

WORD

“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

What does the Bible say?

The word “church” often brings a building or a place of meeting to mind. However, Jesus made it clear that God’s kingdom lives in the hearts of men and women (Luke 17:20,21). The church, therefore, is a group of people in common unity (community) pursuing God, His will, and His ways. Here are some truths that we need to learn and keep in mind about the family we are part of—God’s church.

- **Jesus is building His church.**

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church . . .”

Matthew 16:18

It is important to know that it is God who builds the church. And He does this through people—imperfect and works in progress, but God enables and empowers them to do the works of the kingdom (1 Corinthians 3:5-9). With this, no one can take the credit for any measure of success or prosperity of the church. All glory belongs to God and He is in control. How does this truth help us respond right when we encounter human shortcomings in church?

- **Jesus’ church is on the advance.**

“ . . . I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Matthew 16:18

Satan and his kingdom of darkness have been around for a long time and have bound God’s precious creation, humanity, in sin. Yet the good news is, God is greater than our enemy and is building a church through Jesus that is on the advance. How is the church on the advance today (Mark 1:15; Matthew 12:28)? On whose power does the church operate?

- **Jesus’ church will overcome darkness.**

“ . . . and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Matthew 16:18

This verse is a promise and guarantee from God. It is also what Jesus’ church is in reality. When people who follow Christ fully understand this, they will live life in victory and godly confidence, not in defeat as most do. Isaiah 54:16,17 mentions one of the promises God has for the church. What other promises are there in the Bible that gives us the confidence that we will prevail as God’s church?

SO WHAT

What is the relevance of the Word to my life?

- Where do you work or study? What community are you in? How do you think God will enable you to bring God’s Kingdom to those you know?
- What hardships or challenges are you facing right now? What does the Bible say about these?
- How is God’s victory seen in your life? What areas of living in victory do you need help in?

NOW WHAT

How do I apply the Word to my life?

- What role do you think God is calling you to play in building His church today?
- Who can you pray for this week? How will you encourage him or her in light of God’s promise that His church is on the advance?
- What areas of your life do you need victory in? How will you allow God to help you overcome these?