

## The Master's Call

***'And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it' (Matthew 16:18)***

What is meant by the word 'church'? If we go to the Bible the church is the body of Jesus Christ, and He is the Head. ***'For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church His body, of which He is the Saviour' (Ephesians5:23)*** The church is the bride and Jesus is the bridegroom. ***'I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.'*** (Revelation21:2)

In Greek language from which the New Testament was first written, the meaning of the word church is 'the called out people'. We will start from this statement to explain the scripture for this week. Jesus started His ministry by calling out people. He called His first disciple Andrew and Simon: ***'Come, follow me, 'Jesus said,' and I will make you fishers of men.'*** ***At once they left their nets and followed Him.'*** (Mark1:17-18) He saw James son of Zebedee and His brother John. ***'Without delay He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed Him.'*** (Mark1:20) Jesus called Matthew while He was sitting at the tax collector's booth. ***'As He walked along, He saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth 'Follow me' Jesus told him and Levi got up and followed Him.'*** (Mark 2:14)

Jesus called out people for eternal life. Jesus spoke and people kept coming to Him. Even those who only heard about Him searched for Him and followed Him. Jesus called out to people for healing. Jesus restored sight to the blind, mobility to the lame, speech to the mute, hearing to the deaf and even life to the dead. Jesus called out to people for deliverance. Many are demon possessed and were released from the evil spirits and got restored to their normal life. Jesus called out people for holiness and cleansed them by His words. ***'You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.'*** (John15:3) Jesus called out people for a righteous life and away from sins. He called out people to have faith and trust in God.

When Jesus started His ministry on earth, the world and the people were in the grip of Satan and the power of darkness. So His mission in calling out is to give freedom with all its Biblical meaning as we described above, and this is another meaning of the church: 'To give freedom from sin, sickness, death, and all kinds of evil forces,' and anyone who responded to the call of Jesus and followed Him, truly are freed and delivered from the evil forces because the battle was already won by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross and rose from the grave on the third day.

One time, Jesus asked His disciples, ***'Who do people say the son of Man is?'*** (Matthew 16:13) Jesus wanted to know from His disciples the opinion of the people who do not follow Him. They replied, ***'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'*** (Matthew16:14) In the mind of the people who do not follow Jesus, He is just little more than an ordinary man. But this time Jesus is more concerned about the opinion of His disciples: ***'But what about you? Who do you say I am?'*** (Matthew16:15) Simon Peter answered ***'You are the Christ, the son of the Living God.'*** (Matthew16:16) Jesus' disciples knew that He is the Christ; the anointed and appointed King from God; He is the son of the Living God. He is the King of all Kings and Kingdoms that is now present and those still to come. Simon Peter who was always ready to speak up confessed his belief and Jesus reckoned him. ***'And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.'***

**1) You are Peter:** Simon who confessed the identity of Jesus was called here as Peter meaning 'the rock'. Not only Peter, but anyone who confessed the name of Jesus becomes a rock for a noble purpose.

**2) And on this rock I will build up my church:** Jesus did not use blocks and cement to build His church, but He chose something which is cheap in the world but very expensive in the eyes of God, and this is the human. The human with all his weaknesses and deficiencies become the useful material of Jesus to build up His church. Jesus does not adorn His church with statues, banners, pictures, etc., but with the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Every now and then He passes on the rock that He chose and gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. The rock is adorned with the gifts of preaching, healing, prophecy, miracles, etc. 'Don't say that you are worthless member of the church, because you are the useful rock for Jesus.'

**3) And the gates of Hades:** Hades belonged to Satan and his angels or the demons. Jesus declared that there is power against the church and against the followers of Christ. And there is a continuous battle against those forces. This battle has been there since before Jesus started to call out people. He wrestled against these forces while He was tempted by Satan after forty days of fasting. And the battle is still on but already won by Jesus on the cross, where all the powers of dark are defeated. This is why He finished His statement with the following phrase.

**4) Will not overcome it:** Nothing will overcome the church because of the Spirit of God moving and working through the rocks. If we go to the book of Acts, we can see clearly the progress of the churches and how the spirit of God moved through. The church of Christ does not use force, weapon or money but by prayers and the power of the Holy Ghost it reaches different countries and regions. Despite of Satan trying to decrease the called out and the calling out by telling lies, creating difficulties, and stealing the joy and victory of the believers, Christ's church will continue to progress.

The church is not an institute, a company, nor an academy. But the church will continue to work while the Lord is working through. In the presence of the church sicknesses are healed, people are freed, delivered and bondages are broken. Christ through the church is freeing people from sorrows, sadness, burdens, sicknesses, addictions, and above all freeing people from death by giving the message of salvation to have eternal life for those believe in Jesus. Moreover, the church is facing different oppositions and threats, because the task of the church is opposite to the world's systems that work to enslave the people. World's promises are given to be broken. But God's promises firmly stand and always be fulfilled. From the above chosen verse, His promise is this: ***'The gates of Hades will overcome His church.'*** God's promises are cheques with credit that we can withdraw and use any time we need if we believe.

Simon Peter was commended when he boldly confessed what he knew and what he believed. We can see the victories of the church with all its tiny items if we choose to stand with the Lord. If we choose to be silent, isolated, and introvert in our faith, this will not silence the battle against us, but it will give more chance for the devil to suppress us. Jesus did not only promise authority and power but His continuous presence with us if we continue to carry on His mission to call out. **(Read Matthew 28:18-20)**

**My dear and beloved:** In the Old Testament God has assumed to be an eagle, and today He is coming to us in the nest. This is now the time to leave the nest and fly with the lord, where His voice is strong and clear to everyone of us. God blesses you with courage and strength to enjoy the victory as you agree to be part in building His church and agree to pray.

**My Prayer:** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord Jesus I commit myself to serve you and carry the call to the end of the earth, to go and make disciples and be an active and living stone in your church. This is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.