

Why Church?

Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 3:10

Dr. Paul Cannings

A. It is Christ's Headquarters (vs. 18; Ephesians 1:22-23):

1. Tell, speak – There are only two times Christ mentions church, and this is one of them. He defines from this passage everything the disciples will build on to formulate the body of Christ. So what Christ is saying here remains, no matter what traditional or contemporary times we may be in.
2. Tell, speak – Once God decides who will be the preacher at Pentecost and lead the disciples, Christ builds on that revelation as the Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4) and the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11-13).
3. Upon this rock – This is the massive bolder that is the foundation upon which the church would become immovable (1 Corinthians 10:4; 3:10-11; 1 Peter 2:8; Christ is also the cornerstone, Ephesians 2:20-22).
 - a) The word translated “rock,” is not the same word as Peter, but is of a similar meaning. Nothing can be more wrong than to suppose that Christ meant the person of Peter was the rock. Without a doubt, Christ Himself is the Rock, the tried foundation of the church, and woe to him that attempts to lay any other! Peter’s confession of this is the rock to doctrine. [\[1\]](#)
4. I will build - Notice the personal pronoun “I”. If we try to build His church our way, it would be a waste of time. Paul defines, doing church our way as ‘gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw that will burn up (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). In some cases, it may seem valuable but in the long run the Lord provides no rewards. Also, Christ says He will eventually remove His lampstand (His presence) from the church (Revelation 2-3). It is better even if it seems like the church is popping (Sardis) or like people are blessed (Laodicea) it will eternally be of no value. We would have wasted our time. (Revelation 2-3).
 - a) The word ‘build’ here means to edify a believer so that they are built up to spiritual maturity; strengthening them from the inside out (Ephesians 4:11-16).
5. My church – The church belongs to Christ because it is a collection of faithful believers gathered together as free citizens (Ephesians 2:19) in a public assembly, called by a herald to worship Christ.

- a) The word “church” (16:18) simply means “the assembly of those called out.” The “powers of hell” (16:18) was a figure of speech that referred to death. Even death would not prevail against this special community. What would the Messianic community be like? The community that Jesus revealed would be different from anything his disciples had ever imagined.^[2]

B. It is How He Protects Us (vs. 19):

1. I will give – It is Christ church so He will provide the church with a permanent possession of His keys so that the church is equipped to deal with the onslaught of Satan’s attacks.
2. The keys – The Word of God (not “a” key; “the key”) is the only defense against Satan (Hebrews 4:12). It keeps the armor on us (Ephesians 6:14) and it is the “sword of the Spirit.” (Ephesians 6:17) It is how the Spirit of God fights forward in our lives.
3. The keys – It is “the keys” for “the gates”. It is specific keys for specific gates. We must learn what specific scriptural text to use to the specific attacks that Satan advances against us. The Spirit is our Helper (John 14:16-17; 16:13).
 - a. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.”*
(2 Corinthians 10:2-6; NASU)
4. Whatever you bind on earth – Christ did not say open and lock. He said bind and loose. WHY? Christ seems to not be talking about Satan anymore because He is saying “whatever”.
 - a) Bind is to incapacitate someone. It is putting handcuffs on someone. You disable their ability to resist so that person is immediately under the authority of the person that binds them.
 - b) “Whatever” could be Sickness (prayer), grieving (the HS is our comforter; John 14:1), depression (gift of encouragement, gift of wisdom – counseling ministry), conflict (make sure we are not being worldly; James 4:1-4), money management (give so we don’t end up with holes in our purses; Haggai 1), loneliness (finding peace; Philippians 4:8-9), mental health (counseling).

“Whatever” is not the gates.

5. Putting to an end, Loose – “Whatever” is decided to once and for all be freed or delivered from any restrictions provided by the authority of Christ as determined by the keys is considered to be under no restrictions in heaven.
 - a) It is the truth (the key – revealed through the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth; John 14:16-17) that delivers us when we commit to being Christ disciples (this is whom He is speaking to) because we chose to submit to the authority of God’s Word unlike the leaders in Jesus’ day. (John 8:31-38, 44).
6. Kingdom of Heaven and heaven for bind and loose - The Kingdom of God is the sphere of God's rule. When He gives us the keys and when we use them as He specified, He chooses to rule through us to the world which is in Satan’s power (1 John 5:19). It is we who are the salt and the light (Matthew 5:13-16).
7. Kingdom of Heaven and heaven for bind and loose - We are protected no matter what Satan does because we’ve got the power (Hebrews 1:14; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 John 4:4).

C. It is How He Empowers our Lives (Ephesians 3:10; 6:10-12):

1. In order that – This verse provides the intent, the purpose of the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, revealed through the preaching of the Gospel.
2. Manifold wisdom of God – “The wisdom of God has shown itself in Christ to be varied beyond measure and in a way which surpasses all previous knowledge thereof.” (3:18-19). In other words, the skillful application of God’s word in its highest and fullest sense when being applied to real life situations has a number of different ways of being applied. (James 1:5-9; 3:15-18).
3. Might now be made known – When the mysteries of the Lord are exposed ,the revelation of God’s saving purposes is proclaimed through Christ.
4. Through the church – The numerous ways of God’s wisdom being exposed takes place through the collection of faithful believers gathered together as free citizens (Ephesians 2:19) in a public assembly, called by a herald to worship Christ proclaiming the salvific work of the God.
5. Rulers and authority – This is a reference to the evil forces of Satan who function with power and authority and have the ability and strength to execute their wicked agenda (Ephesians 6:11-12).

6. Rulers and authority – All the schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11) of Satan (the gates) meet with the wisdom of God (the Keys – different keys need multifaceted wisdom) that is multifaceted (gates) for all the schemes of the Devil.

^[1] Henry, M., & Scott, T. (1997). [*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*](#) (Mt 16:13). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.

^[2] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [*Tyndale concise Bible commentary*](#) (p. 412). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.