

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD –
The Pillar and Ground of Truth

Matthew 16:13-19, 1 Timothy 3:15-16

We recall the challenge that Paul gave to the church at Ephesus when he said, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.*” (**Eph. 5:25**) The question would be then how did Jesus love the church? Well, He loved it with all of His heart, and He loved it sacrificially; He gave His life and blood for it. Then in **1 Timothy 3**, Paul talked about the qualifications of the Pastor and Deacons in the local church - then he makes a very profound statement concerning the local New Testament church in **V-15**. Now understand, a very important truth, that the “**CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH**” is **NOT** a Denomination, it is not Baptist, or Methodist or Catholic or anything else, but rather simply, a local New Testament Assembly of Born Again Believers. Like BBC of Erie or any other Bible Believing local church. This church does not belong to any denomination; we simply believe the doctrine taught by the apostles at the Bible Baptist Church of Jerusalem. We are Baptist by name and doctrine, not denomination.

Now let’s go to **Matthew 16** where Jesus after three years of teaching His disciples decides it is time to give them a short exam in **V-13**. Well here in **Matthew 16**, Peter passes the test with flying colors and got an A+ on the test. It is absolutely totally foolish to talk about loving Jesus without loving what Jesus loves, and Jesus loves the local NT church.

We are going to see in Matthew **16:13-19** in what Paul describe as “*the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*”. First we see...

I. THE SAVING CONFESSION OF THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD
V-16

Now what MUST WE CONFESS? Here's what you must believe in order to be saved? You must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. That's where you put your faith. You must be a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what Peter declared and that’s what you and I must confess as we see in **Vs.14-16**. I want you to think about this saving confession and listen to me very carefully. Put it down it was— this was first...

- 1. A PERSONAL CONVICTION.**
- 2. IT WAS ALSO A PERSONAL CONFESSION OF CHRIST**
- 3. IT WAS A PERSONAL CONVERSION**

Notice what Jesus then said to Peter **V-18**. Jesus gives him another name, **Peter, petros**. It means rock. It means boulder. Now, Jesus is the foundation rock. Peter doesn't just have a piece of the rock; he is a piece of the rock. He has become a partaker of the divine nature

II. THE SOVEREIGN CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

Look now at **V-18** again. Now the church is sovereignly constructed. Jesus did not say, “You will build my church.” He didn't say, “I will build your church.” Jesus said, “upon this rock I will build **my church...**” Now, Jesus is the **architect** of the church. Jesus is the **builder** of the church. And Jesus Christ is the **foundation** of the church. Jesus said, “I say unto you that you are Peter.” The Greek word there is *petros*, **P-E-T-R-O-S**. “And upon **this rock (Jesus)** I will build my church...” But He doesn't use the word *petros* again. He uses another word. “Thou art *Petros*, and upon this *petra*, **P-E-T-R-A**, I will build my church...” What's the difference between *petros* and *petra*? One word means a rock, like a boulder. Another word means a rock like the bed rock, a ledge, a foundation, a massive rock.

III. THE SPIRITUAL COMPOSITION OF THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

What is the composition of the church? What does He, build the church out of? Out of stone, living stone. Now Simon Peter knew he was not the foundation (**1 Peter 2:4-5**). Now the very word church - He says, “... I will build my church...” - it's the Greek word *ekklēsia*, and it means a **called out ones, an assembly**. What the Lord Jesus Christ is doing is in Erie, He's calling out some people.

What is the mortar that holds Bible Baptist Church together? It is love. We are bound together by **love** and the Word of God. Peter says, “Ye... are built up a spiritual house...” (**1 Peter 2:5**). What does that mean? A place for the Spirit to live. Why did Jesus say, a little later in Matthew, **chapter 18**, “For where two or three of you are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them?” I'm telling you, folks, that Jesus Christ is in this place this morning in a way that He's not out there in the world around us.

Let me tell you something, friend. If you say that you're saved, you're going to love the church of Jesus Christ. You're going to attend the church, you're going to defend the church, you're going to commend the church, and you're going to extend the church if you love Jesus Christ. I love the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church is not just my livelihood - it is my life and my heart felt affection for Jesus.