

A Body Built on the Rock

This a moment in Matthew's Gospel that we've just heard feels like the hinge on which everything swings. Jesus turns to his disciples and asks a question that goes straight to the heart:

"Who do you say that I am?"

And Peter, with that beautiful mix of boldness and grace, steps forward and declares:

"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus responds with words that echo through the centuries:

"On this rock I will build my church."

A foundation. A starting point. A truth solid enough to build a life on.

But here's the thing: Jesus doesn't say, "On this rock I will build *your* church," or "On this rock I will build *Peter's* church." He says, **"I will build *my* church."**

The church is Christ's. The foundation is Christ's. The mission is Christ's. And we—every one of us—are invited to be part of what he is building.

A Living Foundation

When Jesus calls Peter "the rock," he isn't saying Peter is perfect. He isn't saying Peter will never wobble. He's saying that Peter's *confession*—his recognition of who Jesus truly is—forms the bedrock of Christian faith.

The church is built on **Christ revealed, Christ confessed, Christ trusted, Christ followed.**

That is our foundation.

But a foundation, on its own, is not a building. It's the beginning of one.

And this is where Paul's words in Romans 12 meet Jesus' words in Matthew 16.

One Body, Many Gifts

Paul writes:

"We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another."

It's such a striking phrase: **members one of another.**

Not just members of a club. Not just attendees of a service. Not just individuals who happen to sit in the same pews.

We belong to each other. We are connected. We are interdependent.

And Paul goes on to describe the gifts God gives:

- prophecy
- teaching
- encouragement
- generosity
- leadership
- compassion

Different gifts. Different callings. Different strengths.

But all given by the same Spirit. All rooted in the same Lord. All built on the same foundation.

The church is not built by one person— not even by Peter. It is built by **Christ**, through **all of us**, as we offer our gifts in love.

The Foundation Becomes a Structure

Imagine a building site.

The foundation is laid—solid, level, dependable. But then the builders arrive, each with their own skill:

One brings timber. One shapes stone. One measures angles. One fits windows. One wires electricity. One paints walls.

Each part matters. Each contribution strengthens the whole. Each gift builds on the foundation.

This is Paul’s vision of the church.

Christ is the rock. We are the builders. Our gifts are the materials. And together—only together—we become something strong enough to stand, beautiful enough to draw people in, and spacious enough to welcome the world God loves.

A Sure Foundation Needs Living Stones

Peter himself later writes that we are **“living stones”** being built into a spiritual house.

Living stones. Not identical bricks. Not mass-produced blocks. Stones—each shaped differently, each with its own texture, each placed intentionally by the master builder.

Your gift—whatever it is—is not an optional extra. It is part of the structure God is raising.

If your gift is encouragement, you strengthen the walls. If your gift is compassion, you soften the edges. If your gift is teaching, you help us see the blueprint. If your gift is generosity, you widen the doors. If your gift is leadership, you help us build with purpose. If your gift is prayer, you keep us rooted in the foundation.

And when all these gifts work together, the church becomes what Jesus promised: a community so rooted in him that **“the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.”**

A church built on Christ and built by Christ through the gifts of his people is a church that stands firm.

Offering Ourselves

Paul begins Romans 12 with a call:

“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.”

In other words: Offer yourself. Offer your gifts. Offer your time. Offer your heart.

Not because the church needs volunteers— but because Christ is building something eternal, and he invites you to be part of it.

The foundation is already laid. The rock is already secure. The confession has already been spoken.

Now the building continues— through you, through me, through all of us together.

The Church God Is Building

So today, as we hold these two passages together, we hear a single, unified call:

Stand on the rock. Use your gifts. Build the body. Strengthen the foundation. And trust that Christ is building his church—through you.

We are one body with many parts. We are living stones on a living foundation. We are the people through whom Christ continues his work in the world.

May we offer ourselves with joy. May we use our gifts with courage. May we build with hope. And may we stand firm on the rock that will never crumble.

Amen.