

# Ekklesia, part 1 - Rich Barrett

Bible reading: Matthew 16:13-18 (ESV)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock** I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

## Observation questions

1. According to the passage, what were the different opinions people had about Jesus's identity?
2. What was the specific location and significance of where Jesus asked his disciples this question? [54:01]
3. What was the foundational truth Peter declared, and how did Jesus say this truth was revealed to him?
4. What did Jesus say he would build on this truth, and what power would it have?

## Interpretation questions

1. Why was it significant that Jesus chose to have this conversation in a place known for pagan worship and considered a "gate of Hades"? [55:22]
2. Jesus said the "gates of hell" would not prevail against the church. Since gates are defensive, not offensive, what does this imply about the nature and mission of the church?
3. The church is built on the truth of who Jesus is, not on a person or a building. How does this truth decentralize authority and place it on the entire community of believers? [52:48]
4. How does the historical context of early Christians meeting in secret [42:47] demonstrate the "gates of hell" not prevailing?

## Application questions

1. The church is not a building but a movement of people filled with God's Spirit. [01:00:21] How does this truth change the way you view your role and responsibility within your local community of believers?
2. The tone, approach, and posture of Jesus's followers should reflect his own. [01:02:10] In your daily interactions (at home, work, or online), what is one specific area where you could better represent Jesus's gentleness, truth, and compassion?
3. The early church gathered despite great risk because of their conviction about the resurrection. [43:23] What are the practical things—big or small—that sometimes keep you from prioritizing gathering with other believers? How can you overcome them?
4. Believers are called to be stewards of the faith for the next generation. [36:28] What is one specific belief, value, or practice you are actively trying to pass on to your children, family, or friends?
5. The movement of the church is for everyone, especially the messy and broken. [38:16] Who is one person in your life who might feel they don't belong in a church? How can you communicate God's love and welcome to them this week?
6. The goal is not to get something out of the church, but to give something to it. [01:01:35] What is one tangible way you can contribute your time, gifts, or resources to the ongoing mission of your church this month?