool or a bigot. In fact, you might even be tempted to think like some people in our society that the Church is getting old, the world around it has changed, and the Church is so out of touch that soon it will be so irrelevant that it will simply cease to exist.

In fact, about 300 years ago, before the United States had won its independence, there was a man who thought just that. His name was Voltaire, and he lived in a time that was just as crazy (though for different reasons) as ours. Voltaire hated God, hated religion, and hated the Bible. He used to throw parties where people would come over and play soccer using Bibles instead of soccer balls. Seeing a decline in church attendance and a rise in apathy toward the things of God, Voltaire famously said, "One hundred years from my day there will not be a Bible in the earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity seeker." Some stories hold (though possibly falsely) that 100 years after Voltaire's death, his

The interpretation/  
exegesis of the passage.  
What does this passage  
mean? How does this  
passage apply to my  
life?

# LOOK (Continued)

own house had been purchased by the Geneva Bible society and was used as a warehouse for Bibles. Whether that story is true or not, 300 years later the Bible is still loved and treasured by millions of people around the world.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus made us a promise. He promised that His Church would be built by Him, upon His own Name, for His own glory, and most importantly that the gates of Hell would not overcome it. In the Old Testament, the gates of the city are where people would go to conduct business, settle disputes, and sit to make plans. The term “gates of Hell” refers to the schemes or plans of the evil one. Jesus promised us that no matter what Satan or anyone else does, the Church will carry on like it always has. In fact, in many ways the Church is stronger now that it has ever been. The Church is growing at an incredible rate in many countries all over the world. In our church, there are people who are giving there lives to the Lord every single week, and not just on Sundays, but at the Monday night, Tuesday morning, Wednesday night, and Friday night studies too.

The most interesting question that I find in the passage in Matthew is the one that Jesus asks the disciples. It is a question that He also asks every single one of us, “Who do you say that I am?” Who is Jesus to you? Is Jesus just some nice guy that fed, healed, and helped people? Or is He something more than that in your life? Is Jesus just a teacher like John the Baptist, or is He LORD? Is He the King of your life? Is He the Christ, the Savior? Do you really know Him or do you just know about Him?

# TOOK

As a class, memorize 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

At the end of this week’s lesson, leave time to carefully and clearly share the Gospel with your class.

**Pray:** Thank the Lord that He will watch over and guide His Church until the day of His return. Ask that He would give us strength to walk in a manner worthy of Him as we wait. Praise Him for His incredible love toward us. Pray with any students who might give their lives to Him.

**Parent Question:** What is the “Rock” that Christ will build His Church on?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Matthew 16 by David Guzik

B. Peter proclaims Jesus as Messiah.

1. (13) Jesus asks the disciples to tell Him who others say He is.

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

a. **When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi:** Jesus again withdrew from the mainly Jewish region of Galilee and came to a place more populated by Gentiles. This was likely a retreat from the pressing crowds.

i. "Caesarea Philippi lies about twenty-five miles [46 kilometers] north-east of the Sea of Galilee...The population was mainly non-Jewish, and there Jesus would have peace to teach the Twelve." (Barclay)

b. **Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?** Jesus did not ask this question because He didn't know who He was, or because He had an unfortunate dependence on the opinion of others. He asked this question as an introduction to a more important follow-up question.

i. Caesarea Philippi was an area associated with idols and rival deities. "The area was scattered with temples of the ancient Syrian Baal worship...Hard by Caesarea Philippi there rose a great hill, in which was a deep cavern; and that cavern was said to be the birthplace of the great god Pan, the god of nature...In Caesarea Philippi there was a great temple of white marble built to the godhead of Caesar...It is as if Jesus deliberately set himself against the background of the world's religions in all their history and splendour, and demanded to be compared to them and to have the verdict given in his favour." (Barclay)

2. (14-16) A pointed question and a pointed answer.

So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

a. **Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets:** People who thought that Jesus was **John the Baptist**, didn't know much about Him, and they didn't know that Jesus and John had ministered at the same time. Yet John, **Elijah**, and **Jeremiah** (along with other **prophets**) were national reformers who stood up to the corrupt rulers of their day.

i. Some thought Jesus was a herald of national repentance, like **John the Baptist** and some thought Jesus was a famous worker of miracles, like **Elijah**. Some thought Jesus was someone who spoke the words of God, like **Jeremiah** and the **prophets**.

ii. Perhaps in seeing Jesus in these roles, people hoped for a political messiah who would overthrow the corrupt powers oppressing Israel.

iii. The general tendency in all these answers was to *underestimate* Jesus; to give Him a measure of respect and honor, but to fall far short of honoring Him for who He really is.

b. **Who do you say that I am?** It was fine for the disciples to know what *others* thought about Jesus. But Jesus had to ask them, as individuals, what *they* believed about Him.

i. This is the question placed before all who hear of Jesus; and it is we, not He, who are judged by our answer. In fact, we answer this question every day by what we believe and do. If we really believe Jesus is who He says He is, it will affect the way that we live.

ii. "Our Lord presupposes that his disciples would not have the same thoughts as '*men*' had. They would not follow the spirit of the age, and shape their views by those of the '*cultured*' persons of the period." (Spurgeon)

c. **You are the Christ, the Son of the living God:** Peter knew the opinion of the crowd - while it was complimentary towards Jesus - wasn't accurate. Jesus was much more than John the Baptist or Elijah or a prophet. He was more than a national reformer, more than a miracle worker, more than a prophet. Jesus is **the Christ**, the Messiah.

i. We can surmise that this was an understanding that Peter and the other disciples came to over time. In the beginning, they were attracted to Jesus as a remarkable and unusual rabbi. They committed themselves to Him as His disciples or students, as was practiced in that day. Yet over time Peter - and presumably other of the disciples by this point - understood that Jesus was in fact not only the Messiah (**the Christ**), but also **the Son of the living God**.

ii. Peter understood that Jesus was not only God's Messiah, but also God Himself. The Jews properly thought that to receive the title "**the Son of the living God**," in a unique sense, was to make a claim to deity itself.

iii. "The adjective *living* may perhaps have been included to contrast the one true God with the local deities (Caesarea Philippi was a centre of the worship of Pan)." (France)

3. (17-20) Jesus compliments Peter for His bold and correct declaration.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

a. **Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven:** Jesus reveals to Peter that he spoke by divine inspiration, even if he didn't even know it at the time. In this, Peter was genuinely **blessed** - both by the insight itself and how it came to him.

i. We too often expect God to speak in strange and unnatural ways. Here God spoke through Peter so naturally that he didn't even realize it was the **Father who is in heaven** that revealed it to him.

ii. This also speaks to us of our need for a supernatural revelation of Jesus. "If you know no more of Jesus than flesh and blood has revealed to you, it has brought you no more blessing than the conjectures of their age brought to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who remained an adulterous and unbelieving genera-

tion." (Spurgeon)

b. **I also say to you that you are Peter:** This was not only recognition of Peter's more Roman name; it was also a promise of God's work in Peter. The name Peter means "Rock." Though perhaps unlikely, Peter *was* a rock, and *would become* a rock. God was and would transform his naturally extreme character into something solid and reliable.

c. **On this rock I will build My church:** The words **this rock** have been the source of much controversy. It is best to see them as referring to either Jesus Himself (perhaps Jesus gesturing to Himself as He said this), or as referring to Peter's confession of who Jesus is.

i. Peter, by His own testimony, did not see *himself* as the rock on which the church was founded. He wrote that we are living stones, but Jesus is the cornerstone. We could say that Peter was the "first believer"; that he was the "first rock" among "many rocks."

ii. Peter said as much in 1 Peter 2:4-5: *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

d. **I will build My church:** This is the first use of the word **church** in the New Testament (or the Bible for that matter), using the ancient Greek word *ekklesia*. Significantly, this was well before the beginnings of what we normally think of as the church on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

i. This shows that Jesus was *anticipating* or *prophesying* what would come from these disciples/apostles and those who would believe in their message that Jesus is **the Christ, the Son of the living God**.

ii. The ancient Greek word *ekklesia* was not primarily a religious word at all; it just meant, "group" or "called-out group." In describing the later group of His followers and disciples, Jesus deliberately chose a word without a distinctly religious meaning.

iii. Furthermore, this statement of Jesus was a clear claim of ownership (**My church**). *The church belongs to Jesus*. This was also a claim to deity: "What is striking is...the boldness of Jesus' description of it as *my* community, rather than God's." (France)

iv. Taken together, the promise is wonderful:

- He brings His people together in common: **I will build.**
- He builds on a firm foundation: **On this rock I will build.**
- He builds something that belongs to Him: **My church.**
- He builds it into a stronghold: **the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

e. **And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it:** Jesus also offered a promise - that the forces of death and darkness can't prevail against or conquer the church. This is a valuable promise in dark or discouraging times for the church.

i. The Puritan commentator John Trapp explained **the gates of Hades** this way: "All the power and policy of hell combined."

ii. "Neither doth *hell* signify here the place of the damned...but either death, or the graves, or the state of the dead: yet the devil is also understood here, as he *that hath the power of death*, Hebrews 2:14." (Poole)

iii. "*The gates of hell*, i.e., the *machinations* and *powers* of the invisible world. In ancient times the gates of forti-

fied cities were used to hold councils in, and were usually places of great strength. Our Lord's expression means, that neither the *plots, stratagems, nor strength* of Satan and his angels, should ever so far prevail as to destroy the sacred truths in the above confession." (Clarke)

iv. A slightly different view: "Is thus to say that it will not die, and be shut in by the 'gates of death.'" (France)

f. **And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven:** This idea of Peter holding the **keys of the kingdom of heaven** has captured the imagination (and theology) of many Christians throughout the centuries. In artistic representation, Peter is almost always shown with **keys**.

i. Some people think that this means that Peter has the authority to admit people to heaven, or to keep people out of heaven. This is the basis for the popular image of Peter at the Pearly Gates of Heaven, allowing people to enter or turning them away.

ii. Some people think that it also means that Peter was the first Pope, and that his supposed successors have the keys that were first given to Peter. Indeed, the Papal insignia of the Roman Catholic Church is made up of two prominent keys crossed together.

iii. There is no doubt that Peter had a special place among all the disciples, and that he had some special privileges:

- He is always listed first in the listings of the disciples.
- He opened doors of the kingdom to the Jews in Acts 2:38-39.
- He opened doors of the kingdom to the Gentiles in Acts 10:34-44.

iv. Yet there is no Biblical argument whatsoever that Peter's privilege or authority was passed on. To put it one way; one might say that Jesus gave Peter the keys, but didn't give him the authority to pass them on to further generations, and there is not a *whisper* in the Scriptures that Peter's authority was to be passed on.

v. The idea that apostolic authority comes from Jesus, who gave it to Peter, who set his hands on the heads of approved and ordained men, who in turn set their hands on the heads of approved and ordained men, and so on and so on through the generations until today is *nonsense*. It is exactly what Spurgeon said it was: *the laying of empty hands on empty heads*.

g. **And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven:** The power for binding and loosing is something that the Jewish rabbis of that day used. They **bound** or **loosed** an individual in the application of a particular point of the law. Jesus promises that Peter - and the other apostles - would be able to set the boundaries authoritatively for the New Covenant community. This was the authority given to the *apostles and prophets* to build a *foundation* (Ephesians 2:20).

i. We should understand this as Jesus giving both the permission and the authority to the first-generation apostles to make the rules for the early church - and indirectly, the inspired writings that would guide all generations of Christians. The authority that Peter carries is "not an authority which he alone carries, as may be seen from the repetition of the latter part of the verse in Matthew 18:18 with reference to the disciple group as a whole." (France)

ii. "Binding" and "loosing" were administrative terms in daily Jewish life; whenever a Jew came up against the Law of Moses, that Jewish person was either "bound" or "loosed" in regard to that law. To loose was to permit; to bind was to prohibit. To loose was to free from the law, to bind was to put under the law. "Their regular sense, which any Jew would recognize was *to allow* and *to forbid*. *To bind* something was *to declare it forbidden*; *to loose* was *to declare it allowed*. These were the regular phrases for taking decisions in regard to the law." (Barclay)



iii. In daily Jewish life, this could be rather complicated. Here is one example from ancient rabbinical writings, cited by teacher Mike Russ:

- If your dog dies in your house, is your house clean or unclean? *Unclean*.
- If your dog dies outside your house, is your house clean or unclean? *Clean*.
- If your dog dies on the doorstep, is your house clean or unclean? Ancient rabbinical writings took the issue on and decided that if the dog died with his nose pointing into the house, the house was *unclean*; if the dog died with his nose pointing away from the house, the house was *clean*.

iv. As their rabbi, Jesus did this binding and loosing for His own disciples. Without using the same words, this is what Jesus did when He allowed them to take the grains of wheat in the field (Matthew 12:1-8).

v. Significantly, when it came time to understand the dietary laws of the Old Covenant in light of the new work of Jesus, God spoke to Peter *first*. He and the other apostles, guided by the Spirit of God, would bind and loose Christians regarding such parts of the Old Covenant.

vi. In a lesser, secondary sense, this power is with the Church today. "Today the Lord continues to back up the teaching and acts of his sent servants, those Peters who are pieces of the one Rock. The judgments of his Church, when rightly administered, have his sanction so as to make them valid. The words of his sent servants, spoken in his name, shall be confirmed of the Lord, and shall not be, either as to promise or threatening, a mere piece of rhetoric." (Spurgeon)

h. **He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ:** Jesus was pleased that His disciples were coming to know who He was in truth, but He still didn't want His identity popularly known before the proper time.

i. "Before they could preach that Jesus was the Messiah, they had to learn what that meant." (Barclay)

4. (21) Jesus begins to reveal the full extent of His mission.

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

a. **He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things...and be killed:** This must have come as quite a shock to His disciples. After fully understanding that Jesus was the Messiah, the last thing they expected was the Messiah would **suffer many things** and **be killed**.

i. Yet this was the predicted work of the Messiah (Isaiah 53:3-12). He **must** die, and He **must** after His death **be raised the third day**.

ii. The suffering and death of Jesus was a **must** because of two great facts: the *man's sin* and *God's love*. While His death was the ultimate example of man's sin against God, it was also the supreme expression of God's love to man.

iii. "The 'must' of Jesus' suffering lies, not in unqualified determinism, nor in heroic determination (though some of both is present), but in willing submission to his Father's will." (Carson)

iv. "*The elders and chief priests and scribes* were the three groups who together made up the Sanhedrin, Israel's highest court; Jesus is to be officially executed. The estrangement between Jesus and the official Jewish leadership is thus already irrevocable." (France)

b. **And be raised the third day:** The disciples were probably so shocked that Jesus said He would be killed in Jerusalem that these words didn't sink in. Later, an angel reminded them of these words (Luke 24:6-8).

5. (22-23) Peter's unwitting opposition of Jesus.

Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

a. **Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!** At this moment Peter had the remarkable boldness to **rebuke** Jesus. Peter did it privately (**took Him aside**), yet was confident enough to tell Jesus that He was wrong to consider going to Jerusalem to be killed.

i. It's not hard to see Peter following these steps:

- Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah.
- Jesus compliments Peter, telling him that God revealed this to him.
- Jesus tells of His impending suffering, death, and resurrection.
- Peter feels this isn't right, and he feels that he hears from God and therefore has some authority or right to speak.
- Peter begins to rebuke Jesus. " 'Began' suggests that Peter gets only so far before Jesus cuts him off." (Carson)

ii. We can infer that if Peter was bold enough to **rebuke** Jesus, he was confident that God told him that he was right and that Jesus was wrong at this point. Where it all broke down was that Peter was far too confident in his ability to hear from God.

- What Peter said didn't line up with the Scriptures
- What Peter said was in contradiction to the spiritual authority over him

b. **Get behind Me, Satan!** This was a strong rebuke from Jesus, yet entirely appropriate. Though a moment before, Peter spoke as a messenger of God, he then spoke as a messenger of **Satan**. Jesus knew there was a satanic purpose in discouraging Him from His ministry on the cross, and Jesus would not allow that purpose to succeed.

i. We can be sure that Peter *was not aware* that he spoke for Satan, just as a moment before he was not aware that he spoke for God. It is often much easier to be a tool of God or of the devil than we want to believe.

ii. "Origen suggested that, Jesus was saying to Peter: 'Peter, your place is *behind* me, not *in front* of me. It is your place *to follow* me in the way I choose, not to try *to lead* me in the way you would like me to go.'" (Barclay)

c. **You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men:** Jesus exposed how Peter came into this satanic way of thinking. He didn't make a deliberate choice to reject God and embrace Satan; he simply let his mind settle on **the things of men** instead of **the things of God**, and Satan took advantage of it.

i. Peter is a perfect example of how a sincere heart coupled with man's thinking can often lead to disaster.

ii. Peter's rebuke of Jesus is an evidence of the *leaven* mentioned in Matthew 16:6. With his mind on **the things of men**, Peter only saw the Messiah as the embodiment of power and strength, instead of as a suffering servant. Because Peter couldn't handle a suffering Messiah, he rebuked Jesus.