

Matthew 16:1-20

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[0 : 00] me as we stand together and we read the Word of God found in Matthew 16. We'll be reading verses 1 through 20 this morning. It says, The Pharisees and the Sadducees came up and testing Jesus. They asked him to show them a sign from heaven. But he replied to them, When it is evening, you say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning there will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening. Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and a sign will not be given it except the sign of Jonah. And he left them and went away. And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. And Jesus said to them, Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, He said that because we did not bring any bread. But Jesus, aware of this, said, You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, how many baskets full you picked up?

Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, how many large baskets full you picked up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak of you concerning bread, but beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Then they understood that he did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he was asking his disciples, Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist, and others Elijah, but still others Jeremiah, one of the prophets. He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. Then he warned the disciples that they should tell no one that he was the Christ. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity we have to come. Lord, we do celebrate and recognize our fathers, and we thank you for the work that is being put in there. Lord, we thank you for the opportunity we have for the public reading of your word. Lord, as we've come to this portion of the service where we hear your word and read your word, Lord, we come now asking that you would speak to our hearts and minds. Lord, we pray that the truth of scripture would captivate us. Lord, that it would challenge us, that it would move us, and it would conform us more and more to your image for your glory and honor. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

You may be seated. I want you to see this morning from our text, a faith that sets apart, or a set apart faith. Not just any faith, but a faith which sets one apart. And we get this from the word *ecclesia*, which means the called out ones, or the chosen ones. We have that translated in our text as the church. The church is literally the *ecclesia*, the called out ones, the ones who are set apart. Now, the word *ecclesia* was not unique or is not unique, even in the time of Christ, for the church, because it was a common word. There were many *ecclesias*, which would be those who were called out from the multitudes or called out from the number of people in order to judge particular cases or to stand kind of what we would refer to as having a jury. There would be an *ecclesia*, some called out ones that were gathered together that would stand and hear a case and to judge a case in light of society's standards and things of that nature. But here, Christ elevates that *ecclesia*, or the church as we have it defined here, as being those who are set apart from the rest of society for his particular purpose.

And it's here that we see it being mentioned for the first time in all of scripture, and we pay very special attention to it in its proper setting. So we're looking at a faith that sets one apart and what it must have to possess that faith. We have seen in the last few chapters that legalism, namely Phariseeism, legalistic faith or legalistic lifestyle, legalistic belief is really being adamantly opposed by Christ. Remember the washing of the hands and having hands that were ceremonially unclean or not necessarily taking care of the inner man, but always putting something on the outward man, putting on a show so that one would look to have the appearance of righteousness.

[4 : 36] And Christ reminds us, it's not that which is on the outside which defiles the man, but rather that which is on the inside. Over and over and over again, Christ has been opposing the teaching and the legalistic standards of the Pharisees. He has opposed them in their strict Sabbath keeping of healing those on the Sabbath and touching the untouchable and doing the unthinkable. We see over and over again that Christ shows us that it is not just this adamant legalistic faith, but it is the faith that is rooted in the heart.

So we begin to see that which sets us apart. Now the reality is that in the society in which Christ was teaching, there was no one more set apart than the Pharisees. They dressed differently. They looked differently.

They had these tassels on the robe. We see that in the Old Testament where he told them to tie tassels on the edge of their garments so that they would remember the Ten Commandments. And these were legalistic keepings of these things.

Their dress was different. Their behavior was different. Their solemnness was different, right? They didn't necessarily want to have a lot of fun because they were afraid if they had fun, maybe they would be unrighteous. They were strict adherents to the legalistic standard, which they found throughout what they considered the law or the Torah. Now, very distinctly different from that would be the Sadducees.

Now the Sadducees didn't agree at all with much of the Pharisees' teaching. Before I came here as pastor, you had an interim pastor who was really so well at telling you why they were Sadducees because they didn't believe in the resurrection or the afterlife. This is why they were Sadducees.

[6 : 12] They didn't believe in angels. They didn't believe in anything. They had no hope. They had no expectation. As a matter of fact, the Sadducees' really mantra was, you only live once, so you need to live it the best you can. We have that today.

I used to say that the only religious tribe which has stayed in existence since the time of Christ were the Pharisees because they were the legalistic adherents of the Old Testament law. And we still see that in Judaism today. And the Sadducees naturally would have died out.

But the reality is, is we've just renamed it. Because there are still who live as if there is no hope, no afterlife, no judgment, no angels, no heaven, no hell, that this is all you get.

Sadducees were very, very invested in the world in which they lived. As a matter of fact, they were much more prosperous than the Pharisees. The reason they were more prosperous is because they embraced the corporate world.

They embraced the Roman society, and they embraced it for their benefit. They said, if the Romans come in, we can make money off that. The Sadducees, during the time of Christ, held the position of the high priesthood.

[7 : 16] Now, this should be astonishing to us because the Pharisees were the most religious, the Sadducees were the most worldly, but the Sadducees held the position of the high priesthood. That is because the Romans put the high priesthood for the highest bid.

And since the Pharisees sought to be disconnected from the world and therefore did not enrich themselves with the Roman commerce, and the Sadducees did enrich themselves with the Roman commerce, they had the means of the world to buy the position.

These two, now stay with me, I know I'm throwing a lot of information at you, but stay with me. These two adamantly opposed to one another, but when it came to the opposition of Christ, they came together.

See, the first thing we understand about having a faith that sets us apart is there is a caution to be heeded. Because it says, Then the Pharisees and the Sadducees came together, and they came to Christ.

It is amazing in Scripture when you understand the reality of people who would never be caught together at any other moment always came together for the purpose of opposing Jesus.

[8 : 21] Here, the Pharisees and Sadducees would have wanted nothing other than to be away from one another. We see this in the book of Acts. Paul is being on trial after supposedly bringing in a Gentile into the synagogue.

Remember that? He is there before their leaders, and Paul determines that half of the gathering there is the Pharisees, and half of them are Sadducees. And Paul cries out, For the hope of the resurrection, I am on trial today.

And all of a sudden, the Pharisees say, Well, I don't see anything wrong with this man. The Sadducees said, There is no resurrection. And they began fighting and arguing with one another so much that they had to take Paul away because those who were actually putting him on trial were fighting with one another because they hated each other.

That was the society in which they lived. But when it came to opposing Christ, they could work together. Because here is the reality. The world has no problem working together as long as you oppose the same thing.

Two other groups that you see that would never fellowship together, but yet in their opposition of Christ, came together are the Pharisees and the Herodians. Now, the Herodians are those who really supported Herod.

[9 : 25] The Pharisees didn't like Rome, but they came and challenged Christ together. And they came and they asked for a sign. Here we have the Pharisees and Sadducees come to Christ, and they ask him.

Now, to us, it doesn't seem like a big deal, but it is a big deal, so stay with me because here is the caution to be heeded. They came and they say, Show us a sign so that we may believe that you are who you say you are.

Now, think of this just for a moment. By this time, Christ has fed the 5,000 men, probably more like 12,000 to 15,000 individuals. By this time, Jesus has fed the 4,000 men.

By this time, Christ has walked on the water. And everybody knew that he did not get into the boat, but they also knew he got to the other side somehow or another. By this time, he has already turned the water into wine.

By this time, Jesus has done sign after sign after sign after sign. By this time, miraculous vent after miraculous vent has already occurred. And by this time, the Pharisees and the Sadducees would have witnessed a lot of these things.

[10 : 25] And yet they ask, Show us a sign that we may believe. And Jesus goes into this discourse. Don't you love this about Christ, that when you come to him and ask him one thing, he always talks to you about something else?

And I didn't say he did. He said he does, because he's a present Savior, right? He's a present King. And he starts talking about the weather. And like, you can see the sky and say, Oh, well, you know, it's going to be pleasant today.

Or, oh, it's going to be stormy today. And you can read the signs of the sky, but you can't read the signs of the time. And he is reminding them of the reality that they're looking at the wrong thing. Because they want a sign.

Just prove yourself, Christ. Prove yourself that you are who you say you are. And for the second time in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says the same thing. A wicked and perverse generation seeks after the sign, but not a sign will be given to it, but the sign of Jonah.

Now mark it well. There's a few things I want you to see in this passage. Okay, just a few. I just want you to put like a little asterisk beside it so that if anybody ever doubts you, if people tell you that the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000 is just the same story being told twice, remind them that Christ set them apart as two separate events here.

[11 : 32] Christ himself said, do you remember when I fed the 5,000, how many basketfuls we took up? And do you remember when I fed the 4,000? In the mind of Christ, that was two events, right? And how many, what does it say? Large basketfuls I took up, or you took up?

And if people say that Jonah is just this great mythological tale, kind of an analogy for something else, it's not an actual event, remind them that Jesus affirmed the sign of Jonah twice.

And the sign of Jonah is actually a picture of the resurrection, and if that was kind of a mythological tale, then so too is the resurrection. So it kind of makes us go, well, I don't understand how a man could stay alive in the belly of a fish for three days.

I don't either, but it doesn't mean that it didn't happen. There's a lot of things that I don't understand. A lot of things. I still have a hard time, and I know somebody's going to come up and tell me it's got something to do about gravitational pull and circular force and all this other thing, but how we can live on a round planet that's spinning around and nothing moves.

I mean, I know you can explain it to me, and you can give me all these laws and all this gravitational pull, but all you're doing is repeating the science. You don't understand it. I mean, really. I mean, do you really understand it? No. We don't.

[12 : 45] I mean, the earth is round, spinning around, and going, and it's kind of tilted a little bit, and we're going this way and this way all at the same time, and yet we can stand still and not fall over. It's just...

And if God can do that, surely He can keep a man alive in the belly of a great fish for three days. It's pretty simple, right? But what we see here is this reality.

Testimonial miraculous signs never lead to salvific faith. They are not the basis for faith.

Jesus refused to do a sign because He knew the reality. What was sufficient to reveal Him had already been done.

They did not want to believe in Him, therefore they would not believe in Him, and no matter what He did, they could not believe in Him. because faith is not rooted in miraculous events.

[13 : 51] It's not. Stay with me throughout this whole thing because I believe these are interconnected for a reason. We do not come to a faith that sets us apart because we see Him do amazing things, because some of the most miraculous works that God has ever done are very common everyday experiences to us.

the reality that the sun came up, and the Bible tells us that He calls the sun forth as a bridegroom coming out of His chamber, and He calls its course to go across the sky, and then it goes back into His chamber, and it becomes night.

The reality that all these things are in existence, and we see them as everyday natural events. These things do not draw us to salvific faith or faith that sets us apart. Therefore, the most miraculous thing which we could ever imagine that we could ever ask Him to do, Lord, if you would just prove yourself to me then I will believe you.

My friend, listen to me. That is a lie from the pit of hell because Jesus says a wicked and perverse generation seeks after a son. All we're asking is for Him to prove Himself more than He has already revealed Himself.

Now, I know those are harsh words, but stay with me. Because then as we get ready to go across the sea, it says Jesus left them, and as they go across the sea, Jesus tells them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

[15 : 10] Now, the disciples, they're great. They're walking with Christ. They're living with Christ. They're seeing these things, but they're having a hard time understanding all this. Biblical truth is a hard thing to comprehend sometimes.

And they say, well, it's because we didn't bring any bread with us. That's why He said that, because He doesn't want us to go buy bread from the wrong store. Now, they very quickly forgot that a lack of bread was not a problem in the light of the Savior's presence, right?

They didn't understand this reality that they didn't have to have a lot of food in order to be fed, that they had the Savior, and that was sufficient. So we see, He tells them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and they're kind of going back and forth with themselves, like, oh, what Jesus upset us.

We didn't bring anything. And then He comes out and says, why are you talking about these things? And then they realize what He was telling them is to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Now, here's the caution to be heeded.

Here's the caution to be heeded. The faith that sets us apart is always a product of the teaching which we have put ourselves under. And we must be cautious.

[16 : 13] We must be cautious. Now, I'm not asking you to accept everything that I say blindly. As a matter of fact, I love the believers from Berea who went home and searched the Scriptures daily after Paul would preach.

The reason I encourage a set-apart Bible reading plan, and I want everybody to be in the Word is because I don't want you to follow the teaching of man, but I want you to follow the Word of God.

Because here's the caution. Be careful of the teaching you follow. Oh, what harm has been done as a result of false teaching and misguided teaching throughout the years?

Because let's be honest with each other. We are all very moldable. We're shaped by the teaching which we put ourselves under.

This is why there have been times where I've been reading books and I just set it aside, or I've been reading this and I set it aside because I understand that I'm being led more by what I'm reading as opposed to more than by what he has said.

[17 : 20] Friday was a pretty rough day for your pastor. I officiated a funeral service for a 20-year-old young man, which I knew I had the opportunity to coach, and I knew it was going to be difficult.

I appreciate your prayer. So many people were praying. I appreciate that. I think I trust that the Lord was honored in what was said. The room's packed and the weight's on me, and pastor's wives understand there's things that weigh on pastors and just what's going on there.

We get to the graveside, and the graveside's packed. I mean, it's probably one of the fullest gravesides I've ever been to, and I'm sitting there and I'm waiting, just waiting on things to go, and I have one concern.

I know things you don't think about as a pastor or without being a pastor. When I get to the graveside, I need to know where the head is, right, which ends the head on, because I stand at the head, so I usually talk to the grave diggers.

Usually I'm there first. Nobody talks to those guys. They have a hard job, so I just talk to them. I thank them for their work, and I get my clarity. One of them found out, you know, he wanted to know who it was, where I was from, super nice guy.

[18 : 32] But in the middle of all this crowd, in the middle of all this, he's a great believer, he's a strong believer, I can tell he's a strong believer, but he just started going into all of his doctoral statements of his faith, and I'm like, this is great.

I appreciate that. Just not right now, you know, and just really adamant in things he was saying, and I'm not saying the things he was saying was wrong.

I'm just saying, I could tell the tinting of the teaching he had been under. We're all that way.

I'm that way. You're that way. Anybody that knew, and there's a few in here that sat under Billy Howe's ministry, know that I'm forever tainted by that.

Good or bad or indifferent, that's just, his fingerprints are on me. The caution to be heeded, Christ tells his disciple, is be careful who's teaching your following.

[19 : 34] Be careful. We live in a society and have an opportunity. We have more access to quote unquote biblical teaching than any other time in history.

But not all biblical teaching is biblical teaching. Not all teaching from the Bible or about the Bible is biblical teaching. A faith that sets us apart ensures that we are cautious.

I tell myself that. Now let's get to the meat of it, right? Because here's the caution. I promise. We'll cover the meat as quickly as we can but you need to see it.

There's a caution to be heeded. There's a confession to be made. It says when they left that area, Jesus took them to Caesarea Philippi. Now this is good. Stay with me. He took them to Caesarea Philippi.

Where did he take them? 120 miles north of Jerusalem outside of Jewish territory. He took them again outside of a prominent Jewish land away from the influence of Judaism.

[20 : 40] He took them to Caesarea Philippi, a city that was named after Caesar. A city that was full and you've probably heard it of paganistic idols and temples.

It had a grand temple built for Caesar worship there. There was at least the foundation of that city was the god Pan, lowercase g, god Pan who was proclaimed to be the son of a god and it was also a fertility god was the largest god in that land.

Bell worship was prominent there. Caesar worship was on full display there and it is here at this place that Jesus brings his disciples and he asks them two questions.

He says, who do people say that I am and then who do you say that I am? Now, we want to do this because Christ asked for confession in a very pluralistic idolatrous society.

Jesus did not ask them to make a confession in a place that was safe to confess. He did not ask them to make a confession in a place that was very monotheistic that is even in Jewish territory.

[21 : 57] He did not ask them to make a confession in a place that was free of distractions. Jesus took them to a place that was surrounded by idols and false worship and said, now, who am I?

That's good news because we live in a land of floristic worship. We live in a land of idolatrous worship even if we don't call them idols anymore. We live in a land of much distraction and we live in a land that has, in our society, in our world, in which a number of temples have been built, some constructed for self and some constructed for other things.

Christ has never asked his people to confess only when it's easy. He usually asks them to confess when it's the hardest. Here we see that he asks them, who do people say that I am?

And great answers. Some say Elijah, some say John the Baptist, some say one thing, some say this other thing. One thing we find from this and it's the reality is that everybody has an opinion, right?

Everybody has an opinion. Even now, all people have an opinion as to who Christ is. The historical figure of Jesus Christ of Nazareth cannot be denied and people everywhere have an opinion about him.

[23 : 08] But the main thing is not who do people say that I am, the main thing is the next question, but who do you say that I am? Because see, our faith that sets us apart is never a faith based on what others are saying, it's a faith based on what we say.

And Peter makes the confession, Peter's the spokesman, we understand that. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. He makes this great confession. Now, these things have been stated throughout the book of Matthew already.

These things have been stated when he called him the sea. They called him the Son of God. He is the Son of Man. When he did all these events, they would say this, this is the first time, by the way, that a confession is being made when there is no tragedy or no thrust of events.

All is calm. Nothing is going on around them. It's in a moment of stillness. He says, who am I? See, he doesn't ask them in the middle of chaos.

He doesn't ask them in the middle of tragedy. He doesn't ask them in the middle of need. He asks them in a very ordinary day when there's a lot of options before them, who am I? It's an honest confession.

[24 : 22] And it's an accepted confession because Christ takes this. And this, he says, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but my Father who is in heaven.

Now, Simon Barjona literally means Simon the son of Jonah. That's what it means. He is Simon, the son of Jonah. That's his father's name.

That's who he is in the flesh. But Christ backs this up and says, but you do not know this because of who your daddy is. Or you do not know this because of the flesh.

Now, friends, if you don't hear anything else, I want you to hear this from this point forward. Okay? And I know I'm going long. I'm going slow but I'm trying to be steady and get there as quick as we can.

Man does not make a true salvific confession of Christ based on what he has been taught by man but rather based on what's been revealed to him by the Father. The teaching you sit under is important but the revelation is from the Father Almighty.

[25 : 29] He says, you do not know this because of flesh and blood but rather by my Father who is in heaven. The only way in which we confess who Christ is, the only way that we come to a salvific confession of faith is the revelation of the Father who reveals it.

No one knows the Son but the Father. Right? It is revelation. This is why the teaching we sit under is important not necessarily the person we sit under because the teaching is the Word of God and God uses the Father uses the Word of God to reveal the Son of God that pricks the heart of man that draws him to a salvific confession.

I know this is deep and you say, wow, where are we going from here? Stay with me. And we see the wonder of salvation here. God is opening it up to us and he is revealing it to him.

He makes this confession of who he is. And this is the confession that all must make. Not my daddy says or my mom says or somebody so and so said this, who do I say that he is based on what he has revealed to me?

It is a personal revelation of the reality of who Christ is and that is the confession to be proclaimed. Which leads us to this last and final thing.

[26 : 45] The church that is being built. Because a faith that is set apart is a faith that has rightly heard the Word of God and the Word of God has revealed to them the Son of God and it puts them in connection with the body of Christ.

The church is essential. The church is essential. It's not a secondary thought. It's not a, oh yeah, it would be good if I'm a part of it. The way I explain it is the church is the bride of Christ.

All throughout Scripture we see that. I know a lot of people who have told me and I know you've heard this before and I don't mind repeating it. A lot of people have told me, man, I love Jesus but I'm just not so sure about the church. You know, the church has got its problems and you know, I just haven't found the right church yet but man, I love Jesus.

Jesus is awesome and I don't mean this to be despairing. Just stay with me, okay? And I'm not trying to put anybody down. I'm just trying to put it in light of the way I think the Savior sees it. Man, I love Christ and I love, He's my Savior and Lord but the church, I don't know, the church has got problems and I tell people all the time, that's like you walking up to me going, you know, Billy Joe, you're pretty cool but I don't know about your wife.

You know, your wife, she's got all kinds of problems and you know, I like you, I just don't want to hang out with your wife and guess what, me and you ain't going to hang out. There's not.

[28 : 03] Because I love my wife. I'll die for my wife. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells me I need to die daily for my wife. And for someone to say, well, you know, me and you were cool but I don't know about Carrie.

See the picture here? The weight of the church? Because look, Peter makes this confession, this salvific, true confession which sets him apart and he's making it as a spokesman for the apostles, right, for all of them there and it sets them apart and immediately Jesus starts speaking of the church.

Immediately. Because that confession leads to the reality of the church and look at what it says. I also say to you that you are Peter and upon this rock. Now let's stay here because we have a lot of doctrinal thing in this one message.

Catholics use this text to show that Peter is the first pope and in the succession of Peter we have the popal succession and Peter is the one whose church is built upon and Christ is speaking in reference to him and there's papal authority based upon the keys and the binding and loosing and all these things.

Alright, so stay with me. We're going to flesh it out because that's important because if we get it wrong we get the church wrong because this is the first mentioning of the church so we need to know what's going on here, right? Because from this point on this is what the church, by the way, this whole message I preached just led up to this.

[29 : 27] We're just now getting to the sermon, okay? The other part was the red stuff. So we got all kinds of time. Trains bonus whistle, the tracks are blocked, you got all kinds of time. I asked them to stop right there. The restaurant will be there when you get there. Just had a light and a move for just a little bit.

Not really. I think it's moving, maybe. But we did need to hear this part because this is the important stuff right here. We need to know what's going on right here and we're going to make it as quick as we can but we're going to do it as accurately as we can and we're going to hear what God has to say to us about the church.

Jesus says, this is great, you made the confession and immediately starts talking about the church. This is where I get excited. The other stuff we need to get to so we get to this point, right? He starts talking about the church. He says, and I say to you, you are Peter, Petra.

You are Petra. Cephas, by the way, means the same thing. Peter and Petra, they mean the same thing, small stone. Yesterday, we came down here and my wife and daughter were doing the decorating as you probably saw out in the fellowship hall.

You probably knew I didn't do the decorating. They were doing the decorating. About the only thing I did was I cut the pieces of cedar that were put on the table. I can run a chainsaw. She said, I need cedar. I said, I got a saw.

[30 : 29] So anyway, she needed some rocks, right? So she had these jars. She needed some rocks. So Braden and I got to do the coolest thing, which is the best thing you can do in decorating. Braden and I decided to go down to Buskawful Bridge and get rocks.

The reason that was cool is because we spent a little extra time down there skipping rocks. We picked up a lot of Peters, right? A lot of Petras. And we're skipping rocks, got back a little late, said, sorry, we got distracted skipping rocks and looking for minnows. That just kind of happens any time you get around water.

But I came back with all these Petras, these little rocks. And they're all, some of them are back there in the jar. Sorry, Brother Troy, a bunch more are back there in a tea pitcher.

I will empty those out later. So I came back with all these little Petras and these Peters and they're there and they had a purpose, right? And they're filling the jars. He says, you are Peter, you're Petra. Now pay attention, stay with me.

This is important because was it not Peter who also wrote in the book of 1 Peter in the second chapter, we are all together being built up one another as living stones, Petras.

[31 : 27] Peter used the same word that Christ referred to him as referring to all believers, right? We are all spiritual stones, Petras being built up. Peter says, we're all Petras.

We're all being built up to one another, right? This is important. So if he's speaking to Peter, Peter would be the best one to interpret exactly what he is saying. And since Peter says, I am a stone and then Peter looks at you and says, but you're a stone, then surely Peter's not exalting himself, right?

Stay with me. Best interpreter of scripture, scripture. I know we get a little excited. I told you this is what we led up to, right? He says, you are Petra. And then he says, and upon this rock I will build my church.

He said, well, that's Peter. Well, that's a different word. He says, you are Peter, Petra, small stone. This is Petros. Bedrock, large stone is what it literally means.

Now, maybe I'm wrong. I don't think Jesus just chose words at random. We have a saying in our house, say what you mean and mean what you say.

[32 : 34] So when he says, here, a little rock, I'm going to build my church on this bedrock. He's not just happenstance saying it, right? So we have to, now, the onus is on us.

Because if he was saying he was going to build his church on Peter, he would say, you're Petra and I'm going to build my church on Petra. He didn't. He used a different word. So now we've got to find out what that word means. Now, confessional faith throughout the ages said, well, some say that Petros, the large rock, the bedrock, is the confession that Peter makes.

It could be. It could be what he said. Or it could be the unity of the body of the disciples. We'll see that in just a moment. It could be all of them, a conglomerate body of them. It could be each and every one of them. Well, the only problem I have with that is that each and every one of them are flawed, right?

We don't want a foundation that's flawed. And if he's building his church on Peter, well, in the next verse, actually, I think if we were to get down to verse 21, Peter starts opposing him and then Jesus says that he is being used of Satan.

And some say, oh, well, that was Peter before he was filled with the Spirit. Well, okay, then let's go to the book of Galatians and we find Paul opposing Peter because Peter had problems in the book of Galatians, which, by the way, was after the filling of the Holy Spirit.

[33 : 45] So if Peter is the foundation of the church, Peter's got problems and our foundation has problems and therefore, we're not on solid ground. So I don't think it can be him, right? All of the apostles have problems, by the way.

So the only thing that we can try to figure out what this Petros, this big rot, this bed rot, this foundation, Jesus says, I'm building my church. Well, let's go to Scripture. Paul says, no other foundation will we lay other than that which has already been laid.

What does he say? No other foundation, foundational stone, bed rot, by the way, in their time, right? They didn't pour concrete slabs, even though Herod the Great developed underwater concrete. They didn't do that. They just got down to bed rot.

No other foundation do we lay than that which has already been laid. And Paul says, which is Christ Jesus, our Lord. So, Jesus says, I say to you, you're a Petra, Petra, you're a small stone.

And you're going to be a part of this church that I'm building on this foundation. And I think, honestly, the best interpretation of that text is when he said, upon this rock, he's pointing to himself.

[34 : 52] Because the rock in the wilderness is who? Christ. Go back to what Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 2, we are all spiritual stones being built up to one another.

There is one cornerstone and that cornerstone is Christ. See, Christ is the foundation of the church. Because he's the only stone we can find that doesn't have a crack in it.

There's no fault no break, no failure. The church is not built on man. The church is built on Christ. Peter is a part of that church.

Now, he's an instrumental part. We're about to get into it because the church is being constructed based on Peter's confession here. And Peter is a representative of the entire. And then we've got to go into this, okay, well, if Christ is the foundation, he says, and the gates of Hades.

Now, I know some translations say hell. New American Center says Hades. And Hades is actually a better interpretation of this because hell is the place of eternal condemnation and punishment, which we see in the book of Revelation.

[35 : 55] Hades, according to the time of Christ and even to this time, is a place where death and Satan's realm operate until they are called out of Hades and then cast into hell.

Two different places, two different representations. So Hades is the realm of death. So what are you saying? Gates always mean authoritative power. So what are you saying is the authority and the power of death and Satan will not have any advantage over the church.

That should lead us to go glory hallelujah because death and Satan and the grave have no authority over the church. And we see that. He says, they will not be able to overpower it.

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. As many, I think, accurately say, this picture of St. Peter standing at the pearly gates with the keys to heaven letting people go in and out, it came from this passage but it is greatly misconstrued.

Because what does the passage say? Read it. Does it say that he will give him the keys of heaven? No. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

[37 : 07] When John the Baptist came, he came preaching what? The kingdom of heaven is near. The kingdom of heaven is near. The kingdom of heaven is near. When Jesus came, he came preaching what? The kingdom of heaven is here.

Here. See, the kingdom of heaven is the visible representation of heaven on earth. It's not heaven. It's heaven's kingdom being visibly represented on earth.

And he is entrusting the keys which are symbols of wisdom and access to Peter. And by the way, if we go read in Matthew 18, we'll see that they're also entrusted to all the apostles.

Now, let me show you the importance that this Petra, this small stone, has. Peter does unlock the door. It is Peter who opens the door to the Jews at the Pentecost sermon on Acts chapter 2.

It is Peter who goes into Samaria, which is half Jews, half Gentiles, and preaches and they come to faith there. It is Peter who goes into the household of Cornelius, Acts chapter 10.

[38 : 11] It opens up the door to the Gentiles. See, everywhere the kingdom of heaven, that is the church, was going, Peter was the first one to go there because he was the man God was using.

He opened the door. But he opened the door and others came in. When I got here this morning, I unlocked the door because I had the keys. But you know what I did?

I unlocked the door and held it open so that others could go in. And I left it unlocked so that everybody could come in. Every one of you came through a door that I unlocked this morning.

I can't say that every Sunday morning, but I unlocked every one of them this morning. So every door you came in this morning was a door I unlocked just because I had the keys.

But that doesn't make me more than any one of us together. because there would not be a church if we were not all here. Because where two or more are gathered together, right?

[39 : 14] Then the church showed up. I walked through the building by myself. I'm just here by myself. I can walk through it tomorrow by myself and unlock every door. And guess what? It's still not church. It's just me.

I don't normally do that. I usually keep all the doors locked. But I can walk through it any day I want to having all the doors unlocked. And if nobody else comes through that door, it doesn't matter. It's just me. But when I unlock the door and others come in, all of a sudden we have church.

Peter has the opportunity to be the man that God uses to unlock the door to open up for others. And then people walk through it. People go through it. People go through it. And this is where we get this binding and loosing. And I promise I'm finishing. But we have to get there if we don't get there, okay?

He says, and whatever you bind on earth will have been loosed in heaven and whatever, or will have been bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. We do not need to read this saying that Peter gets to make decisions.

By the way, this is also given to all the apostles in Matthew 18. And we see in this fulfillment in John chapter 20 when he breathes on them and they receive the Holy Spirit. Okay? So this is again, this binding and loosing. What it is not saying, it is not saying, Peter, if you bind something or John or whoever, if you bind something on earth, then I will bind it in heaven.

[40 : 19] Or if you loose something on earth, I will loose it in heaven. That's not saying that. We kind of lose it. This is where we get into that Greek and Aramaic, that present, future, perfect tense and stuff like that. Literally, the wording is saying here, if you bind something on earth, it is only because it has already been bound in heaven.

See, this is not man getting his will done on earth. This is man doing on earth what God has already done in heaven. Big difference. Big difference.

This is man simply doing what has already been done in heaven. How can they do that? Because they are being led by the Spirit to build the church.

Therefore, binding and loosened, by the way, is very popular among Pharisees and Sadducees and all the rabbis teaching of Christ. That means to instruct how things ought to be done.

To show the standards how we operate. Not necessarily to condemn or none of that, not eternal condemnation, but to construct the guidelines.

[41 : 27] Christ had to have those to construct the guidelines. Here is the church that's being constructed and it's still being built together. We are living stones joined to one another on one foundation who is Christ our Lord.

And that, my friend, is when we have a faith that sets us apart is when we become a part of that building for his glory. And we begin to reflect on earth what has already been done in heaven, not asking heaven to do what we're trying to accomplish on earth.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this day and thank you for our time. Thank you for the opportunity to gather together. Lord, we pray that you would lead and guide us. Lord, that all things would bring glory and honor to you in your name.

We ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[43 : 52] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[48 : 52] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.