



EKKLESIA

Swartz FBC Leader Discussion Guide



SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16:13-20

SERIES: Ekklesia

TITLE: What Is a Church?

BIG IDEA: A Church is the people of God, built on Christ, unencumbered by death, and given Kingdom ownership.

SUMMARY

If we are a church, what is a church? Where did we come from? What is our purpose? What is our identity? What are we supposed to do? Jesus gives us answers to these questions. The primary place is in a conversation with Peter when Peter realizes and says who Jesus is. From this confession that Jesus is the Son of the living God, Jesus says that it is on this rock (the rock of faith Peter shares in, not just the person of Peter alone) that Christ will build His church. Jesus is building a spiritual house comprised of stones (his people) built on the foundation of faith in His messiahship and inhabited by the true rock (Christ). There is a lot going on in this passage, but the intricacies and complexity bring forth a simple and powerful truth – The church will prevail because Christ has conquered. No persecution, apathy, abuse, or suffering will succeed in destroying Christ’s church. We are part of something bigger than ourselves and empowered by the Spirit of God to do His will.

TEXT

Matthew 16:13-20

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. ¹

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2025), Mt 16:13–20.

1. CHRIST IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH

- What does it mean that Christ is building His church?
- What does it mean that Christ is the One building it?
- What was so astonishing about the response from Peter?
- How does this apply to us personally?
 - In what ways are we being built and crafted?

Application Question: What is God building you into?

Point 1 Notes

2. DEATH COULDN'T HOLD JESUS; THEREFORE, IT CAN'T HOLD THE CHURCH

- How does this truth guard our hearts against fear and anxiety?
- What does it look like practically for death to lose its power?
- In the Gospel, Jesus defeated death. He in essence, broke the gate open. If that is the case, how do we explain that Gospel hope in practical terms to others?
- What does it mean to cast our anxiety on to the Lord?

Application Question: Are you living like death truly has no power?

Point 2 Notes

3. CHRIST GIVES US OWNERSHIP

- The keys to the Kingdom signify ownership. What are practical ways we take ownership in Kingdom-oriented ways?
- What are some practical ways people in the church can begin to serve? (Initial steps for new believers and those not currently serving.)
- Why is it so profound that God not only forgives us and saves us, but then grants us to have responsibility and ownership in His Kingdom?
- What does it mean to be a co-heir with Christ? (Galatians 4:7)

Application Question: What responsibility has God given to you?

Point 3 Notes