



Dr. Rick Reed | Matthew 16:13-20 | February 20-21, 2016

1. When we think about “the church,” why do we tend to think in terms of a physical building? Is this a problem? Why or why not? What does the word “church” actually mean?
2. *Jesus is building his church in the midst of religious diversity.*
 - How was Caesarea Philippi a place of tremendous religious diversity? What belief systems were common there? How did Jesus’ question (“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”), as well as the spoken and unspoken responses, highlight this diversity?
 - What evidence is there that Canada, and more specifically Barrie, is religiously diverse? How have you come face-to-face with this reality? What does it mean to know that Jesus is building his church in spite of our pluralistic culture? How have you seen this to be true?
3. *Jesus is building his church around a declaration of his identity.*
 - How did Peter answer Jesus’ question about who he was? Discuss each of the key words in this declaration and what they mean/infer. What was the point of Jesus affirming Peter as “blessed” (rather than, say, “brilliant”) because of his response? What did that indicate?
 - Who do people say that Jesus is today? What are some of the various ideas out there? How can we declare that Jesus is God with confidence but not with arrogance? Why is this distinction important?
4. *Jesus is building his church in spite of spiritual resistance.*
 - What was Jesus referring to with the “gates of hell [Hades]” language? How was this an interesting picture? Why was he talking about death and the devil? What was going on around Jesus (14:1-12), and what did he know was coming soon (16:21, 24-25)?
 - What do you know about spiritual resistance throughout our world today? Why does the church seem to thrive in difficult places? What signs of spiritual resistance are around us right here in Canada?
5. *Jesus is building his church with people who aren’t yet rock-solid.*
 - What was Jesus speaking of when he promised to build his church “on this rock”? Dr. Reed outlined three possible meanings. What were they? Which option do you think makes the most sense? How so?
 - What is so surprising about God’s incredible use of Peter in the early days of the church? What were some of his less-than-stellar performances before then? How is this an encouragement for those of us who aren’t rock-solid in our faith?
 - Are you all in on what Jesus is doing to build his church? What part are you playing in his kingdom-building effort here at Harvest? How can you engage more fully?