

The Church Part 1

- Mathew 16:13 Jesus asks his disciples what is the culture saying about me?
 - o Matthew 16:14 the disciples answered him because they knew what the culture was saying.
- Matthew 16:15 Jesus asks his disciple what are you saying?
 - o Because yes, the culture is going to say what they say about God and the church but what you are saying is the key.
 - o Jesus wanted to know if they were saying the same thing as the culture. Was the ignorance and darkness of the culture bleeding over into their conversations and conforming what they believed. Jesus figured I've been with them long enough now that they shouldn't be in the dark concerning who I am.
- What are you saying?
 - o What is influencing your conversation and way of life more these days, the culture you are living in or your walk with God?
 - o Because if the culture holds more influence over you than your walk with God then you need to change your walk.
 - o If I am more influenced by the ideas and patterns of this culture then I am by what God has said and is saying, then there needs to be a change.
- This was a litmus test.
 - o How impactful was Jesus' ministry to them? Was it more impactful than the culture? He was going to find out by hearing what they were saying about Him.
 - o Are our ministries today more impactful than the culture around us? How do you know? You know by what people are saying.
 - o If our ministry is not holding more influence over people than the culture, then something is wrong with our ministry.
- Matthew 16:16-17
 - o Peter was saying something different than what the culture was saying.
 - Flesh and blood (culture) has not revealed this to you or influenced you.
 - But my father in Heaven or revelation from the Holy Spirit had influenced you, Peter.
 - Peter was saying what God had revealed to him.
 - o There's what the culture is saying, there's what you are saying, and then there's what God is saying.
 - o Are you saying what the culture is saying or are you saying what God is saying?
 - o If you are saying what God is saying, then you are being influenced by revelation.
- The culture moves on information, but the church moves on revelation.
 - o When Adam fell in Gen 3:6-7, he fell from revelation to information.
 - o Before the fall, Adam operated on what was revealed to Him by God through the Spirit.

- But when he fell, his eyes were open or in other words his natural eyes were opened, and he began to be dominated by the information that came through his physical senses.
- Notice that when his eyes were open that he noticed they were naked. They were always naked but now they were noticing it because they are dominated now by the information coming through their senses.
- Prior to the fall they were naked but never noticed it and it never bothered them because they were more dominated by revelation than they were information.
- Under revelation they came to God unashamed, just how they were. Under information they ran from God ashamed, because of how they were.
- So now we are in this struggle between revelation and information, and we have to get to a place where our revelation is stronger than our information.
- When Jesus said in Mathew 16:18 I will build my church, the Greek word that was translated church is ekklesia.
 - Ekklesia means called out ones.
- The church that Jesus was going to build was not something made up of brick and mortar, but something made up of people who have been called out of darkness and into the light.
 - The same light that Peter was coming into which was the revelation that Jesus was the Christ.
- This revelation is the rock that Jesus was talking about building his church upon.
 - So, the church is not a building or denomination. It is made up of people all over this world that have been called out of darkness and are centered around this one truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
- The church was established upon an unpopular truth.
 - A truth that was not echoed by the culture and never will be.
 - If you are part of the church then you are standing on, rooted in and clinging to a revelation of who Jesus is that is not shared or even liked by the culture around you.
- So, what do you do when the foundation you stand on is unpopular and many times brings resistance and persecution from the culture around you? You stand and in verses 18 and 19 there are two reasons why:
 - V18 hell can't prevail against you.
 - To prevail means to be superior in strength and to overcome.
 - The strength of hell will never be superior to the strength of the church and overcome it.
 - It doesn't mean that hell won't fight. It just means that hell won't win.
 - V19 authority
 - The church has authority in the earth to bind and loose and heaven will get behind them and bring it to pass.
 - We are waiting on heaven, but heaven is waiting on the church.

- Three Hebrew boys stood on the unpopular truth that there is one God, Jehovah, and he is the only one they were to serve. The culture was saying that the golden image was God and that the Hebrew boys should bow. But the Hebrew boys refused and then declared they weren't going to bow, and they weren't going to burn. So, heaven got behind them and sent an angel and delivered them from the culture. Hell couldn't prevail against them.
- We must stand on the unpopular truths of the word of God.
- The problem with the church today is that too much of the culture is bleeding into our pulpits, our songs, our sermons. The church is leaving foundational truths that can't be twisted, misunderstood, misinterpreted for ideas that are completely contrary to the word of God. In order for some of these churches to stand for what they stand for, they have to completely ignore the word of God.
- But when you ignore the word of God to follow the culture, you will be overcome. You will lose your place of authority.