Abide in Me

Mentored by the Master

Discipleship in Real Time

Loudonville COMMUNITY CHURCH

Volume 11 - Number 20 **The Week of April 12, 2026**

The Community of Jesus

The Church Jesus Builds

Matthew 16:13–20

We live in a moment where many people are unsure about what to do with the church. Many feel indifferent toward it. Some have been hurt by it. Still others want Jesus but without the structure that comes with belonging to a church. And yet, in Matthew 16:13–20, Jesus speaks for the first time about what He calls "My church." This moment is pivotal. Standing in Caesarea Philippi, a place filled with competing claims of power, religion, and identity, Jesus asks His disciples the most important question: "Who do you say that I am?" Peter's answer becomes the foundation for everything that follows: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In response, Jesus unveils His plan not to build a building, but to form a people. A community centered on His identity, grounded in truth, and entrusted with His mission. The church is not a human invention. It is a divine construction project. This week, we want to step back and ask, "What kind of community is Jesus actually building?" and "Are we becoming that kind of people together?"

> [13] Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people
> say that the Son of Man is?" [14] And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others
> Jeremiah or one of the prophets." [15] He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" [16] Simon Peter
> replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] And 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. [18]
> And 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. [19] I 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." [20] Then he
> strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

OBSERVATION *(What does the text say?)*

Before your group meets, carefully read the passage again and perform the following prompts:

- Circle every reference to Jesus' identity (titles, names, descriptions)
- Double underline the questions Jesus asks.
- Put a box around Peter's confession.
- Highlight anything that refers to God revealing truth.
- Bracket every statement Jesus makes about the church
- Place an * over every reference to spiritual authority (keys, binding, loosing)
- Track all uses of "you" and "I." Who is speaking and who is being addressed?

List everything Jesus says He will do in verses 18–19.

When you hear the word church, what comes to mind first and why?

INTERPRETATION *(What does the text mean?)*

1. Why does Jesus begin by asking what others say before asking the disciples directly?

2. What is meant by “this rock,” and why is that significant?

3. How does the rest of Scripture help clarify what the church is built upon? (cf. Matthew 21:42, 44; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 9:33; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 10:4).

4. What does Jesus mean when He says, “I will build my church”?

5. What are “the gates of hell,” and what does it mean that they will not prevail?

6. What do the “keys of the kingdom” represent?

7. How do “binding and loosing” function in the life of the church?

APPLICATION *(How does the text shape our lives?)*

(*Personal*) Before your group meets, consider the ways your experiences with the church have shaped your view of it more than Jesus?

1. How does this passage challenge modern assumptions about what the church is?

2. In what ways can we treat the church as something to consume rather than something to belong to?

3. How should knowing that Jesus Himself builds the church change our expectations of it?

4. As if for the first time, ponder what a community would look like when built on Christ as the foundation? Create a group list:

5. Where might you be discouraged about the church and how does this passage speak into that?

6. Do you see yourself as part of something unstoppable? Why or why not?

ABIDE PRACTICE THIS WEEK

1. **Gospel Keys:** Who in your life needs to hear a clear and loving declaration of who Jesus is? Ask God to bring one person to mind (i.e. a friend, coworker, neighbor, or family member). Look for a natural opportunity this week to speak about who Jesus is, share what He has done in your life, and invite them to consider Him personally.

Remember: You are not responsible to save anyone, but you are entrusted to speak the truth that opens the door.

2. **Reframe the Church**: As you gather with the church this week, remind yourself: *This is not an event I attend, but this is a people Jesus is building.*

Sermon Notes*: The Church Jesus Builds*

Matthew 16:13-20