

Message for August 26, 2018
Living on a cul-de-sac

Matthew 16:13-19 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴ “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

¹⁵ Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.

¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.”

Ekklesia is a Greek word defined as “a called-out assembly or congregation.”
Ekklesia is commonly translated as “church”.

**The Four Marks of the Church, also known as the Attributes of the Church, is
"One,
Holy,
Catholic and
Apostolic" —**

Jesus plainly states in Matthew 21:42 that He is the "*corner stone*."

**He is the foundation:
We sing the Hymn...**

**The Church’s one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation**

**By water and the Word:
From Heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride,
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.**

I love the church. I have given my life to the church. I believe that the church is the hope of the world.

Our job as individual members is to align ourselves with the Church.

Matthew 16:18b The Message (MSG)

^{18b} Jesus declared His church would be so... "expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

I want us to look at that verse a little closer for just a moment.

Many times, we think of the church as being in a defensive posture.

But Jesus is saying that the gates of hell won't be able to keep it out. The church is to be on the offensive, not hunkered down.

Jesus said the church is to be a continuation of His life on this planet.

The church is His body.

His church, the Body of Christ is the way God continues doing ministry to the world. We have been invited to be part of it.

We are to be His church. That is why church is so important.

We cannot fulfill God's plan for His church and for our life, apart from taking our place in its mission and ministry, and that means being a part of Christian community. It takes our Presence.

Missiologist Lesslie Newbigin writes: "Jesus...did not write a book but formed a community." The Church!

This is our mandate and our challenge.

We tend to think that raising the bar will thin the ranks and weaken what we have. So we try to accommodate people, not challenge them. Totally opposite of what Scripture does.

I want us to be challenged by our calling to be the church.

We are to live our lives in Christian community to serve Christ in our deeply fallen world, that means to serve the least and to reach the lost with the redeeming message of His love and forgiveness.

... and what do we do?

We lower the bar on all things related to the cause of Christ.

When we ask for people to serve it's not just to go to meetings but to help lead the church.

Imagine that, you get to serve Christ in the church.

Sometimes we think that the church is lucky to have people just to come to church.

We must remember that there is no greater cause than the cause of Christ.

We must hold ourselves, to the highest standards of commitment and excellence.

Which means the goal cannot be to accommodate schedules, preferences or theology.

... but to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Remember who you are and to who you belong

AMEN