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"The Church Was Built on Revelation"

I am concerned about the church. Why?

1. I am a pastor, so I should be concerned.
2. The church is the body of Christ and the bride of Jesus. That is enough to cause us concern.
3. The church is mainly the local expression of Jesus. I know there is a concept Biblically of a "universal church," but of the 114 references in the NT to the church, 90 of them are to a local assembly.
4. The church has many imperfections and because of that, many want to ditch it or think that it is optional.
5. We have a consumer mentality today when it comes to the church. Josh Harris wrote a book "Stop Dating the Church." Most people choose churches on purely what is best for them and what they like most. There is even terms coined for this – church hopping and church shopping.

In this series of messages, I plan on speaking a lot about what the church needs. In this first message of this series and the first message of this year, I want to talk about the need for the church to have revelation.

I. Revelation is how the church was founded.

Casear was 120 miles north of Jerusalem in the northern part of Palestine. This was mainly a Gentile area instead of a Jewish area.

There, Jesus asked his disciples "who do men say that I am?" They responded with John the Baptist, Jeremiah, or Elijah. All

of these are great prophets who the Jews believed must have come back to life through Jesus because there was no other explanation for what Jesus was doing than a great prophet raised back to life.

You will never come to a true decision about who Jesus Christ is by taking a poll or determining public opinion.

So, Jesus pressed. "Who do you say that I am?" This is the final examination with one question – pass or fail.

John 1:41 Andrew found Simon telling him they had found the Messiah. But two-and-half years later Jesus wanted to know do they really understand who He was.

"You are the Christ, the son of the living God."

Then Jesus told Peter, "Blessed are you, for flesh and blood did not reveal that to you."

Most of the confessions about who Jesus was up to this point came as a result of
Miracles. But this one was different.

Jesus went back and called Peter by his pre-Christ name: Simon. It is the name used in John 1:42.

Petros – a stone
Petra - a large stone, strong foundation

3 main interpretations of that:

1. Peter is the rock. That is what Roman Catholics believe, but there is no Biblical evidence for their placing Peter as the first Pope, succession, infability and exclusive authority.
2. Jesus Christ is the rock. This is certainly true. I Cor. 3:11 "No other foundation can anyone lay that which has been laid, Jesus Christ." Acts 4:11 Jesus is the chief cornerstone.
3. Peter's confession. This is what John MacArthur believes and I do too. It was on this confession of faith that the church is built. Ephesians 2:20 says the church is "built on the foundation of the apostles."

How did this confession come about?

It did not come in a vacuum. It was not shot into Peter with a spiritual needle. It was the result of walking with Jesus and hearing Him. Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

Flesh and blood did not reveal this.

- No person showed you this.
- This did not come by superior intellect
- This did not come by your calculation
- This did not come by your analysis
- This did not come by your intuition

I believe Jesus called Peter by Simon to emphasize his humanity. Who he was before he met Christ.

Jesus said on that revelation, I will build my church. "Reveal" means apocalypse, disclose, uncover, make known.

II. Revelation is the reward of the church.

When Jesus said he would build His church, he gave four other statements:

1. Gates of Hades will not prevail. Gates always represent authority and power. It was the city hall of the ancient city where the elders would meet to decide cases. The authority and power of death will not prevail against my church.
2. Keys of the Kingdom. Keys represent authority and make it so you can open/close. Jesus gives the authority to the church to open and close those going into the kingdom. You have the power to present the gospel and upon their receiving it, open heaven to them and if they refuse, close them off to hell. Peter did this on the day of Pentecost with his preaching.
3. Kingdom – is the rule of Christ
4. Binding/loosing. This was a familiar term to the hearers because the Rabbis used it often. I believe the NASB has it right: "…shall have been bound in Heaven, shall have been loosed in Heaven."

   You can know what is the will of God in Heaven and exercise it on earth. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."

   The church today is alive directly proportionate to the revelation you are walking in. God has promised us that we can know Him and He will reveal Himself to us. The church must have that fresh revelation to be alive in Him.

   God sent "fresh manna" every day to His people in the wilderness.

Prov 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people perish." But the word "vision" is not what we see today. The pastor sets a "vision" for the people, or the CEO gives vision to the company or a politician gives a vision for the country.

The word is best translated "revelation." Where there is no revelation, the people perish. We will lose it spiritually and the dynamic of our walk if we are not walking in fresh revelation.

Dr. Thom Rainer, President and CEO of Lifway Christian Resources, wrote a blog this week about "Twelve Trends in Healthy Churches." Trend number 3 was a "large number of church members read the Bible daily." I read that and thought…duuu. Of course. If the church is not feeding on the Word and walking in what God is showing them, then the church is sick and will eventually die or revert to fleshly manifestation and power.

TWELVE IN 2012: TRENDS IN HEALTHY CHURCHES.

by Dr. Thom Rainer, President and CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources

A large number of church members read the Bible daily. The simplicity of this trend often surprises church leaders. But we can no longer assume that all of the congregants read their Bibles every day. That is a practice that must be encouraged and monitored. In our research on spiritual health of Christian, we found that the highest correlative factor in practicing other healthy spiritual discipline was reading the Bible every day.