

Matthew 16:18 Victory Guaranteed

Introduction: Three weeks ago I expected to cover this verse in one sermon. I had no idea it would take three weeks. In this message we view the victory which Christ promised.

I. The gates of hell against the Lord's church.

- A. The Lord promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.
(This informs us that the gates of hell would try to prevail against it.)
- B. Both Ezekiel and Isaiah inform us about Lucifer who led a rebellion against God.
 - 1. His rebellion was put down and the rebels were cast out of heaven.
 - 2. Lucifer today is known as Satan or the Devil.
- C. When Jesus came to the earth, He founded His church and satanic forces began to wage war against it.
 - 1. The Jerusalem church was scattered, Acts 8:1-3.
 - 2. For the first few years the persecution was by Jews.
 - 3. After the spread of the gospel to Gentiles, unbelieving Gentiles persecuted the church. (Ephesus is example.)
 - 4. Nero was the first Roman emperor to persecute the Christians. (Executed Paul; burned Rome, blamed the Christians and killed them by the tens of thousands.)
 - 5. Wave after wave of persecution followed by anti-Christians.
 - 6. Then came persecution from heretical Christian groups. (Killed true Christians by hundreds of thousands.)
 - 7. The forces of hell waged an all out war. (Attempted to shed the blood of every Christian.)
- D. With the American revolution came religious liberty and some relief for the Christians and Christ's churches.
- E. Yet even in our modern times the persecution persists.
 - 1. In communist countries Christian blood is still being shed and the few existing churches are oppressed.
 - 2. In our nation Satan resorts to other tactics. (Attack on moral principles, Christian truth.)
 - 3. Christianity is undermined by television, political groups, etc.
 - 4. Sex, crime, drugs, alcohol, pleasure of all kinds are used to compete with Christianity.
 - 5. Satan would sell every person against Christianity.

II. A sure victory guaranteed by Christ.

- A. Jesus has promised that the gates of hell would not have the victory.
(Satan cannot win and the Lord's churches cannot loose. Satan can win certain battles, but he cannot win the war.)
- B. Our hope of victory is not in our intelligence or power, but our hope of victory is in Christ.
(Satan cannot outsmart Him nor overpower Him.)
- C. One day Jesus will return to the earth and overpower every enemy of Christ and His churches.
 - 1. Every heretical Christian group will be exposed and put down.
 - 2. Every anti-Christian force will be overcome, even the Anti-Christ.
 - 3. Satan himself will be overcome.
 - 4. The last enemy to be overcome will be death.
- D. Satan can slander us, be-mean us, persecute us, out number us, out grow us, put up a thousand dollars to our one dollar, arrest us, burn us at the stake, feed us to the lions, kill us by the thousands, but he cannot have the victory over us.

Conclusion: I will ask three things of you:

1. Trust Jesus Christ as your Savior. No matter what happens to the church, what happens to you depends on your faith in Jesus. Trust Him now.
2. If you are saved and in need of a church home, let me suggest Pleasant Hill.
3. If you are saved and already a member here or elsewhere, let me appeal to you to be a dedicated Christian and a faithful church member.

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