

Anchored in Christ

A 6-Week Journey Through Trust, Faith & Servant-Leadership

VOLUME 2

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INTRODUCTION

Week 1 The Rock Revealed

As we begin our journey, we stand at the foot of a mountain where Jesus makes a defining statement: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” In this opening session, we’ll explore why Peter’s confession becomes the unshakable rock upon which Christ builds His Church—and how that foundational truth anchors our own faith today.

Week 2 Keys, Gates, and Authority

Having established the rock-bedrock of our faith, Jesus entrusts Peter with the “keys of the kingdom” and the authority to bind and loose. This week we’ll unpack what those keys represent for the early Church—and for us now—so we can apply spiritual authority and grace in our own communities.

Week 3 Paul’s Foundation in Christ

Our focus shifts from Peter to Paul, whose dramatic conversion on the Damascus Road reveals that the Church is built not on human pedigree but on the risen Christ. We’ll trace Paul’s calling and see how his apostolic ministry extends the promise of Matthew 16:18 into every corner of the Greco-Roman world.

Week 4 Introduction: Unity and Diversity in the Body

Christ’s Church is more than a building; it is a living organism made of many parts. This week, Paul’s vivid metaphor of “many members, one body” will guide us in celebrating our unique gifts while pursuing unity—so that together we reflect the fullness of Christ.

Week 5 Introduction: Building with Godly Materials

A strong foundation can be wasted if we build with inferior materials. Paul warns the Corinthians—and us—about the quality of our workmanship. In this session, we’ll examine what it means to “build with gold, silver, and precious stones” through holiness and excellence in service.

Week 6 Introduction: Mission—Sent and Secure

Our study culminates in Paul’s missionary zeal and his confidence that “the gates of Hades will not prevail.” We’ll revisit Matthew 16:18 and draw courage from Paul’s example, commissioning one another to carry the gospel forward, secure in the knowledge that Christ’s Church is undefeatable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Session 1 – The Rock Revealed..... 4
- Session 2 – Keys, Gates, and Authority.....14
- Session 3 – Paul’s Foundation in Christ..... 23
- Session 4 – Unity and Diversity in the Body..... 32
- Session 5 – Building with Godly Materials..... 41
- Session 6 – Mission—Sent and Secure..... 50

SESSION 1

The Rock Revealed

Matthew 16:13–20



The Importance of The Church

Every great structure begins with a solid foundation—and Jesus knew the importance of starting the Church on unshakable ground. In Matthew 16, He takes His disciples to Caesarea Philippi and asks the most urgent question: “Who do you say I am?” When Peter boldly declares, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus doesn’t merely acknowledge a correct answer—He names it the rock upon which He will build His entire Church. This week, we’ll pause to marvel at the power of that confession, discover why Christ alone is our true cornerstone, and consider how our own understanding of Jesus shapes every aspect of our faith community. Let’s prepare our hearts to build on the one foundation that can never be moved.

Jesus asks His disciples who people say He is, then asks them directly. Peter confesses, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” and Jesus blesses him, saying on this rock He will build His church and gives him the “keys of the kingdom.”

MATTHEW 16:18

THE G.S.P.O.R.T. ANTHEM



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.





Historical Context Of Matthew 14:22-33

Location: Caesarea Philippi

Jesus and His disciples travel north of Galilee to the rugged region of Caesarea Philippi, a city named for Herod Philip and the Roman emperor. It was famous for its limestone cliffs, fresh springs, and the grotto shrine of the pagan god Pan. By choosing this setting—where local worshipers had built shrines to fertility deities—Jesus contrasts the false “rock” of paganism with the living “Rock” of God’s Messiah.

Political & Religious Climate

In 30 AD, Judea was under Roman occupation, and Messianic expectations ran high. Many Jews longed for a political deliverer who would overthrow Roman rule. Against this backdrop, Jesus’ question, “Who do you say I am?” forced His followers to distinguish between popular, nationalistic hopes and the true nature of His mission as Savior of the world.



Literary Context

Of

Matthew 16:13-20

- **Turning Point in Matthew's Gospel**

Matthew 16:13–20 serves as a hinge between Jesus' Galilean ministry (chapters 4–16) and His journey to Jerusalem (chapters 17–28). Up to this point, Jesus has taught, healed, and confronted religious leaders; here He explicitly unveils His identity and the coming Church.

- **Peter's Confession & the "Rock" Metaphor**

Peter's declaration, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," functions as the climactic revelation of Jesus' identity. Matthew alone records Jesus' play on words—"on this rock I will build my church"—linking Peter's confession (the rock of faith) to the Church (ἐκκλησία, (ekklesia) "assembly").

- **The "Keys" and Authority**

The granting of the "keys of the kingdom" and the authority to "bind and loose" introduces the theme of ecclesial authority and community discipline that Matthew will revisit in subsequent passages (e.g., 18:15–20). It establishes the Church as the sphere in which divine truth is declared and enacted.

- **Bridge to Church Practice**

Immediately after Peter's confession, Jesus begins to foretell His suffering, resurrection, and the cost of discipleship (16:21–28). Thus, 16:13–20 not only reveals who Jesus is, but also sets the foundation for the community He will build—a community formed by confession, empowered by authority, and focused on His redemptive work.



Teaching Points

1. The Identity-Confession as the Bedrock of Faith

Peter's declaration—"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16)—does more than affirm a doctrine; it anchors every facet of Christian belief and practice on the person of Jesus. In the ancient world, a "confession" (Greek ὁμολογία, hom-ol-og-ee'-ah homología) functioned like a creed, a concise statement identifying one's loyalties and convictions. By professing Jesus as both Messiah and God's Son, Peter names Him as the fulfillment of Old Testament promise and the unique revealer of the Father (cf. Isa. 9:6; John 1:14, 18). That confession becomes our "bedrock" because it addresses two existential needs: Who saves us? (the Messiah) and how? (God's own Son). When our hearts rest on that dual truth, every other teaching, every act of worship, and every expression of love flows securely from the revelation of who Jesus is.

2. Christ—Not Human Leaders—As Ultimate Foundation

Jesus' promise, "on this rock I will build my church," shifts the focus from any human leader, Peter himself, the twelve apostles, or later bishops, to Christ alone as the Church's cornerstone (cf. Eph. 2:20). While God does use fallible human vessels to steward His work, no person, institution, or tradition can bear the full weight of the community's faith or stand its final judgment (1 Cor. 3:11–15). By placing the foundation squarely on Himself, the living, reigning Son of God, Jesus ensures the Church will endure cultural shifts, doctrinal debates, and even persecution. In practical terms, this means our trust belongs first to Christ's character and promises, not to personalities or programs. When leaders fail or systems falter, the Church remains secure because its life and mission are rooted in the unchanging identity of Jesus.

Application for Christians Today



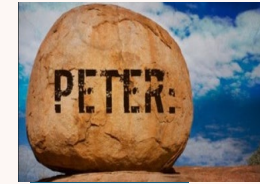
Anchor Your Confidence in Christ's Identity

— When doubts or life's storms arise, remind yourself daily of Jesus' dual identity as Messiah and Son of God (e.g., through a short personal creed or Scripture memory). This "confession" becomes your emotional and spiritual bedrock, sustaining you when worldly assurances fail.



Evaluate Teachings by the Cornerstone

— Before embracing any teaching, tradition, or leader, measure it against the person and work of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). If a doctrine elevates human wisdom over the gospel of Jesus, set it aside—only Christ's finished work holds ultimate authority.



Build Resilient Community

— In your local church or small group, foster unity around Jesus' identity rather than personality-driven followings. Encourage one another to speak the "confession" of faith together (Rom. 10:9), keeping Christ at the center so the body weathers conflict and change without fracturing.



Live Out Your Confession in Mission

— Let your belief in Jesus as Lord shape your daily witness. When sharing your faith, start with who Christ is—His messianic promise and divine sonship—so others can encounter the "rock" that undergirds your hope (Matt. 16:16). This confession-driven evangelism points seekers to the only foundation that never falters.



Bringing It Together

Matthew 16:13–20 is not only a gripping rescue story but also a richly layered theological portrait.

- Jesus elevates Peter’s confession—“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”—as the unshakable foundation of His Church, reminding us that our faith must rest on who Christ is rather than any human institution or personality.
- As modern believers, we anchor our confidence in His dual identity, evaluate every teaching by His finished work, and cultivate communities united not around leaders but around the cornerstone himself.
- By practicing our confession in daily devotion, safeguarding doctrinal truth, and proclaiming Christ as Lord in our witness, we ensure that when life’s storms come, our spiritual house stands firm. Built on this living Rock, the Church endures—and so does our hope.



Discussion Questions

1. How does Jesus' identification as both Messiah and Son of the living God reshape the way you approach prayer and personal devotion each day?
2. In what areas of your life have you been tempted to place your trust in people or circumstances rather than in Christ as your immovable foundation, and how can you realign your faith accordingly?
3. How might speaking and owning your own "rock confession" (declaring who Jesus is) influence the way you engage with challenges or opportunities in your family, work, or community this week?

SESSION 2

Keys, Gates, and Authority

**Matthew 16:19
Ephesians 2:19–22**



The Importance of Jesus' Trust In Giving Us Authority In The Church

In Matthew 16:19, Jesus entrusts Peter with the “keys of the kingdom,” granting His Church the authority to bind and loose, while Ephesians 2:19–22 expands this vision by portraying believers as “living stones” being built into God’s holy temple. In this session, we’ll explore how the keys represent our responsibility to uphold and proclaim Christ’s truth, and how the gates that “will not prevail” underscore the security given to the Church. We’ll also reflect on what it means to be part of God’s spiritual dwelling—each of us a vital stone—working together under Christ the cornerstone. As we uncover the significance of these keys, gates, and authority, we’ll discover how they shape our identity, our unity, and our mission in the world today.

A romantic scene featuring a man and a woman embracing at night. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark shirt and has his eyes closed with a joyful expression. The woman, on the right, is wearing a dark jacket and a black cap, looking down at the man. They are surrounded by warm, glowing string lights that create a cozy atmosphere. The background is dark, with some wooden posts visible. The word "Illuminate" is written in a large, orange, serif font across the middle of the image.

"Illuminate"



Matthew 16: 21-28

Jesus Predicts His Death

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life ^[f] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

1. Jesus Predicts His Death (v. 21)

Jesus begins to prepare His disciples for what is coming: His suffering, death, and resurrection.

- He makes it clear this will happen in Jerusalem and at the hands of the religious leaders.
- The word “must” show it’s not optional. His suffering is part of God’s redemptive plan.

2. Peter’s Rebuke (vv. 22–23)

Peter, out of love and misunderstanding, rebukes Jesus: “This shall never happen!”

- Jesus responds sharply, calling Peter “Satan,” not because Peter is literally Satan, but because he is speaking from a worldly perspective (avoiding suffering) rather than God’s will (redemption through the cross).
- The “stumbling block” is Peter trying to protect Jesus in a way that would derail God’s plan.

3. The Call to Discipleship (vv. 24–26)

Jesus turns to all His disciples and lays down the principle of true discipleship:

- Deny yourself: Give up self-centered desires.
- Take up your cross: Be willing to embrace suffering, sacrifice, and even death for the sake of following Him.
- Follow me: True discipleship is not comfort or safety—it’s obedience to Jesus.

He also flips the world’s logic:

- If you try to save your earthly life (comfort, wealth, safety), you ultimately lose your soul.
- If you surrender your life for Christ, you gain eternal life.
- “What good will it be to gain the whole world, yet forfeit your soul?” reminds us that nothing—wealth, power, status—can buy back a lost soul.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

4. The Promise of Judgment and Reward (v. 27)

Jesus promises that He will return in glory with His angels and will **reward each person** according to their deeds. This points both to final judgment and to hope for those who have faithfully followed Him.

5. A Near-Future Glimpse of the Kingdom (v. 28)

Jesus concludes by saying that some standing there will not die before they “*see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*”

- Many scholars see this fulfilled in the ***Transfiguration*** (Matthew 17:1–9), which happens just after this, where Peter, James, and John see Jesus in His glory.
- Others interpret it as the resurrection, Pentecost, or the spread of the Gospel that reveals the power of Christ’s kingdom.

Jesus is teaching that His suffering and death are part of God’s plan, that discipleship requires self-denial and sacrifice, that eternal life is worth more than worldly gain, and that God’s kingdom will soon be revealed in power.

In Jesus’ time, the cross was not a symbol of faith—it was a brutal execution device. To “take up your cross” meant being willing to suffer shame, rejection, and even death at the hands of society. Jesus was telling His disciples that following Him wasn’t about power or comfort but about costly obedience, even if it led to martyrdom.

Application for Christians Today



Deny Yourself

Practically: This means refusing to let selfish ambition, pride, or comfort rule your life.

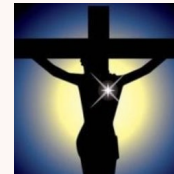
Take-away: Choosing integrity at work even if it costs you a promotion, or prioritizing serving others over personal gain.



Take Up Your Cross

Embracing the sacrifices: This comes with following Christ. It means enduring criticism or ridicule for your faith. Making sacrificial choices (time, money, comfort) for God's mission.

Take-away: Standing for justice, truth, or love, even when it costs you socially or financially.



Follow Me

Practically: It's not just about hardship—it's about walking in Jesus' footsteps: humility, compassion, forgiveness, service, and obedience.

Take-away: *"Does this choice bring me closer to Christ or pull me away?"*



Eternal Perspectives

Jesus' warning: *"What good is it to gain the whole world, yet forfeit your soul?"* is just as relevant now:

We live in a culture that prizes wealth, fame, and success.

Jesus reminds us that these things are temporary, but our soul is eternal.

Take-away: it means evaluating life choices not just by short-term gain but by eternal significance.

Bringing It Together

Matthew 14:22–33 is not only a gripping rescue story but also a richly layered theological portrait.

- Through the **Feed-and-Pray Narrative**, we see that miraculous provision and prayerful devotion are inseparable.
- In the **Disciples' Formation** motif, the crisis becomes the classroom where faith is forged.
- And in the **Christology** lens, Jesus' mastery over the elements reveals His divine nature and elicits our worship. For Christians today, these threads weave into a single tapestry: Jesus both feeds and rescues, teaches and transforms, and reigns supremely—inviting us to trust Him above all.





Discussion Questions

1. What “cross” in your life might God be asking you to carry right now—and are you resisting it like Peter did, or embracing it as part of His plan?
2. If Jesus says gaining the whole world means nothing if you lose your soul, where in your life are you tempted to chase temporary success over eternal significance?
3. When was the last time following Christ actually cost you something—time, comfort, reputation, or opportunity—and how did you respond?

SESSION 3

Paul's Foundation in Christ

**Acts 9:1–22;
Romans 1:1–7**



The Importance of Always Having Christ at The Foundation

In Acts 9:1–22, we witness Saul’s dramatic encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus Road—an event that transforms a zealous persecutor into the apostle Paul, set apart to declare the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul himself summarizes this calling in Romans 1:1–7, identifying his mission as a divinely commissioned bearer of the good news about Jesus Christ. In this session, we’ll trace how Paul’s foundation in Christ—rooted in a personal revelation of the Savior—shaped his theology, empowered his ministry, and laid new groundwork for the Church’s expansion. As we explore these key texts, we’ll discover how Paul’s “rock” confession echoes Peter’s and how it continues to inform our own calling and identity in the body of Christ.



Acts 9: 1-12

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest

² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.

⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.

⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.

⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.

¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."





Historical Context Of The Scriptures

Saul's Background and Mission (vv. 1–2)

- Saul was a devout Pharisee from Tarsus, highly educated in Jewish law under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
- He saw followers of “the Way” (the earliest name for Christians) as heretics who threatened Judaism.
- At this time, Christians were not yet called “Christians” (that came later in Antioch, Acts 11:26). Instead, they were known for following “the Way,” meaning the way of Jesus.
- Saul obtained official letters from the high priest, granting him authority to arrest Christians in Damascus and bring them to Jerusalem for trial. This shows how closely Jewish leadership worked with Roman enforcement against this growing movement.

The Damascus Road Encounter (vv. 3–6)

- Damascus was about 150 miles from Jerusalem, a major trade and cultural center with a Jewish population.
- On the journey, a heavenly light surrounded Saul, causing him to fall to the ground.
- Jesus directly confronted Saul: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Notice Jesus identifies so closely with His followers that persecuting them equals persecuting Him.

This encounter revealed two things:

- The risen Jesus was truly alive and sovereign.
- Saul's mission was completely misguided—he thought he was serving God, but he was actually fighting against Him.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

Saul's Blindness and Helplessness (vv. 7–9)

- The men with Saul heard a sound but didn't see Jesus—confirming it wasn't just an internal vision.
- Saul's blindness symbolized his spiritual condition: though zealous, he could not see the truth until Jesus opened his eyes.
- He fasted three days, perhaps in repentance, waiting for God's next step.

Ananias' Role (vv. 10–12)

- Ananias, a disciple in Damascus, receives a vision from the Lord to go to Saul.
- This was risky—Saul was known as a violent persecutor.
- God assured Ananias that Saul was praying and had already been given a vision of Ananias coming to restore his sight.
- This highlights God's sovereign orchestration: preparing both Saul (through blindness and prayer) and Ananias (through a vision) for this divine appointment.

Historical Significance

This passage marks one of the greatest turning points in church history: the conversion of Saul into Paul, who would become the greatest missionary of the early church. It shows that no one is beyond God's reach, not even a violent enemy of the church.

It also demonstrates the early church's radical obedience—ordinary disciples like Ananias played key roles in God's plan. The story would have been shocking to early Christians: the man who hunted them down was chosen as God's messenger to the Gentiles.

Application for Christians Today



No One is Beyond God's Reach

Saul was the least likely candidate for conversion, he was violent, zealous, and determined to destroy the church. Yet Jesus chose him.

Take-away: Christians today can live with hope for people who seem hardened against God. Whether that's a loved one, a public figure, or even ourselves when we feel unworthy.



Be Willing To Have Your Life Interrupted

Saul's encounter was a total interruption, his plans, his mission, and his worldview were overturned in a moment.

Take-away: Following Christ often means letting God interrupt our routines, careers, or ambitions. Christians can ask: *"Am I open to God redirecting my life, even if it's uncomfortable or unexpected?"*



Embrace Humility And Dependence

Saul went from a powerful persecutor to a blind man who had to be led by the hand. His strength was stripped away so he could learn reliance on God.

Take-away: Modern disciples may need to release pride, control, or self-sufficiency, admitting weakness so God's power can be revealed.



Take Risk Like Ananias

Ananias had every reason to fear Saul, but he trusted God's word and went to minister to him.

Take-away: Christians may be called to reach out to people who feel like "enemies" (socially, politically, or relationally). Obedience sometimes looks risky, but it's where God works powerfully.

Bringing It Together

Acts 9:21 All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?”

Trust That God Is Always Orchestrating Both Sides

God gave Saul a vision of Ananias and also spoke to Ananias about Saul. He was preparing both hearts for the encounter.

When God calls us into a hard conversation or relationship, He may already be at work on the other side. Christians can step forward with faith that God is arranging what they cannot see.

In summary, the road to Damascus teaches that God can radically transform lives, interrupt our plans, humble us, call us to risky obedience, and remind us that He is always near, even in suffering. Christians today can bring it together by living open-handed with God, hopeful for others, and courageous in obedience.





Discussion Questions

1. Saul was convinced he was serving God while actually opposing Him—what areas of your life might you be zealous in, but actually resisting God’s will without realizing it?
2. Saul had to be struck blind before he could truly see—what “blinding” experiences (crises, failures, losses) has God used in your life to open your spiritual eyes?
3. Ananias risked his safety to obey God’s command and minister to Saul—who might God be asking you to reach out to, even if it feels uncomfortable, risky, or undeserved?

SESSION 4

Unity and Diversity in the Body

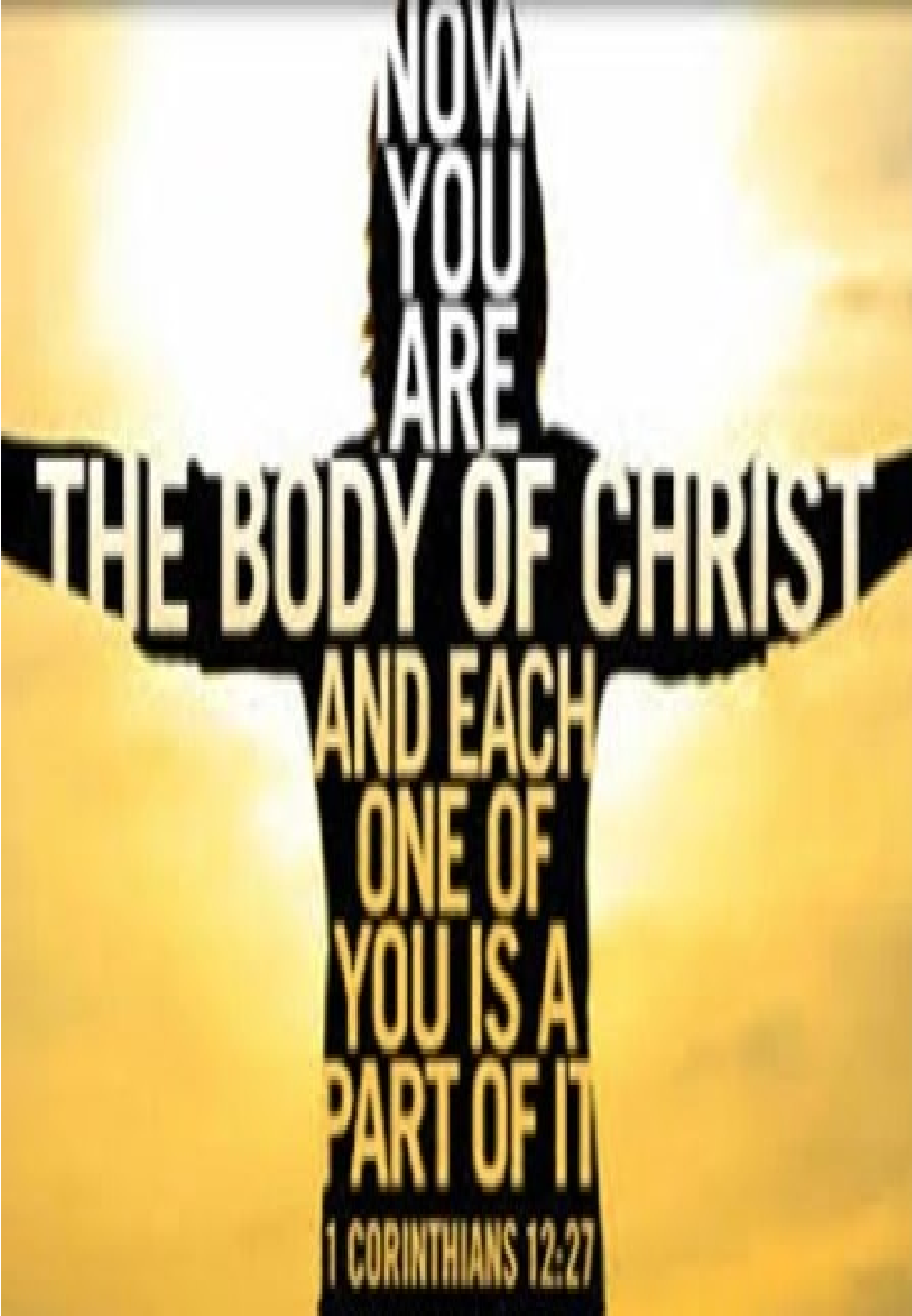
**1 Corinthians 12:12–27
Ephesians 4:1–6**



The Importance of Always Preserving Unity Through The Spirit Of The Lord

In 1 Corinthians 12:12–27, Paul paints a vivid picture of the Church as one body with many parts—each uniquely gifted yet indispensably interconnected under a single Head. Ephesians 4:1–6 builds on this imagery, urging us to preserve unity through humility, patience, and the “one Spirit, one hope, one Lord” that binds us together. In this session, we’ll explore how true fellowship honors diversity without sacrificing oneness, how every member’s contribution enriches the whole, and how our shared allegiance to Christ the cornerstone transcends differences. As we dive into these passages, we’ll learn practical steps for fostering a unified, yet beautifully varied, community that genuinely reflects the heart of Jesus.





1 Corinthians 12: 12-20

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

¹³ For we were all baptized by^[a] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be?

²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”

²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

The City of Corinth

- Corinth was a wealthy, diverse, and morally complex city in ancient Greece. It was a hub of trade, culture, and religion, but also known for immorality and division.
- The church at Corinth reflected that diversity, made up of Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, rich and poor.
- Because of this, the church often struggled with division, pride, and competition (see earlier chapters in 1 Corinthians).

The Issue Paul Is Addressing

- In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul is dealing with spiritual gifts. Some members of the church were exalting certain gifts (like speaking in tongues or prophecy) as more important, while looking down on others who had “less impressive” gifts.
- This caused pride in some, shame in others, and fractures in the church.
- Paul reminds them that all gifts come from the same Spirit (vv. 4–11), and now in vv. 12–22 he uses the human body to explain why every member is essential.

The Body Metaphor

- In Greco-Roman culture, philosophers and politicians often used the “body” metaphor to talk about society, each citizen playing a role for the good of the whole.
- Paul takes this familiar image but radically applies it to the church as the body of Christ.
- For Christians, unity doesn’t come from culture, class, or ethnicity, it comes from the Spirit of God who baptizes all believers into one body (v. 13).
- This was a groundbreaking teaching: Jews and Gentiles, slaves and masters, men and women, all equal, all belonging, all necessary.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

The Point Paul Makes

- No part of the body can say it doesn't belong just because it's different (vv. 15–16).
- No part of the body can say it doesn't need the others (vv. 21–22).
- Even the weaker or less visible parts are indispensable and worthy of honor (vv. 22–23).
- In a divided church, Paul insists: diversity is not a threat, it's God's design.

Historical Significance

- This passage confronted the Corinthian church's pride, classism, and spiritual elitism.
- It laid the foundation for a radical vision of Christian community: a place where all are equally valued and necessary, regardless of gift, background, or status.
- It also challenged the cultural norms of Roman society, where slaves, women, and the poor were often treated as disposable. In Christ, Paul insists, they are indispensable.

In Summary

Paul's metaphor of the body in 1 Corinthians 12:12–22 addressed division in the Corinthian church, reminding them that the Spirit makes them one, their differences are by God's design, and even those who seem “weaker” are vital to the health of the body of Christ.

Application for Christians Today



Embrace Unity and Diversity

Context then: Jews, Gentiles, slaves, and free people were all baptized into one Spirit.

Application now: The church today includes people from different cultures, races, backgrounds, and denominations. Instead of letting differences divide, Christians are called to recognize those differences as part of God's design.

Take-away: Celebrate the gifts and perspectives of people unlike yourself instead of seeing them as competition or threat.



Value Every Member

Context then: Some Corinthians thought flashy gifts like tongues were superior; Paul said even the weaker parts of the body are indispensable.

Application now: In modern churches, some roles (preachers, musicians, leaders) may be celebrated, while others (hospitality, cleaning, serving quietly) are overlooked.

Take-away: Treat every role as essential. Encourage and honor those whose service isn't visible, knowing God sees and values them.



Reject Comparison and Inferiority

Context then: Some believers felt they didn't belong because their gift wasn't like others (e.g., the "foot" saying it's not a "hand").

Application now: Christians today may compare their gifts, careers, or influence and feel less valuable. But God has placed each person in the body intentionally.

Take-away: Instead of asking, "*Why don't I have their gift?*" ask, "*How can I fully use the gift God has given me for the good of the body?*"



Live as One Body Beyond Church Walls

Context then: Paul used the metaphor for the gathered church in Corinth.

Application now: The principle extends to the global church. Christians worldwide are part of one body, meaning what affects believers in one part of the world affects us all.

Take-away: Support global missions, pray for persecuted Christians, and see yourself connected to the larger story of God's people.

Bringing It Together

Acts 12: 22-26

²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Reject Pride and Superiority

- Some members acted as though they didn't need others (the "eye" saying to the "hand," *"I don't need you"*).
- Churches or Christians can become proud of their abilities, wealth, or knowledge, and dismiss others.
- Regularly remind yourself: *"I need the rest of the body. I can't do this alone."* True strength in Christ comes from interdependence, not independence.

Paul's teaching reminds Christians that:

- Diversity is not a problem—it's God's design.
- Every person is needed—no one is useless.
- Pride and comparison have no place—humility and honor do.
- The church is strongest when each part plays its role and depends on the others.





Discussion Questions

1. In what ways have you acted like the “eye” or the “hand,” assuming you don’t need certain people in the church—and what might it take to truly honor those you’ve overlooked?
2. Have you ever dismissed your own role in the body as unimportant—what gifts or callings might you be neglecting because you feel like you don’t measure up to others?
3. If the church is supposed to function like one body, what does it say about us when divisions (racial, political, generational, denominational) still separate Christians today—and what personal step can you take toward real unity?

SESSION 5

Building with Godly Materials

1 Corinthians 3:1–23



The Importance of Building with Godly Materials

In 1 Corinthians 3:5-15, Paul is addressing divisions in the Corinthian church, where some were boasting in leaders (Paul, Apollos, Cephas). He reminds them that the only true foundation is Jesus Christ (v. 11). Each believer is like a builder, constructing their life and ministry on that foundation.

Paul is warning them about the contrasts of building with quality materials (gold, silver, costly stones) versus inferior materials (wood, hay, straw). Quality materials symbolize works of holiness, obedience, love, truth, and faithfulness. Inferior materials represent shallow, self-serving, worldly efforts, things that look impressive but won't last under God's testing.

Paul says every person's work will be tested "by fire" on the Day of Judgment (v. 13). If someone's work endures, they will receive a reward. If it burns up, they will still be saved, "but only as one escaping through the flames" (v. 15). This shows the seriousness of how we build: salvation is secure in Christ, but rewards and eternal impact depend on the quality of our service.

Importance of Paul's Focus

- a. Holiness Matters: God calls His people not just to believe, but to live holy lives. Inferior building (sin, compromise, pride) dishonors the foundation. Paul is reminding Christians that character is just as important as gifting.
- b. Quality in Service: Ministry and good works must be done with sincerity, love, and faithfulness, not for show, ego, or earthly success. What may seem small (quiet faithfulness, hidden service) could be "gold" in God's eyes, while flashy but selfish acts may be "straw."
- c. Eternal Perspective: Paul shifts our focus from temporary results to eternal consequences. The question isn't "Did I build big?" but "Did I build faithfully, in holiness, on Christ's foundation?"

LORD, I'M THIRSTY

JOHN

4:14



1 Corinthians 3: 1-15



¹Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly, mere infants in Christ.

²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

³You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

⁴For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

⁵What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.

⁹For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

¹⁰By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.

¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

¹²If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

¹³their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.

¹⁴If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.

¹⁵If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

1. The City and Church of Corinth

- Corinth was a wealthy port city, full of cultural diversity, luxury, and immorality.
- The church Paul planted there (Acts 18) was growing but deeply divided. Believers struggled to leave behind worldly thinking and patterns of pride, competition, and immorality.
- They valued rhetoric, status, and human leaders in a culture that glorified Greek philosophy and public speakers.

2. The Problem Paul is Addressing

- The Corinthians were divided into factions: some claimed loyalty to Paul, others to Apollos, others to Peter, and some to Christ (see 1 Cor. 1:12).
- This showed they were acting “worldly” (v. 3), like spiritual infants still craving “milk” rather than “solid food” (vv. 1–2).
- Their quarreling and jealousy revealed immaturity, despite their spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 1:7).

3. Paul and Apollos as Servants, Not Masters (vv. 5–9)

- Paul reminds them that he planted (evangelized), Apollos watered (taught), but God gave the growth.
- Both Paul and Apollos were simply co-workers in God’s service, not rivals.
- The Corinthians needed to stop glorifying human leaders and recognize that the church is God’s field and God’s building.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

4. Building on the Right Foundation (vv. 10–11)

- Paul describes himself as a master builder who laid the foundation—**Jesus Christ**.
- Others build on that foundation (pastors, teachers, leaders, members), but they must do so carefully.
- No other foundation (philosophy, human personality, or worldly wisdom) can sustain the church.

5. The Materials and the Test (vv. 12–15)

- Builders may use durable materials (gold, silver, precious stones) or weak materials (wood, hay, straw).
- This symbolizes the quality of ministry and Christian living: Durable = works of holiness, truth, love, and faithful teaching.
- Inferior = works of pride, selfish ambition, shallow faith, or worldly compromise.
- On “the Day” (Judgment Day), God will test each person’s work with fire.
- If it endures, there is reward.
- If it burns, salvation remains, but the person’s work is lost like escaping a fire with nothing but your life.

In Summary

Paul’s message in 1 Corinthians 3:1–15 is that Christians must grow beyond spiritual immaturity, stop dividing over human leaders, and build their lives and ministries carefully on Christ. The quality of our work matters, because God Himself will test it not by appearance or popularity, but by eternal worth.

Application for Christians Today



Build on The Right Foundation

Then: Paul reminded the Corinthians that the only foundation was Jesus Christ.

Application now: Christians today must ensure their lives, ministries, and churches are rooted in Christ, not in trends, personalities, or worldly values.

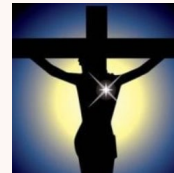


Pursue Holiness Over Worldliness

Gold and silver = works of holiness, truth, love, and integrity.

Wood and hay = compromise, sin, pride, and self-centered motives.

Application now: Instead of cutting corners in integrity, relationships, or business, Christians can seek purity, honesty, and God's glory in all things.



Prioritize Eternal Impact Over Temporary Success

In Corinth, some were dazzled by eloquence, numbers, and status. Paul said those things won't last when tested by God's fire.

Application now: A Christian's "success" isn't measured by wealth, popularity, or comfort, but by lasting fruit, faith passed on, lives changed, truth spoken, service offered.



Serve with Sincerity, Not "Show"

Building with "gold" means serving God faithfully, even if unnoticed.

Application now: A parent raising children in Christ, a believer quietly caring for the poor, or someone faithfully teaching a small Bible class may be building with gold in God's eyes, even if the world doesn't applaud.

Bringing It Together

I Corinthians 3: 16-23

¹⁶ Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

¹⁸ Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; ²⁰ and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

²¹ So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas^[e] or the world or life or death or the present or the future all are yours, ²³ and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

Remember God Will Test the Work

Paul says every believer's work will be revealed "with fire." Salvation rests on Christ alone, but the quality of our service will be judged.

Christians should ask: Am I living and serving in a way that will last under God's gaze? Or am I focused only on what looks good now.

In Summary:

To build with "gold and silver" today means choosing holiness over compromise, eternal impact over temporary gain, humility over pride, and Christ-centered living over self-centered ambition. It calls Christians to examine not just what they are building, but how and why.





Discussion Questions

1. If God tested the “materials” of your life and service today, which parts do you think would endure as gold—and which parts might burn away as hay? *1 Corinthians 3:13*
2. In what areas of your faith are you tempted to value appearance, numbers, or success by worldly standards rather than lasting, eternal impact? *Luke 16:15b*
3. What hidden or overlooked acts of faithfulness might God consider “gold” in your life—and how can you shift your focus toward building more of those things? *1 Samuel 16:7b*

SESSION 6

Mission: Sent and Secure

Romans 15:16–19;
Acts 28:30–31;
Matthew 16:18 (review)



The Importance of The Church Being Built On Christ, Not Men

Paul reminds believers in 1 Corinthians 3:11: “No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” His tireless missionary work flowed from this conviction, he wasn’t building his own empire, but extending Christ’s kingdom.

Importance of Paul’s Focus

- a. Holiness Matters: God calls His people not just to believe, but to live holy lives. Inferior building (sin, compromise, pride) dishonors the foundation. Paul is reminding Christians that character is just as important as gifting.
- b. Quality in Service: Ministry and good works must be done with sincerity, love, and faithfulness, not for show, ego, or earthly success. What may seem small (quiet faithfulness, hidden service) could be “gold” in God’s eyes, while flashy but selfish acts may be “straw.”
- c. Eternal Perspective: Paul shifts our focus from temporary results to eternal consequences. The question isn’t “Did I build big?” but “Did I build faithfully, in holiness, on Christ’s foundation?”

Paul’s life demonstrated his missionary zeal and confidence in the Gospel. He endured shipwrecks, beatings, imprisonments, and rejection, that shows that despite every obstacle, the Gospel kept moving forward (Acts 16, 2 Corinthians 11:23–28). He embodied the belief that the Gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

Importance:

- It assures us that the Church’s endurance doesn’t rest on charismatic leaders, cultural acceptance, or human wisdom, but on Christ alone.
- The Church today can face cultural opposition, persecution, or indifference with confidence that the Gospel will still advance.

THE LAST CALL

MATTHEW
24:3





Romans 15:16-19 (NIV)

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.

18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done

19 by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So, from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

Acts 28:30–31 (NIV)

30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Matthew 16: 18 (NIV)

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.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

Matthew 16:18 – Jesus’ Declaration of the Church

“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.”

Jesus spoke these words in Caesarea Philippi a city filled with pagan worship and symbols of worldly power. Declaring the establishment of His Church in such a place made it clear that His kingdom would triumph over spiritual darkness and opposition.

The foundation of the Church is Christ Himself, though Peter and the apostles would be instruments. The promise: nothing—even death or hell—can overthrow it.

Connection: This sets the mission framework, Christ is the builder, the Church is His, and it is unstoppable.

Romans 15:16–19 – Paul’s Zeal to Establish the Church

“Paul writes of being a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles ... so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

By the time Paul wrote Romans (around A.D. 57), he had carried the gospel across Asia Minor and into Europe. He saw his mission as priestly work, bringing Gentiles as a holy offering to God.

He stresses that everything he accomplished was through Christ’s power, the Spirit, and signs and wonders. Paul’s ministry demonstrates how Jesus’ promise (Matt. 16:18) was being fulfilled—God’s Church was advancing into Gentile territory, proving its universality and unstoppable nature.

Connection: Paul’s zeal shows that the Church is not static but missional, expanding beyond Jewish roots into the Gentile world as Christ intended.



Historical Context Of The Scriptures

Acts 28:30–31 – The Gospel Unhindered

“For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God ... with all boldness and without hindrance!”

Paul is under house arrest in Rome, awaiting trial before Caesar. Yet even in chains, the gospel spreads freely.

This is the closing scene of Acts—the Church has moved from Jerusalem (Acts 1) to Rome, the center of the empire.

Despite persecution, imprisonment, and opposition, the Church continues to grow “without hindrance.” The mission of Christ is unstoppable.

Connection: This is the lived-out proof of Matthew 16:18—the gates of hell cannot prevail.

In Summary

The Church is not fragile, it is built on Christ, advanced by the Spirit, and unstoppable even in the face of persecution or opposition. Paul’s missionary zeal is a model for Christians to engage the world with confidence, knowing that the same Spirit empowers us and the same promise holds true: nothing can overthrow Christ’s Church.

Application for Christians Today



Live With Confidence In Christ's Promise

Christ's declaration: *"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."*

Application now: Christians can live without fear that the church will fail. Political opposition, cultural shifts, or even persecution cannot overthrow it.

Take-away: Instead of retreating or shrinking back, believers can confidently invest in the church's mission, knowing Jesus is the true builder and protector.



Carry Paul's Zeal in Everyday Mission

Paul's example: He saw himself as a servant, carrying the gospel into new places, even at great personal cost.

Application now: Every Christian can embrace the same urgency, whether through cross-cultural missions, local evangelism, serving in church, or simply being a witness at work and home.

Take-away: Ask, *"Where is God calling me to plant, water, or encourage growth?"* No role is too small when Christ is the foundation.



Advance the Gospel Boldly Despite Opposition

Paul in Rome: Even under house arrest, he proclaimed the kingdom "with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31).

Application now: Christians shouldn't wait for perfect conditions to share the gospel or serve. Even in hardship, the gospel can't be chained.

Take-away: Hard seasons (sickness, loss, challenges) can still be opportunities to witness Christ's power.



See The Church as God's Global, Living Mission

From Jerusalem to Rome: Acts shows the unstoppable spread of the gospel.

Application today: Christians belong to a global body, not just a local congregation. Supporting missions, praying for persecuted believers, and engaging in cross-cultural ministry are ways to live out this reality.

Take-away: *"Is this about Christ, or about me?"*

Bringing It Together

2 Timothy 2:19–21

¹⁹ Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use.

²¹ Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Jesus’ Declaration of the Church to Paul’s Missionary Zeal

Matthew 16:18 gives the promise: Jesus Himself is building His Church, and it cannot be overthrown.

Romans 15:16–19 shows the process: Paul, empowered by the Spirit, carried that mission forward, offering Gentiles to God as living proof of the Church’s expansion.

Acts 28:30–31 demonstrates the proof: even in chains, Paul preached boldly, and the gospel advanced unhindered in the very heart of the Roman Empire.





Discussion Questions

1. If Jesus promised that nothing can overthrow His Church, why do we often live and serve as though the Church is fragile—what fears or excuses keep us from advancing boldly like Paul? *Matthew 16:18*
2. Paul risked everything to take the gospel into new places—what “territories” in your own life (workplace, community, family) remain unreached because you have hesitated to step out in faith? *Romans 15:19*
3. Paul proclaimed the kingdom “with all boldness and without hindrance” even while under house arrest—what would bold, unhindered gospel witness look like in your life right now, even in the face of obstacles? *Acts 28:31*

Music Credits

Song 1 – **The G.S.P.O.R.T. Anthem – Mathew 16:18** *(Featuring Christopher “Play” Martin and Preacher One) G-SPORT Edutainment Group, LLC*

Song 2 – **Illuminate** – *(Zabbai Featuring Jhislani)*

Song 3 - **Most High** – *(Featuring Dillion Loving x Nick Gracious) Lovin Muzic*

Song 4 – **Only Voice** – *(Featuring Lil Raskull) JAVO/Rapzilla.com*

Song 5 - **Lord, I’m Thirsty** - *(Featuring Spring, Noel Humphries and Erik Matthews) G-SPORT Edutainment Group, LLC*

Song 6 – **The Last Call** – *(Featuring David Sea, Spring, Prime Minister and Big Bird) G-SPORT Edutainment Group, LLC*

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