



April 15-16, 2023

“EKKLESIA” Week 1: “For His Glory”

Matthew 16:13-20 + 1 Peter 2:1-10

### GATHER

- Describe a time in your life when you discovered the importance of the church. What were the circumstances? (If you’re still wrestling with the idea of the church, take the opportunity to share a bit about why and how your group could pray with or for you on this.)
- If you were at a weekend service, share your takeaways from the message you heard. What was something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?

### GROW

This weekend, the message was anchored in Matthew 16:13-20 and 1 Peter 2:1-12. Read these texts and answer the questions below to talk through the key ideas.

#### 1. Understand Their Story

- a. Read Matthew 16:13-20. This is the first time that the word “church” is used in the Bible! What are all the different things you learn about the church in these verses? **Jesus will build his church. It will be built on “this rock”.** “This rock” could refer to Peter (since he was the first to preach about Jesus after Pentecost), or Peter’s confession: that belief Jesus is the Son of the Living God (v 16) is the foundation of the church.
- b. Read 1 Peter 2:3-12.
  - i. How is Jesus described in this text, and how is people’s relationship to him described? **Jesus is a living stone rejected by men, but chosen and precious in the sight of God (v 4). He is the cornerstone (v 6). People either come to him (v 4) and believe in him (v 6) or reject him (v 7) and stumble on him (v 8). Those who believe in him will not be put to shame! (v 6)**
  - ii. What are God’s people supposed to BE according to Peter? **Living stones, being built into a spiritual house (v 5), a holy priesthood (v 5), a chosen race, royal priesthood & holy nation (v 9), a people for God’s own possession (v 9). They are to be God’s people (v 10)**

- iii. What are God's people supposed to DO according to Peter? Offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus (v 5)<sup>1</sup>, proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light (v 10), abstain from the passions of the flesh (v 11), act honorably, and do good deeds in front of Gentiles (non Christians) (v 12)

## 2. Connect to His Story

- a. The 1 Peter passage is rich with Old Testament imagery.
  - i. Read Exodus 19:1-6. What images in Exodus appear in 1 Peter? What does this parallel language teach you about Peter's conception of the church? Israel was supposed to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation - a people for God's own possession (v 5-6). In the New Testament, Peter saw the church as the New Testament people of God. He used the descriptions from Exodus to describe God's people in the church!
    1. What does a priest do? A priest represents people to God (Intercedes for them in prayer), represents God to people (tells people about God - his rules and commands), and serves the people.
    2. With this in mind, what does it look like for God's people in the New and Old Testament to be "royal priests?" All of God's people are to intercede for people, teach people about God, serve people on behalf of God, as mediators between God and people.

## GO

3. **Apply To Our Story** As the church, we glorify God by living as his people. We become his people when we come to Jesus (1 Peter 2:4), believe in him (1 Peter 2:6) and receive his mercy (1 Peter 2:10). He builds us into a spiritual house<sup>2</sup>, and gives us a purpose: to be a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).
  - o We are called to offer up spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5, Romans 12:1-2)
  - o to proclaim his excellencies (1 Peter 2:9)
  - o and to act honorably, doing good deeds among unbelievers in order that they might glorify God (1 Peter 2:11-12)

How can you glorify God this week, as part of his church? Pick one or two of the four options below and reflect on how you can live as the church for his glory.

- a. Do you need to come to him, believe in him and receive his mercy?
- b. How can you be a "priest" this week? Priests bring people to God (intercession), bring God to people (evangelism and discipleship), and serve the people of God. Who can you intercede for in prayer? Who may need to be taught about God? Where and how can you serve the church?
- c. How can you proclaim God's excellencies this week as you talk to other Christians, or to non-Christians?
- d. Is there a "good deed" that you feel the Spirit nudging you to do at work, at school or in the places you live or volunteer, in order to bring glory to God?

---

<sup>1</sup> To unpack what this means, it may be helpful to read Romans 12:1-2.

<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament, the people of God worshiped in the temple of God. In the New Testament, according to Peter and Paul, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in His people and we become the temple of God! See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 for teaching on how this knowledge should transform our lives.

