

August 24, 2014

Stronghold

Matthew 16:18 – *and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against [the church].*

Have you ever had one of those days? You know the kind. Those days when absolutely nothing goes right. Your car breaks down on your way to a big meeting. You get sick right when you need to have your wits about you for a presentation. Maybe, you've had more than "one of those days." Perhaps you've had "one of those weeks, months or even years." It happens to all of us. Though there is never a good time to have things go wrong, it always seems that they pick the worst possible moment to go haywire. Sometimes it happens because of something we did, other times it happens because of something out of our control.

In our sermon text for today, we will hear Peter confessing Jesus to be the Christ, and Jesus promising to use Peter (and all those who share his confession) as the foundation of his church. And, we will also hear Christ's promise about the church. Namely, nothing will overcome it. At first this promise sounds pretty general. It gives us a warm feeling that nothing will ever defeat Christ's church as a whole. But, I want you to hear how personal Jesus' words are as well. Jesus tells Peter, "I'm going to build the church on you and your confession." Many people have argued that Jesus is setting Peter apart with this statement, but I don't think so. I think that through Peter Jesus is talking to every



individual who shares God's gift and Peter's confession. And, so it is on each and every one of you that Jesus is building his church.

And his promise is to you. The gates of hell will not overcome you. Not only that, but as he opens his kingdom up to the world through you, he is locking the gates of Hell behind you so that no power in all of creation can harm the church that he will build through you and your actions.

Though we have rough days, and sometimes rough weeks, months and years, we know that Christ has established us as his mighty stronghold here and now. We can take comfort in the fact that no matter how bad things are for us at any given moment, Jesus is still the Christ, the Savior and Lord of all. He has died for our sins and risen to give us new life, and he will preserve us through all trials and bring us to everlasting life in heaven, where there won't be another "one of those days."

Dear Jesus, preserve us and give us the strength to stand in our hours of trial. Amen.

Rally Day

Now for another kind of good news. Don't forget that today is rally day. Please come out and have a good time at *Bowl-a-Rama* in Rowlett, both just for the fun of it and to show your support for those students who are headed back to school. It will be a good time, with lots of fellowship and laughs. Just don't laugh too much at the pastor's score. God's peace, and I hope to see you all there.

Pastor Curt P. Johnson

