

Christ Builds His Church: Faithful People in Uncertain Times

Exodus 1:8–2:10, Romans 12:1–8, and Matthew 16:13–20

Have you ever noticed how quickly uncertainty can turn into fear?

We fear change, loss, wrong decisions, and disappointment.

And in the life of a church, fear and anxiety can become especially strong during a season of transition.

When a congregation is searching for a new minister, people may quietly wonder: Will we find the right person, and what will happen while we wait?

These questions are real. They do not mean our faith is weak.

Scripture invites us to bring our fears to God and remember this truth: the church belongs to Christ.

Our three readings today speak to this kind of moment.

Exodus 1:8–2:10 shows us God working quietly through ordinary people in a difficult time.

Romans 12:1–8 reminds us that every person in the church has something to offer.

And Matthew 16:13–20 gives us Jesus' promise: "I will build my church."

These passages are not just ancient words.

They speak to us right now as we wait, pray, serve, and trust God for the future of this congregation.

With these readings in mind, I'd like to offer three points for us to consider today.

1. Fear Is Real, But It Does Not Have to Rule Us

In Exodus, the story begins with fear. A new king came to power in Egypt, and he did not remember Joseph or the good Joseph had done.

He looked at the Hebrew people and saw them as a threat. Instead of seeing families, children, and workers made in the image of God, Pharaoh saw a problem to control.

Fear can do that to us. It can make us suspicious, make us hold on too tightly, and make us expect the worst.

Pharaoh's fear led him into cruelty. Our fears may look different from Pharaoh's, but they can still guide us in the wrong direction.

And that matters for us today. A church in transition can feel the weight of waiting, especially as we pray for a new minister.

But these honest concerns do not have to control us.

Faith does not mean pretending everything is easy.

Faith means bringing our concerns to God and remembering that this church belongs to Christ.

Illustration

Imagine walking through your house late at night. You hear a noise in another room. In the darkness, your mind begins to create possibilities, especially when you watch as many “Datelines” as I do!

You wonder if someone is there. Your heart beats faster. Then you turn on the light and discover it is only the family cat knocking something over.

The situation did not change, but the light changed what you could see.

Faith is like that light. It's not pretending there are no frightening noises in life, but rather turning on the light of God's truth, so fear does not get the final word.

Right now, faith might look like praying before we worry, listening before we assume, and encouraging one another when the waiting feels long.

It may mean choosing patience when we want quick answers and choosing trust when we do not yet know the outcome.

When faith pushes back against fear, it helps us move from worry to trust, and from trust to asking, “How can I serve God right now?”

2. God Uses Ordinary People Who Make Themselves Available

Exodus shows us something beautiful. God begins to work through ordinary people.

The Hebrew midwives choose to honor God more than they fear the Pharaoh.

Moses' mother protects her baby as long as she can.

Miriam watches her brother Moses carefully from the riverbank.

Pharaoh's daughter shows compassion when she sees the child.

None of them had the whole plan. None of them knew how the story would end.

But each one did the faithful thing that was in front of them.

That is good news for a church like ours.

God works through more than the person in the pulpit.

Romans 12 teaches us that every believer has something to offer.

Some pray, some encourage, some welcome, some visit, some give, and some serve quietly behind the scenes.

We sometimes disqualify ourselves because we think we are not gifted enough, experienced enough, brave enough, or important enough.

But the readings remind us that God can do important work through people who simply trust and follow Him.

This is a time for each of us to ask, “What can I offer?”

Not everyone will serve in the same way, but everyone can help strengthen the church.

A prayer, a phone call, a welcome, a word of encouragement, or a willingness to serve can make a real difference.

Illustration

During a relay race, each runner carries the baton for only part of the race, yet each runner is essential. If one runner refuses to run because their section seems too short, the whole race suffers.

In the same way, God may ask us to do our part in a way that seems small, but our faithfulness may be part of something much larger than we can see.

3. God Is Working Behind the Scenes

God never speaks directly in Exodus 1–2, yet His presence is seen throughout the story.

Through the courage, care, and compassion of ordinary people, God was already preparing the Israelites’ deliverance before anyone could see it.

That is good news for us today.

There are times when the way forward is unclear, including the search for a new minister.

But uncertainty does not mean God is absent.

God is already at work, even before we can see what He is doing.

Illustration

When you plant a garden, all you see at first is dirt. You cannot see the seed taking root beneath the surface.

But growth is still happening. In the same way, we may not see everything God is doing right now, but we can trust that He is already at work beneath the surface.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these passages remind us of these clear truths: Christ is building His church, even in uncertain times.

Fear is real, but it does not have to rule us.

God used ordinary people in our readings, and He still works through ordinary people today.

We were also reminded that every believer has a gift to offer.

During this period of searching for a new minister, the church does not stop being the church.

We keep praying, encouraging, serving, and trusting God together.

And Jesus gives us the promise we need most: “I will build my church.”

So, we do not need to be afraid. We can take the next faithful step, use the gifts God has given us, and trust that He is already preparing the way ahead.

Let us look ahead with hope instead of uncertainty, trusting that God is already working among us and guiding this church through the days ahead.

We do not have to know every answer to be faithful; we can trust Christ, serve with the gifts we have, and move forward together.

Let Us Pray

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word and for the reminder that You are always at work, even when we cannot see it.

When fear feels strong, help us turn to You.

Teach us to trust You, use our gifts faithfully, and live by faith rather than fear.

Guide this church in this season of transition, and give us patience, wisdom, and peace as we wait for the minister You are preparing.

Give strength to the weary, hope to the discouraged, healing to the hurting, and peace to the anxious.

In Jesus' name, Amen.