

The Church On Purpose 2

Building God's Way: Our Confession, Our Commitment, Our Loyalty Matt. 16:13-26

Introduction:

1. I am absolutely amazed by what God has done.
2. It is incredible that He would take miserable sinners and use them to reach the lost.
 - a. Those He chooses to do his great work are not particularly well educated, not particularly talented and usually have very little monetary power.
 - b. The 12 were fishermen, tax collectors and political zealots.
 - c. Paul was a Pharisee so blinded by his traditions that he ravaged the church with his persecutions.
 - d. How is it that He chooses those that seem so unqualified as us and uses us to accomplish His purpose?
3. It is all the result of His power operating on us to produce radical transformations.
4. That means that we are totally dependent upon His power to accomplish the work He has designed for us to do. The success of His work is not up to our ingenuity, our knowledge and our plans.
5. In this lesson we are going to talk about our confession, our commitment and our loyalty to Him as the foundational elements of our work.
6. Reading of Matt. 16:13-20.

Discussion:

- I. The church is built upon the confession: "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16:13-20).
 - A. Some basic observations about this text.
 1. There is a contrast between the authority of men and the authority of heaven.
 2. Peter's confession is based on the revelation of God.
 3. Power to overcome the gates of Hades comes from heaven, not from men.
 4. Building the church requires this power. We talk a lot about establishing authority in the church. Often when we are trying to persuade people to obey the gospel we teach them first about establishing authority, reflecting frequently on how God communicates to us through commands, examples and inferences. But do we really understand that the authority (power) of God is necessary to overcome "the gates of death?" Heaven's authority, heaven's power is necessary to build the church.
 - B. How do we tap into that power?
 1. "We pray for God's help." Yes, that is critical. (We will talk more about this later.)
 2. It comes first by submitting ourselves to the Lordship of Christ.
 3. Peter's confession is: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."
 4. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church."
 5. Peter is not that rock, even though he may serve as a rock of weakness by

comparison. This confession is the foundation of the church.

D. What this confession means.

1. It is not the mere verbal acknowledgement of a fact.
2. We often speak of the “good confession” referring to the confession of the fact of Jesus being the Christ at the time of our baptism. But there is more to it than this.
3. 1 Tim. 6:13 refers to Jesus making the good confession before Pontius Pilate. The incident is described in Matt. 27:11. It is an acknowledgement of Jesus as King. The text of 1 Tim. 6:15 identifies Him as the only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.
4. The confession is not a mere acknowledgement of fact, but a recognition of Jesus as Lord and King.
5. His Lordship is what the church is built on. When we confess Him we are voluntarily submitting to Him as our King.

E. Practical implications regarding our participation in the building process.

1. Dependence upon His power, thus submission to His purpose, His work, in His way. Ex. If He says, “organize the church this way,” we organize the church that way. His way will work to accomplish His purpose. The work, the organization, the way the work is to be accomplished through the church with support sent

directly

to preachers (not evangelistic organizations, schools, etc.).

2. We depend upon Him for our new life (Col. 2:12). Will we then attempt to do His work in our own way? Depending upon our own power? Did Moses deliver Israel from Egypt by his own power? Was Jericho conquered by Israel’s power? How do we think we will deliver the world from sin by our own power?
3. We must operate within the confines of God’s authority and power as revealed from heaven.
4. We are “God’s fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3:9).

II. Our commitment is to set our minds on God’s interests, not man’s (16:21-23).

A. There are all kinds of interests of man.

1. Worries, riches, pleasures of this life (Matt. 13:22).
2. Land, oxen, relationships (Lk. 14:20).
3. Peter’s interest appears noble. He does not want Jesus to be killed.

B. God’s interests would take Jesus to the cross.

1. This marks the level of commitment to God’s purpose. This is what our confession of Jesus as Lord means.
2. Following the Lord is not easy.
 - a. The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.
 - b. The rich young ruler was required to give everything (Matt. 19:16-30).
 - c. The kingdom is this valuable (Matt. 13:44-45)..
 - d. There is no place for status-seeking; only service (Matt. 20:20-28).
3. All of our plans and purposes are subjugated to God’s plan and purpose.

III. It demands the loyalty of our life (16:24-26).

A. Hans-Reudi Weber, *Salty Christians* (NY: Seabury, 1963), p. 25 speaks of how

Roman soldiers entered the military through a life-changing oath. In this oath he forfeited all other allegiances and loyalties. He committed himself without reservation to Caesar and his cause. His time, fortunes, concerns and life itself belonged to his king. He would live for him, labor for him, fight for him, and die for him. He had no claim on himself.

1. It was into this kind of context that the Christians of the first century came preaching

Jesus as King instead of Caesar (cf. Acts 17:7).

2. Their allegiance was to Jesus. They had confessed Him as Sovereign and made Him the Lord in their lives. We have too!!

3. And in our baptism we have died to self and been raised to walk after Him.

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).

B. Discipleship is costly.

1. Wilbur Rees (“\$3.00 Worth of God,” *When I Relax I Feel Guilty* by Tim Hansel, Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing, 1979, p. 49) wrote:

I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please, not enough to explode by soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of Him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.

2. King David sinned when he sought to number the people in 2 Sam. 24. Evidently because he was not depending upon God's power but his own. A pestilence fell on the people and 70,000 died. David would offer a sacrifice to God. He came to a man named Araunah offering to buy his threshing floor to build an altar out of it. Araunah offered threshing floor and oxen as a gift. David said, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing” (v. 24).

3. Ours' is a religion of self-sacrifice, but it is a great cause that we have given ourselves to.

Conclusion:

1. We are the people of God. We have submitted ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is our King.

2. Our commitment, like His, is to the accomplishment of the purpose of God and so we serve the purpose of God in our generation (cf. Acts 13:36).

3. We have given our lives to Him and make the sacrifices that reflect our loyalty to Him and to His cause.