

## Church Series – I Will Build My Church

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, February 5, 2023

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### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us. Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

### SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

**NOTE 1** – Last Sunday we considered that Scripture likens the Lord to a master artist crafting a masterpiece (i.e., His masterpiece being the redeemed in Christ). This sentiment is true both individually and collectively! Consider again...

#### **Ephesians 2:10 (NIV cf. NLT)**

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork [masterpiece], created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**NOTE 2** – Note this sermon is available online for those who would like to go deeper at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org)

**NOTE 3** – This morning I would like to consider a related and corresponding theme, noting that Scripture also likens the Lord to a master builder. Please keep this sentiment in mind as we examine one of my favorite Gospel accounts. Turn with me to Matthew 16 and let us read through this timeless and timely selection...

### SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

#### **Matthew 16:13–20 (NIV)**

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 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. 19 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.” 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

### SETTING THE STAGE PT. 3

**NOTE 1** – This text contains much that we might address: **a)** the probing nature of Jesus’ Q and its implication; **b)** the revelation given to Peter re: the nature and work of Jesus as the Christ and Son of the Living God; **c)** the foundation upon which the Church is built; **d)** the apostolic authority of “binding and loosing”; **e)** the gates and nature of Hades; **and f)** why Jesus forbade His disciples from speaking re: His Messianic identity.

**NOTE 2** – However, I have chosen to address one of the most significant statements ever uttered by Christ...

**Matthew 16:18b (REPEAT)**

18 . . . I will build my church . . .

**NOTE 3** – You see, throughout the whole of the Word God is identified as a builder or creator...

**Hebrews 3:4b (Emphasis Mine)**

4 . . . every house is built by someone, but **God** is the **builder** of everything.

**Genesis 1:1 (Emphasis Mine)**

1 In the beginning **God created** the heavens and the earth.

**John 1:1–3 (Emphasis Mine)**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were **made**; without him nothing was made that has been made.

**Colossians 1:15–17 (Emphasis Mine)**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were **created**: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

**NOTE 4** – And in Matthew ch. 16 Jesus proclaimed His divine intention to build something new (i.e., His Church).

**KEY** – As members of His Church, we do well to understand the intent and purpose of our Lord, Savior or Christ!

**Matthew 16:18b**

18 . . . I will build my church . . .

**NOTE 5** – Let us examine this statement one component at a time...

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS PT. 1

**Q. What is the first word of this five-word phrase?**

**Matthew 16:18b (Emphasis Mine)**

18 . . . I will build my church . . .

**Q. What is the significance of this term?**

**NOTE 1** – The “I” of Christ indicates that the Church is not an organization or entity built by human capacities. This is a point we often overlook because we commonly function under the idea that building the Church is the work of pastoral leaders, board members, or full-time missionaries. Nothing could be further from the truth...

**NOTE 2** – Though I will not diminish the efforts of countless millions in the advancement of the cause of Christ, the Church of Christ is something built by Christ and Christ alone (i.e., per His own declaration). We, as humans, are no more responsible for building the Church than a hammer is for building a home. We are all but tools in His hands!

**NOTE 3** – Let us talk on an earthly level for a moment. When you want to build a home, it is necessary to find a qualified builder. For most people this will mean the hiring of a general contractor. You need to find someone who is able and willing to perform the task at hand, as an incompetent builder can yield disastrous results (e.g., wasted time and/or capital).

**NOTE 4** – Shifting and speaking now to heavenly matters, who but Christ Jesus is able to build something as momentous as the Church? Who but Christ has the capacity to craft something of such magnificent scale or significance? Scripture reveals Him to be un. qualified...

**NOTE 5** – The Bible declares Jesus to be the Holy One, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is preeminent over all creation, being its Creator and the Firstborn from the Dead. He is the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the Prince of Peace and both the Son of God and Son of Man. He is the embodiment and ultimate expression of God the Father, as the fullness of the Godhead dwells within Him bodily. He is known to be the Great Deliverer and our tireless Intercessor and High Priest. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith, and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is the only Mediator between God and man, and His is the Name that is above every other name. He alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father but by Him. He is the Resurrection and the Life and the one who holds the keys to death, hell and the grave. He is Christ, the Lord.

**KEY 1** – I would argue that Jesus is singularly qualified to do the work. Moreover...

**KEY 2** – Jesus Himself established that He is willing to do the work.

**KEY 3** – There is much depth in the following...

**Matthew 16:18b (Emphasis Mine)**

18 . . . I will build my church . . .

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS PT. 2

**Q. What is the second word of this five-word phrase?**

**Matthew 16:18b (Emphasis Mine)**

18 . . . I **will** build my church . . .

**Q. What is the significance of this term?**

**NOTE 1** – This term indicates that the building of the Church of Christ and the completion thereof is inevitable. It is sure and certain, fixed, unavoidable and immutable; it shall come to pass! Jesus' declaration contains a promise that is backed by power divine. We can rest assured that nothing shall ultimately thwart or frustrate His holy objective...

**Matthew 16:18b (Emphasis Mine)**

18 . . . I **will** build my church . . .

**NOTE 2** – This is not to say that the Church will be without opposition. Rather, Christ Himself assured His people throughout space and time of persecution, affliction, and suffering, and the Church has always faced a multiplicity of adversarial forces (i.e., external and internal)...

### 1) The Church & Rival Religious Forces

**Acts 8:1–3 (Subsequent to the Martyrdom of Stephen)**

1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

**Acts 13:49–50 (Missionary Journeys of Paul and Barnabas)**

49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region [Pisidian Antioch]. 50 But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

**Acts 14:1–2 (Missionary Journeys of Paul and Barnabas)**

1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. 2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

**FYI** – Much more could be said re: opposing Jewish and Gentile religious forces in the Book of Acts.

## 2) The Church & Secular Forces

### Acts 16:16–24 (Missionary Journeys of Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke, etc.)

16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

19 When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

## 3) The Church & Demonic Forces

### Ephesians 6:10–12

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

## 4) The Church & Internal Adversaries (False Teachers & Teaching)

### Jude 3–4

3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people. 4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

**NOTE 3** – Despite these forces and more, Jesus will build His Church (cf. Matt. 16)! In fact, note the following...

### Matthew 16:18b–c

18 . . . I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

**NOTE 4** – Hades is the realm of dead spirits, and the gate or point of entry for such is death. This means that even the power of death itself has no power to stop His building of the Church. Death could not keep Christ (cf. Acts 2:24) and it shall not keep those who trust in Him (cf. John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15)! Amazing!

**NOTE 5** – As I have said many times, a promise is only as trustworthy as the one making it. Is Jesus trustworthy? If not, we have no reason to hope. If so, let us take Him at His word! Christ shall build His Church!

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS PT. 3

**Q. What is the third word of this five-word phrase?**

**Matthew 16:18b (Emphasis Mine)**

18 . . . I will **build** my church . . .

**Q. What is the significance of this term?**

**A.** The term means to construct, prepare, or to make ready. In the weeks to come we will take the time to define both the nature and purpose of the Church that Christ is building. However, let me note the following by way of human example and/or illustration...

**NOTE 1** – In 2014 this church decided to put an addition on our facility. In some ways, I cannot imagine our church without the addition, but a lot of work went in to make it happen (i.e., behind the scenes). We had to **a)** establish a design based upon the purposes of the room; **b)** secure necessary authorizations from local and state entities; **c)** consider the cost of the project and secure funding; **d)** hire a general contractor who worked to purchase necessary supplies, enlist suitable help and erect the structure. Ultimately, we **e)** celebrated its completion some months after!

**NOTE 2** – Consider how these elements parallel Christ’s work...

- 1)** Christ Established the Design of the Church Based Upon His Good Purposes (Eternal Ages Past)
- 2)** Christ Operates in Sync w/ the Will Of & Under the Oversight of His Heavenly Father (Authorization)
- 3)** Christ Had to Consider and Prepare for the Cost of the Project (Necessary Preparation & Follow Through)
- 4)** Christ Purchased the Necessary Supplies for the Construction of His Church (i.e., the Souls of Men)

**Revelation 5:9 (Song to Christ)**

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,  
because you were slain,  
and with your blood you purchased for God  
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

- 5)** Christ Has Been Gathering Said Supplies (Souls) Throughout Space and Time (i.e., the Harvest)
- 6)** Christ Has Been Preparing, Erecting, Forming and Fashioning the Church for Millennia
- 7)** The Day Shall Soon Come When He (WE) Will Celebrate His Grand Completion

**NOTE 3** – We will delve much deeper into the nature, function and purpose of the Church in the days to come. I want us to be informed concerning what He is building, how it is to function and, ultimately, why it still matters! Let us move on for now...

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS PT. 4

**Q. What is the fourth word of this five-word phrase?**

**Matthew 16:18b (Emphasis Mine)**

18 . . . I will build **my** church . . .

**Q. What is the significance of this term?**

### 1) This Term Speaks to Origination

**NOTE 1** – The Church is not of earthly origin. Humanity did not birth the idea of the Church, nor did it outline the purpose(s) for which it exists. Rather, the Church finds its origin in the Lord, as it was first conceived in His heart and mind in eternal ages past. He is the sole catalyst behind it, and the Church is being built according to His good pleasure and purpose! All things pertaining to the Church, its function and work originate in Him...

**Ephesians 1:4–6**

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

### 2) This Term Speaks to Possession

**NOTE 2** – To whom does the Church of Christ belong? To Christ alone. In many ways this concept connects back to the opening point. Since no apostle, pastor, church leader or missionary is ultimately responsible to build the Church, the Church does not belong to them. Rather, it belongs to the One who is building it. Therefore, the Church is the unique possession of Christ (i.e., individually and collectively).

**Titus 2:11–14**

11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

**1 Corinthians 6:19b–20**

19 . . . You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price.

**NOTE 3** – Since the Church belongs to Him, it must give itself to His purposes and function. This we shall cover!

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS PT. 5

**Q. What is the final word of this five-word phrase?**

**Matthew 16:18b (Emphasis Mine)**

18 . . . I will build my church . . .

**FYI** – This is the first use of the term in the NT (i.e., “ekklesia” in the Greek). The literal meaning of the term is “a called out” assembly and connotes the idea of a people uniquely belonging to God. The word is used 114 times in the NT, 90 of which refer to a local assembly of believers. However, in this first use of ekklesia, Christ has the whole of the Church—throughout space and time—in mind. Bible commentators posit the following....

**QUOTE** – “Though the ancients were familiar with this term in other, political/social contexts, Jesus spoke about His ‘ekklesia’ in contrast to these other assemblies. This was to be something new and different, for in His church, Jesus Christ would unite believing Jews and Gentiles and form a new temple and a new body (Eph. 2:11–3:12). In His church, natural distinctions would be unimportant (Gal. 3:28). Jesus Christ would be the Builder of this church; the Head of this church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). Each believer in this church is a ‘living stone’ (1 Peter 2:5). Believers would meet in local congregations, or assemblies, to worship Christ and to serve Him; but they would also belong to a universal church, a temple being built by Him. There is a oneness to the people of God (Eph. 4:1–6) that ought to be revealed to the world by love and unity (John 17:20–26).”

**Q1. What is the nature of this God-ordained entity and organism?**

**Q2. What is its function and work (i.e., individually and collectively)?**

**KEY 1** – We will address these Q’s in the weeks to come. Much is in store!

**KEY 2** – We are part of something of divine design—something that finds its origin in the heart and purpose of God. We are part of something that connects us to one another, to believers all over the world, to all believers throughout all of time, and to Christ Himself in the most profound of ways. We are His people and body. We are connected with, yet subject to Him. Moreover, we each have a fundamental value and role, meaning we must all work together to fulfill His heavenly mission. There is much in the following...

**Matthew 16:18b**

18 . . . I will build my church . . .

## CONCLUSION

**NOTE 1** – Feel free to give either in person or online at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org)

**NOTE 2** – Feel free to participate in our “beyond-Sunday” ministries (MM, WM, Study)

**2 Corinthians 13:14**

14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.