

The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 22

In our last study, Jesus was amazed that His disciples did not understand. They got in the boat and immediately became aware that they had only one loaf of bread. He warned them about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. They were so dominated by their natural situations and conditions that they could only think about their need for food. Jesus said, “Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?” (Mark 8:17-18) Then Jesus reminded them about the thousands that He fed with a few fish and a few loaves of bread.

From there Jesus went to Bethsaida where He performed many notable miracles including the feeding of 5,000 and healing the blind man. It was located 2 miles north of the Sea of Galilee and east of the Jordan River. Bethsaida, “the house of fishing,” was the hometown of Philip, Andrew, and Peter.



Blind Man Healed at Bethsaida - Mark 8:22-26

The healing of this blind man was done in stages.

Mark 8:22-23 NKJV Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

Mark 8:24-26 NKJV And he looked up and said, “I see men like trees, walking.” Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. Then He sent him away to his house, saying, “Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.”

Several questions arise around this miracle. Once again, Jesus took a person outside of town before He healed them. Then He did something unusual to bring about the healing miracle. After spitting on the man’s eyes, He laid His hands on him, but unlike other situations, the man was not immediately completely healed. Why did the man not receive perfect sight instantly? In Jesus’ dynamic ministry, every case of healing and deliverance was different. This helps us when we face challenges to our faith or when answers come in stages and not immediately. Some people have presumed that it is a lack of faith to pray for something more than once. If you pray one time and do not get a perfect answer,

don't stop praying. It is not a lack of faith to pray more than once for a healing or answer from God. However, when God gives you an answer you should hold on to it without doubting. God is not limited to one method of healing, deliverance, or answer. Jesus used various methods when He healed the sick. At times, He just told them their faith made them well. One time He spat on the ground, made clay and rubbed it into one man's eyes, and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. Sometimes Jesus simply spoke to the situation and people were healed. In this situation, after spitting on the man's eyes, Jesus laid hands on him, and then He placed His hands on the blind man's eyes a second time and his sight was completely restored. The thing that is important is that the man did not give up and neither did Jesus. After this, Jesus went to the region of Caesarea Philippi.

Peter's Confession of Christ - Matthew 16:13-19; Mark 8:27-29; Luke 9:18-21

Matthew 16:13-14 NKJV When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Caesarea Philippi was 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It was a center of pagan worship to the Greek god Pan and had niches that held statues of the Nymphs or mythological spirits of nature, maidens, dragonflies, or locusts. Herod the Great built a white marble temple dedicated to the worship of Augustus Caesar. In this place of pagan worship, Jesus asked, "*Who do men say I am?*" This event took place six months before Christ's crucifixion. At this pivotal point in Jesus' ministry, it is necessary for the disciples to understanding who He really is.

Matthew 16:15-16 NKJV He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Simon Peter made a declaration about Christ that was beyond his ability to know on his own. He said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Unlike the pagan gods of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus is God's only Son.

Matthew 16:17 NKJV Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

The deity of Christ is a truth that can only be known by divine revelation.

This confession of faith is the foundation of the church.

Matthew 16:18–19 NKJV And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

What rock is the church built upon?

There are three historic interpretations to these verses.

1. Peter is the rock upon which the church is to be constructed.
2. Jesus Christ is the rock upon which the church is to be built.
3. Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Son of God is the rock upon which the church will be built.

The word for “Peter” comes from the Greek word “petros.” The word used for “rock” is “petra.” “The Rock” the church is built on is not “Peter.” Jesus said He would build the church on the “petra.”

Jesus Christ is the foundation stone for the church.

1 Corinthians 3:11 NKJV For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:4 NKJV For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Simon Peter had no controversy with this. Peter defined the solid rock foundation of the church.

1 Peter 2:4–5 NKJV Coming to Him as *to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:6 NKJV Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

1 Peter 2:7–8 NKJV Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, “*The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,*” and “*A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.*” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

Jesus said “the gates of hell shall not prevail against” the church that

is built on that "Rock." (Matthew 16:18)

Matthew 16:18–19 NKJV And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

The term "gates of hell" are only mentioned in this verse. The gates of hell are the whole sum of Satan's kingdom and powers. This includes death and hell and every attempt to fight against the Gospel and the church. The strongest powers of Satan's kingdom shall not prevail against the Lord's church. Even death cannot stop the Lord's church. It is noteworthy that the Lord said this in a city that had temples dedicated to pagan gods. This is the first mention of the church. The establishment of the church is secure and stable upon the solid Rock, Jesus Christ. He said nothing shall prevail against His church. The church belongs to Jesus and not to Peter. Then Jesus gave some instruction about this.

Matthew 16:19 NKJV And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

The language in this verse should say, "Whatever you bind or loose on earth will have already been bound or loosed in heaven." Peter was the first one to confess Jesus as Messiah and the Son of God. The Lord's disciples were to continue His work to "bind or loose." Ultimately, Jesus' declaration of power and authority is being passed on to His church. Binding and loosing can only apply to what has already been bound or loosed in heaven. The language "will be bound" and "will be loosed" indicates that Jesus is the One Who has this ultimate authority through His victory on the cross. The church is charged with releasing on earth what Jesus has already accomplished.

Three truths are revealed in Matthew 16:13-19.

1. **Throughout this era, the Lord Jesus Christ will be building His church.**

During this whole church age, the gates (powers, authorities, strategies) of hell will be encountered. Jesus is delegating spiritual authority to the church over all of the principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and schemes of the adversary. His church has the authority and power to prevail, overwhelm, and dispatch all of the operations of the adversary.

2. **The basis of this authority to bind and loose finds its strength and authority in Christ's finished work on the Cross.**

The language in these verses reveal that we may fully exercise this authority based on what Jesus Christ has already accomplished.

Matthew 28:18–19 NKJV And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

On the basis of the authority that Jesus Christ received from the Father, the church can go with His authority, make disciples and conquer the enemies territory.

Colossians 2:14–15 NKJV Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Jesus has already defeated principalities and powers and triumphed over them in the cross. He triumphed over them for us when He nailed every trespass, failure, and weakness of ours to His cross.

Revelation 1:18 NKJV *I am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Jesus is the Holder of the keys and He has the authority and power to release or bind. The power of the keys describes certain authority that Christ has given to the church to bind and loose. Ancient religions depict the underworld as sealed off by gates Nedu, Pluto, Kronos, or Isis as keepers of the keys. Jesus was speaking in Caesarea Philippi that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail. Jesus holds the keys of all authority and power.

3. The believer's responsibility is expanded and given authority and power.

Jesus has conferred this authority upon us that can be exercised through prayer, intercession, and godly relationships. This authority that comes through Christ can be exercised against the greatest strength of Satan's kingdom. Believers have authority to introduce God's divine will (kingdom) into earthly situations.

Jesus made it clear that "heaven's" side of these issues is already settled and determined.

God does not have to exercise new sanctions or new endowments of grace, mercy, or power to achieve this. Jesus has already conquered and has shared with believers the authority to take action. For us to realize God's intent, we must take decisive authoritative action. Heaven has already taken action, so we must act.

Matthew 16:19 NASB95 "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."

We are not to work in front of God, but alongside with and in tandem with God.

1 John 5:4–5 NKJV For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?