

Life Group Notes

Sunday 15 September 2019

Speaker: Sean Green

Title: Transform Reading: The Church

Passage: Matthew 16: 13-28

We are joining with other churches in Reading on a 3-week sermon series helping us play our part as Jesus transforms Reading.

READ: Matthew 16v13-28

Jesus is building His Church: Peter acts as spokesman for the Twelve and declares that Jesus is the long-promised Messiah, the Son of the living God. He is the first of the disciples to make this confession, and on this confession, Jesus will build His church. The church (ekklēsia in Greek) refers to God's "called out", set apart people; an unstoppable community of Christ followers. Because Jesus is the builder, the powers of death & hell cannot overcome the church.

In time, Peter he plays a central role in the establishment of the church, but right now he doesn't under the true nature of the Messiah-ship. As such we get an epic 'awkward' when Jesus rebukes him v23.

Give up; be built in: Jesus said *"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.* Jesus is using crucifixion as a metaphor for discipleship:

1. A disciple of Jesus must deny themselves (die to their own will).
2. Take up their cross (embrace God's will, no matter the cost).
3. And follow Christ (his teaching & example).

Phrases like *'embrace Gods will no matter the cost'* demand more from us than we often want to give. Surrender, sacrifice and forfeit don't sit easy with us; they leave little wriggle room; they make a claim on us that cuts into our comfort. Yet the person who won't surrender to God's will, eternally loses every earthly good thing they are trying to embrace. The second coming of Christ with his angels, in the glory of his Father, will bring judgment & reward but only for those who have taken up the cross.

Give up on your own way! Follow Jesus and let Him build you into His church. The church is the 'ekklesia' of God, called by God to represent, speak for and show Jesus to the World. Follow Jesus and let Him build you into His church. Be meaningful involved in this expression of the local church.

Suggested questions:

1. What has stayed with you about the message?
2. How are / can you be, meaningfully involved in this local church?
3. What attitudes do you need to adjust concerning Christ's bride?