

# The Cross, the Conflict, and the Cost

by Keith Malcomson

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*This sermon delves into the importance of surrendering to God and embracing the cross, highlighting the divine challenge to bear the cross, the unrelenting conflict Satan brings against the church, and the cost of following Jesus. It emphasizes the necessity of denying oneself, taking up the cross, and following Christ to build a victorious church founded on the revelation of Christ and the power of the cross.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:24, Luke 22:31, Ephesians 4:26, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Galatians 6:14, John 2:19, John 3:14, Acts 28:28, 1 Corinthians 2:2, Matthew 16:24

**Topics:** "Surrender to God", "Embracing the Cross"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want you to turn with me here to Matthew chapter 16. Matthew chapter 16. I feel like we've got so much to communicate here today.

So much to deal with. Matthew chapter 16. And this is almost like the continuing part of last week.

Last week we dealt with part 10. I will build my church. And I stopped because it was so important what the Lord was dealing with us.

There's a continuation. There's part 11 of our series Christ as the only foundation. But this message part 11, I was going to call it falling and fighting on the foundation, but I just changed that.

What I called it is the cross, the conflict, and the cost. Three C's. The cross, the conflict, and the cost.

If you remember from Matthew 16, and just before I do this, because I want people online to hear this as well. Just the schedule for the coming weeks. Next week we're going to have here is brother Stephen Riddle from the north, from Dungannon.

He's an elder in a very good church up there in the north. A good brother. I want him to come down here for several years, and it just providentially hasn't worked out.

So he's going to be preaching here next Sunday, twice next Sunday. The following week we're going to have pastor Paul Williams from England, from Wolverhampton. He's going to be coming with his family, and he's going to preach.

That's the 28th. He's going to be preaching here. These are just wonderful brothers.

I went over and ministered with them in England, but they're going to be coming here. We prayed for the right time for them to come and visit, and we really believe there's the right time. The week after that, on the 4th of Feb, we're going to have a baby dedication of two babies here.

Not so much babies anymore, but growing. We're going to have a baby dedication. On the latter part of February, beginning of March, I'm going to be in America, the United States, preaching at a few different spots.

I'm keeping it limited, restricted, but I'll be meeting their brothers, sisters, never met them before, as well as old friends, which are like family that I haven't seen in over a decade. So, please do keep all these things in prayer. But this message here this morning, part 11, the cross, the conflict, and the cost.

Let's read from Matthew chapter 16, reading from verse 13. Matthew chapter 16 and verse 13. When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked the disciples, saying, whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee. But my Father, which is in heaven, and I say also unto thee, thou art Peter.

And upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began, notice that word began, from that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee. But he, that is Jesus, turned and said unto Peter, get thee behind me, Satan.

Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it.

And whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels. And then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Let's pray together. Pray for yourself. Pray for one another.

Pray for this church. Pray for those that are listening online. You can't even listen the word of God without God's grace.

You can't even respond to the word of God rightly unless his grace, his ability draws near and touches your heart. You wouldn't even come unto God like we dealt with last week. You could not have come.

You wouldn't have desired to come unless the father had revealed the son unto you. There's nothing within you, too much rebellion, too much opposition, too much desire for this world or the urges of the flesh. It's a miracle that you're sitting here.

If you're sitting here saying, it is a miracle of God's grace, it's not natural. It's not that you just chose and others didn't want this. It's not that you have some special privilege or understanding or capability.

No, it's by the grace of God. It's by the power of God. Now, let's pray together unitedly.

We need his grace. I need his grace. I can't even speak.

I can't even put my thoughts together unless the grace of God comes. We need him here this morning. Father, we rely on you.

We submit ourselves even this morning. We resist the devil from the position of being submitted to you, to your lordship, under the authority of your word. Lord God, we realize we're in a ferocious and a horrendous battle with the powers of darkness.

And oh God, we submit ourselves to the only one who has true power, true authority, true grace, oh God, true mercy and compassion. And Lord God, I pray that even this morning that you'd expose the works of darkness, every strategy of hell. Lord God, that you'd expose it, that Satan wouldn't gain an advantage over us, but his lies would be broken.

Lord God, his strategies would be exposed to the light of your word. And Father, bring us forth into the glorious power and the grace of our risen savior. My God, as we consider the cross here this morning, the conflict and the cost, Lord God, we pray that the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ would be made manifest in power in our lives.

We realize as we increasingly, oh God, Lord God, go that way of weakness and suffering and barrenness. We realize that the power is not in us. The ability is not in us, but oh God, it's in the power of the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he was crucified for us in our place.

And Lord God, it's the message of the gospel that brings power into these lives, that we might serve you in an honorable way. Bless us now. Open our ears and our eyes.

Open our hearts, oh God. We rely fearfully upon you to move upon us now. How fragile we are.

Once when we thought we were strong, we found ourselves to be so weak. But oh God, we've never found you to be weak. Blessed be your holy name.

In Jesus' name. In Jesus' name. We said last week in Matthew 16 about these seas.

I mentioned four last week. I'm mentioning five here this morning. Last week we dealt with, in this chapter, we dealt with Christ, the Messiah.

What you have is a divine revelation of Christ given, revealed by the Father. It was the Father that revealed to Peter that he was the Messiah, the only Christ of God. Then we also see in the light of that revelation, that revelation was the foundation.

And upon that foundation of the revelation of God the Father revealing who the Son is, you can't even understand who the Son is unless the Father grants you open eyes, open heart, power to come, power to understand. Unless you're taught by the Holy Spirit, you don't even know who Jesus is. Academically you can know.

Intellectually you can know. You can be taught by men. You can use all of your man-made power.

But saints of God, when God teaches you who Christ is, when he reveals the Son of God, your life is changed. You are absolutely radically changed by the power of God. That's what Christ is, and it's that revelation.

What did he say? Upon this revelation, upon this rock, this massive foundation stone, I will build my church. We said that this chapter is the first time that Jesus mentions the church, and that's no accident. So you get Christ revealed by the Father.

Then you have the church revealed, a vision of a victorious church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. But we're going further here with three other C's. You have the cross, then you have the conflict, and finally the cost.

These are the three things I'm going to deal with here this morning. We have already seen the wonderful revelation of Christ, a glorious vision of a victorious church, but we're just about to now see the terrible conflict with Satan that those built upon the rock have to endure. Don't tell me it's a picnic being built on the rock.

It's not. You become a target, and we're going to see a divine challenge to take up your cross and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 18, upon this rock, I, Jesus, will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Not only an individual, but a church, the church, his church, built on this revelation, and it's the only revelation. Not Peter, not a man, not a system, not an organization, a revelation of Christ. That's what you build your church upon.

God the Father says, that's where I will build my church. Jesus Christ, the Son of God says, I will. It was a prophecy.

I am going to build my church, and right in the midst of this, he deals with a man called Simon Peter. Let me remind you something about Simon Peter. His original birth name was Simon, Simon.

But remember, Jesus gave him not a different name in place of that, but another name added to that, which is Peter. You're a rock I can hold in my hand. This rock is a foundation rock I build my church on, and you're not that rock.

I didn't call you that rock. I said, you're a rock upon which I can hold in my hand to build upon the foundation stone. That's who you are, Simon Peter.

And all through the scriptures, when you read Jesus saying, Simon, do you know what he's speaking to? He's speaking to the natural man, Simon. When he wants to rebuke him, get his attention, or he talks about his house, natural things, he says, Simon's house. That's what's written in the Bible.

So when you read about Simon's house, there's nothing spiritual about that. It's just natural. Or when Jesus is trying to make a point and say, Simon, you're in the flesh, he says, Simon.

Doesn't call him Peter, because that name Peter is what God is building out of a man. And so his dual name is Simon Peter. Simon speaks about the old man, the natural man, the human man, or the fleshly man, or when you're acting in the flesh.

But when he calls him Peter, he says, you're the new man. This is the man that I'm building into my church. This is my building material.

And so all of us in this room, I think, can identify with Simon Peter. I've got three points here I want to give to you from Matthew 16, and we've already dealt with two. Number one here, the purpose of the cross revealed.

In Matthew 16, after having revealed Christ and revealed a vision of the church from God's perspective, not man's. See, men turn the church into a social club, a rehab, entertainment, songs. That isn't his church.

His church is victorious over the powers of darkness. That is his church. That's what it looks like.

It is a church on a battlefield, and the gates of hell are attempting to come against that church. Don't tell me it's entertainment. Don't tell me it's a social club.

Don't tell me it's about sports, or worship, or some style, or ministries. It is a battlefield. Where you find the church, there's a real warfare.

But there's my first point, the purpose of the cross revealed. Look with me at verse 21 here. It says, from that time.

Really note that from that time. He says this exact time, this day, this hour, this conversation, from this time forth began Jesus. So he began something.

He began to say something, teach something he hadn't done before. This is the first time. What did I say? It's the first time he mentions the church.

No, it's the first time he's going to talk about his death by crucifixion. His first time, the cross, the death, that he explicitly says, I'm going to die. The first time he reveals to Peter and the disciples.

It's no coincidence that he gets revealed as the Christ. Then he talks about the church. And the next thing he talks about immediately is the cross.

And so here you have the purpose of the cross revealed. From this time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples. Notice who he's showing it to.

The word show means to open up, to reveal, to share, to explain. He begins. He hadn't done it before.

This is just months before his death. He has ministered for over three years. Preaching, healing, doing miracles, talking about the kingdom.

Crowds of 10,000 plus gathering to hear him teach. But do you know what now? Now he begins. You know what he's saying? There's a whole change coming in this ministry now.

I am the Christ, the Messiah. I'm the fulfillment. This is the foundation stone.

I am the foundation of everything God is going to do from here on. I'm going to build a church. There was nothing like it in the Old Testament.

Some people say the church was there all through the Old Testament. That's not true. There's a prophecy.

I will build upon this revelation, upon who I am. The father revealed who I am. That's where I'm going to build the church.

And now immediately he begins. He reveals the church and immediately he leads you to the cross. How that he must go on to Jerusalem.

He's teaching his disciples to show his disciples, his taught ones, that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed. This is the first explicit mention of him saying, I will be killed. Three years of ministry, he never mentions it.

Or you'll see here he does, but he doesn't. And be raised again the third day, an explicit teaching of his death and resurrection. I'm going to Jerusalem.

Do you see what's happening here? He speaks of a victorious church that's going to prevail, stand against, overcome, withstand the onslaught of the gates of hell, stratagems, plans, temptations, assaults, hell itself coming against the church, but it shall not prevail. Is it any wonder he then immediately begins to reveal the cross. I'm going to die.

I'm going to die. You see, after revealing his person, now he begins to reveal his work. There's some Christians, they want to stay with this person.

I love Jesus. I am intimate. I'm just Jesus conscious, but they're not conscious of the work that he'd done on the cross.

They know very little about the cross. Oh, I'm just saved. I believe in the grace of God.

I'm forgiven. But do you know the power of the cross? You see, some have a Christ without the work of the cross. They think of Christ separate apart from this bloody sacrifice on the cross.

They say that's gory. That's horrible. Of course it is.

Of course it is. And so you have here the first mention of his suffering and death on the cross was he say, I must go to Jerusalem. The word must there is the Greek word di must.

I must. This is what it means to bind or to tie something. In other words, he said, I must go to Jerusalem, suffer and die.

I am bound. I am tied. I am under a necessity.

Remember it says he set his face as a flint towards Jerusalem and no man could move him. I must go to Jerusalem. I've got to go to the cross.

I've got to, if this church is going to be built, it's got everything to do with the cross and my death and my suffering. I've got to go there. And so this word must, it actually means this binding.

Do you know that Greek word must is the root of the word doulos for servant or slave in the New Testament. A doulos is a bond slave. You're a doulos.

Well, this is the core word of that to be bound, to be tethered, to be tied. You're not free. You don't have your own way.

You're going to find in this Christian walk, the more you walk with Christ and follow him, the less it's about your will and your desires. You're bound. You're absolutely bound on a course.

Someone says, you can just do whatever you want. You can go in the world. No, I can't.

You can have an easier life. Oh, I know I could. You bet I could have redesigned the whole thing a lot better, but I am bound.

Hey, I'm in Limerick. I came to Limerick. I'm staying in Limerick.

Do you not realize that's a binding, a purpose where you go, I must, I have to. It's the way of the cross. It's the plan of the cross.

Now, Jesus did refer to his death before. Listen to this in Matthew chapter 12, verse 40. And this is what he says.

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Here, Christ is not explicitly saying that he's going to die and rise again, but he does it in clothed language. Only later, when you understand what he's saying, do you go, it's obvious.

Jonah, three days, three nights in the belly of the earth, then he'll rise again. You understand that, but he is teaching in veil. He's not explicitly saying, I'm going to die and rise on the third day.

And so in Matthew 12, before Matthew 16, he gives them the sign of Jonah. That was the sign. Or what about in chapter 16, verse four, a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.

There should be no sign given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them and departed. At the beginning of chapter 16, he's speaking about his death in veil terms, types, pictures, patterns of the Old Testament.

But now to Peter and his disciples, he begins to show them, I'm going to go to Jerusalem. I'm going to suffer. I'm going to die.

I'm going to rise again on the third day. This is clear teaching. Do you know why he's revealing this now? Because he's revealing, I'm about to build my church.

I'm going to build my church. On what foundation do you think it is? Just a simple revelation. Oh, I know Jesus is real.

I know he's alive. I have communion with God. You better be sure that revelation of Christ leads you to the cross.

Because I tell you, this foundation, it's not just about the person of Jesus. This foundation is the work of Jesus. His blood was shed at Calvary.

He bore your sin and transgression. His righteousness was imputed to you at Calvary. He provided a robe of righteousness.

The powers of darkness were broken there on the cross. The law of God was nailed to that cross. Don't you realize this foundation upon which the entire church globally, worldwide, for every generation for 2,000 years has been built upon this? Yes, it's Christ, but let me reveal who that Christ is.

Many in the church today, their Christ has no form, no doctrine, no clarity, no cross, no blood, no suffering. Their gospel is Christless and it's crossless. They speak of a Christ who never suffered, a Christ who didn't know what it was to weep over the souls of men.

We read again, Jesus in John 2.19, Jesus answered and said, Unto him, destroy this temple, speaking about his body, and in three days I will raise it. See how veiled it is. Then in John 3.14, And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

All veiled statements, but not of Matthew 16. He began, Peter, I've just revealed the foundation. I've revealed to you what this is.

The Christ is the foundation. Now I'm revealing the church that's going to be built. Now he leads them directly to the cross.

I'm going to show you. When you cross-reference Matthew 16, you read the same story in Mark chapter 8. Listen to what it says. And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and the chief priests and scribes and be killed.

And after three days rise again. And he speak that saying openly. This is the first time, first time he mentions the church, first time he mentions his death and resurrection explicitly.

There's a connection here and he sees Christ, the church, now the cross. He's revealing what it means to follow him. He's revealing how he is going to build the church.

It's impossible to build a church if this is not in the foundation. If Jesus' blood, if his death, his suffering is not on the foundation, you've got no foundation to build the church upon. Many are building the church upon a wrong foundation.

They have created a personality, but there's no cross. But a Christ without the cross would be an utter impossibility. It would be deity or divinity without blood, human shed blood, but divine blood.

It would be holiness without compassion. It would be the call to perfection without the means to accomplish it. It would be a Christless, sorry, it would be a crossless Christ and it would be a bloodless gospel.

It would be a crossless and a crossless Christ would be impossible to follow. You could never follow Jesus Christ if he had not already gone to the cross and suffered for you and died for you and bore your sins. Was the Bible saying, God so loved you, he loved you that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him.

If you don't have at the center of your revelation a bleeding, dying Christ, that's why it's Lord's Day each Sunday. We actually remember the Lord's death. We break bread together as often as you come together, as often as you do it.

You should be doing this often, frequently. You know why? Because of this, he can build a church. We are a church here.

Why? Not because of a preacher, not because of ministry, not because of all of our activity, not because we're nice folk. You only have a church here for one reason, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is in the foundation.

That's why when he talks about the church, the gates of hell will not prevail against it. All hell's plans to destroy it will not work. You know where he's going to take you next? The cross.

The cross, the bleeding lamb, the sacrifice at Calvary following Christ would end in hopelessness if he had not gone to the cross. Despair, fear, defeat, or worse still, men would create a Christ of their own imagination. Remember later Paul in Acts chapter 28, he says, speaking to the elders, the Ephesian elders, take heed therefore unto yourselves.

Unto all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. What is the church? What is the real church? It has been purchased, a price was paid, his blood. You don't have a church without the blood.

Why have we removed the blood from songs and from our prayers and from our preaching and from our worship and our evangelism? You don't have a church without the blood. If you remove the blood, if you emphasize Christ, if you talk about his power and his deity, his divinity, his exaltation, but you don't preach the blood, if you don't keep your eyes on the blood saints, you don't have a church. The gates of hell will prevail.

A bloodless church is no church at all. The real church you can identify, it's washed in the blood of the Lamb. I can identify a real Christian.

You know why he stays near the blood? I know where I came from. I know what washed away my sin. I know what lifted me up out of the ditch.

I know what made me part of the church of Jesus Christ. You see on this revelation, this foundation stone, he's going to build an entire church. That foundation's not only a revelation of a person, it's a revelation of his work.

That's why he had to, he began to teach openly, clearly. You've got to understand this. If we're going to build a overcoming church, a victorious church, a triumphant church, a pure church, if we're going to build that here in Limerick or out across the world, you know what we need to do? We don't only reveal the Christ and reveal the church, we've got to reveal the cross.

We've got to reveal the power of the cross. There's an old hymn we sing often here. There is a fountain filled with blood.

People argue, say, people don't understand the word fountain. Rewrite it, throw out the old songs. They can't understand fount, per me.

Uneducated, failed all my exams but understood the word fountain and its picture language. This was a hymn sung at Charles Spurgeon's funeral. Listen to one of the verses.

I always rejoice when I sing this verse. It's so dynamic about the church. Not only the church now but what the church will be.

Listen to the words. It's about this blood. Dear dying lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more.

What a dynamic hymn. These are the songs of Zion. We're marching to Zion, the city of God.

And you know what? We sing songs like this. I've been redeemed by the blood of lamb. You know the real church, it's redeemed by the precious blood of the lamb.

You want to know what the power is over hell, over demonic powers, over powers of darkness? You want to know where the real power is? It's not in some special teaching. Well, God's revealing to me the power over limerick. It's suicide.

It's free masonry. Blah, blah, blah. You don't get the apostles once doing that.

They preach the blood of the Lord Jesus. That's where the power is against the gates of hell. Hell cannot prosper when a church is redeemed and it knows it's redeemed.

Listen to the apostles preaching all through the New Testament. Christ and him crucified in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and 18 for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. Sinners are people in the church who aren't really Christians, but they like to call themselves Christians because they want all the benefits.

Do you know what? The gospel, the preaching of the cross is foolish to them. They don't even understand that. But unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

The preaching of the cross, what is it? It's power. Power. It's not theology.

It's not intellectual understanding. There's power. There's dynamite.

Okay, I'll use the word. Listen, it says preaching of the cross. The word preaching there is the Greek word logos.

And the word logos is not talking about a style raising your voice, proclaiming out loud. Not talking about a style of preaching. The preaching of the cross is the logos of the cross.

The word logos means the expressed mind of God through the spoken word. In other words, it's the message of the cross. What is the power of God? The message of the cross, the substance of the message, the contents of what you preach.

That's why I'm very careful what I preach. I want a biblical gospel. I want to preach the cross.

I want to open it up and explain it and teach it scripture after scripture. You know why? The contents of the message of the gospel is very important. There's one of the biggest ministries in America at the moment, and its leader and founder has fallen into immorality.

It's all being exposed and opened up. And they're the biggest ministry of prophetic ministry worldwide. They have the biggest staff of any Christian ministry in America.

They were affecting the globe. They could promote people to pray worldwide like no other ministry I know of. But you know what? It gets exposed.

You know what people are saying now in that ministry? He never preached the gospel. Older believers, they went to him, tried to explain, what about the cross? What about being born again? It's like he couldn't understand. But he could preach about everything else, and you'd be convinced he's born again.

But he would not preach repeatedly this foundation. I tell you, I know what I'm doing. When I preach the cross and talk about the blood and deal with the righteousness, the free gift of his righteousness unto us, I know exactly what I'm doing.

So this message, this spoken, expressed thought of God concerning the Christ, it is the power of God. You young Christians in here, you want to walk in the power of this? Study the word of God. Get a revelation of the cross.

His blood. Stay there. Don't move on and say, oh, I'm moving on to special revelations and ministries and callings and what I'm going to do.

You better stay at the cross. You better understand the message of the cross. It's disaster not to.

And in 1 Corinthians 1.23, but we preach Christ crucified. Not Christ, Christ crucified. Our message isn't just about the person of Jesus.

People preach Jesus, Jesus. The New Age preaches Jesus. The Charismatics preach Jesus.

The heretics preach Jesus. Joyce Meyer preaches Jesus. All the ministries and heretics of the day, every single one of them preach Jesus.

I'll tell you what, they don't preach the cross. Not like this book reveals. It says again in 1 Corinthians 2.2, Paul speaking for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Have you determined to know nothing in this church, in fellowship, in prayer, in your marriage, in your friendships, apart from Christ and him crucified? Between me and you ought to be Christ crucified. In our fellowship, in our relationship, I ought to remember sitting at that table. You watch over your words.

You watch over your fellowship. Is Christ crucified there? Or is it mere dirt, mere trash to be forgotten, dropped in the waste paper bin? I hope not. It says in Galatians 6.14, but God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, we're not into biblical doctrine or the cross. We're into Christ. Go back to scripture and test every single word.

It can sound spiritual, and it could be anti-biblical, but we don't worship the Bible. You're scared of the Bible. That's why.

You don't want to be hemmed in, corrected, judged, tested. And so you say we're biblical, I can't get my words out today, Bible idolatry. That's what they call us, the ecumenical mixture coming in.

They started this. It says you believe in Bible idolatry. You worship the Bible.

No, I speak about the Bible like Jesus speaks about the Bible and Paul and Peter and the rest. Oh yes, I hold it with great reverence and respect. I do.

I do. I submit to its statutes. I believe in its authority.

But Paul says save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. I would hate to see the church apart from the cross. Christ is not going to build a church unless it's on this foundation, the revelation of who he is, the father revealing the son, but the son immediately takes you to the cross.

The son immediately says, I will die. I will suffer. I'm going to Jerusalem.

Hell hates us. Number two, watch this very, very carefully. This is my second title, Satan's Unrelenting Conflict Against the Church.

If you know that Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah that was prophesied from Genesis 3 all the way through to Malachi was standing here and he's just said, I'm going to build a church and the gates of hell will not prevail if they're built on this foundation and then you begin to teach on the cross. If you were hell, what are you going to do? I know what I would do. I'm a strategist.

I'm a military thinker. I think like that in the church. I'm a strategist.

I've got a strategy, a plan. I'm thinking all the time, how can I make that person a better Christian? How can I win them for Christ? How can I stir them? How can I provoke them to love? How can I make them go on there? That's what I ask. I don't always have the answers, but that's my thinking.

Lord, help me. Show me as a preacher, as a shepherd, help me. The second point, Satan's unrelenting conflict against the church.

Look at verse 22 directly after this. Verse 21, he begins to preach openly the cross, his death, his resurrection, but look at the very next verse, then Peter took him. Notice why I'm going to teach you Satan's unrelenting conflict against the church.

What does this attack look like? How does it come? How does it come through? Does the devil appear with hordes of darkness, with wings, with hooves, with pointed ears, with pitchforks? Look at the attack right at the beginning. Christ has only revealed, I am going to build my church, and you know how I'm going to do that? It's me dying, suffering, bleeding. That's how I'm going to build a church worldwide in every generation, in every time, every city, every village of the world.

So how does Satan's attack? Satan is not going to remain silent right at the beginning of this. Here comes the conflict. So we see Christ, we see the church, we see the cross, now we're seeing the conflict.

Look very carefully here how it comes. Then Peter took him. I always like to imagine that it's Peter taking him by the lapels.

That's how strong the word is. It means to take him in hand. It's like a little child that's lost its way.

Come, let me show you the right way to mommy. You've got lost running about the church, so you take the little child in hand. That's what this word means.

It means Peter took Jesus. It means to take a hold of him, take him unto yourself so you can talk to him. So Peter took him.

Notice what stirred this. As soon as he mentions Jerusalem, suffering, death, rejection, Peter takes him. Oh master, master, look very carefully what I'm going to tell you here.

And began to rebuke him. The word rebuke means to correct, to point out where you're wrong, to correct your understanding. Do you see the attack of Satan? It wasn't some dark demonic force coming down.

I'm telling you, I'm going to show you Satan's attack here. Watch very closely because you know what, it's not a thousand miles away. And you don't need to look at the person in the seat next to you either, husbands especially.

I'm telling you how close this is. Remember the old saying, Churchill, he said, we look for the enemy and we discovered we were him. A wise general will always know my worst enemy is me.

A wise Christian does the same. And began to rebuke him saying, be it far from me, Lord. So he acknowledges his Lordship.

You are my Lord, but not this, not suffering, not Jerusalem, not rejection, not death, not you. You don't need to go the way of the cross. You want to discern how Satan attacks the church to stop it being built.

I'll tell you, the devil gets inside the church and you've got real Christians, shepherds, preachers, evangelists, beginning to correct any teaching about the cross and about the blood and about suffering. Oh no, you don't need to preach that. You don't need to go the way of the cross.

Do you realize that's a full frontal attack upon the church, the foundation, upon the cross. But we don't see that. All we see is a Peter.

We see the niceness, the care, the love, the concern, the compassion, the meekness, the mildness. We see Peter rebuking this message of the cross. And yet the cross is the only thing that will build this church correctly.

It's the only foundation. Lord, this shall not be unto thee. It shall not.

You're seeing Peter, red, hot, dogmatic, saying, you're Lord, but not this message, not this way, not this revelation. You see how just moments before, Peter, blessed art thou, because flesh and blood hasn't taught this to you. It's my Father in heaven.

Who do you say I am? You are the Son of God. You're speaking by divine revelation. You're taught by God the Father.

Coming out of your mouth is a revelation that's opened in your mind and your heart. It's supernatural. All of a sudden, who's this Peter? He's the same man.

I'm telling you, there's more Simon here. I think we started with Peter and we've ended up with Simon here. And I know none of you know about this.

You have never experienced this. And the person beside you, you've never seen them go through this either, I'm sure. But you have here.

Not unto you. Listen to how Jesus responds. Verse 23, but he, that is Jesus, turned and said unto Peter, get thee behind me, Satan.

Said it unto Peter. Didn't say unto the devil. Said it unto Peter.

Get thee behind me, Satan. Can you recognize Satan's work in the church? Against the church? Through the church? Can you even recognize it? We're looking at the world and its demonic powers. Go out and get drunk.

Oh no. It's the advice in the house of God. I hate personal opinions.

I hate them. Because most people who give them in the church, they don't even think. It just flows out.

A flood of stuff coming out. Opinions, ideas, thoughts. I think you should do that.

Have you studied? Are you careful? Are you prayerful? Are you watchful over your own tongue? You're just saying things to people. How do you know it's not the devil? Oh no, I'm saved. I've got a revelation of Christ.

You need to be very careful. Jesus rebukes Peter. Peter's rebuking Christ.

Not that way. But Jesus turns it around. And I tell you, men of God will do that.

Do you know I've got the biblical right to shut mouths of people in God's house? And I've rarely done that. I've got a biblical right. Paul writes to Timothy.

Young Timothy in the house of God. He didn't raise the church up. He's left to care for it.

You shut the mouths of those that are teaching wrong. You shut their mouths. That shows the danger.

You think we should tolerate anything and anything being taught in and around the church? Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Do you realize it can be hell, the devil attacking the foundation of a church? Attacking the cross? It could be the devil coming through a genuine believer.

I want you to know carefully, it doesn't say Peter is demon possessed. He's not demon possessed. Jesus doesn't say that.

The Bible doesn't say that. Neither does he cast the demon out of him. Not at all.

He didn't have a demon in dwell on him. What he had was thoughts coming to the mind. Remember like Job's wife.

First of all, you see in Job chapter 1, a vision of heaven, Satan before the throne of God saying, if you allow me to do this to Job, he will curse you and die. Then you move into the story and suddenly it happens. Now Job's wife comes to her husband.

Look at this that happened. And she says, why don't you curse God and die? Oh, I can handle a devil directly coming to me, but not my wife. Now I'm going to need the real power and grace of God.

See, you could fight against things coming, but when your wife in the hardest trial of your life, when all hell is raging, and she says, curse God and die. Can you even discern the devil coming in? People want to damn Mrs. Job. I wouldn't.

Or else you have to damn Peter. You want to damn Peter? Do you think Peter was sincere and godly and born again and after Christ? Sure was. But this is the attack of hell.

Do you realize a genuine believer who just moments before had a revelation in his mind, his heart, and out of his mouth can suddenly now give way to the thoughts of hell. You don't need to go the way of the cross. I don't like to suffer.

It's not God's will for me to suffer. I tell you, I've wrestled for a year and a half saying, God, this cannot be your will. I shouldn't have to suffer this.

I shouldn't have to encounter this. How can this be your will? How could you allow me to endure this? And I know all this stuff. There's a battle raging in my mind.

And even this morning, I want to tell you saints, the things of life come in real close to your heart. This isn't nice doctoral sermons. This is practical living in reality.

And it hurts. It's hard. It's not easy.

And so you have here, Peter, unknowingly, unconsciously, he doesn't want his master to suffer. Not you, Lord. You're good.

You're kind. You're gracious. You're powerful.

You're going to build your church. You're going to build a church that all hell cannot prevail against. Then the master says, suffering and death.

What a shock. He goes on to say, thou art an offense unto me. He's actually not speaking to Peter.

He turns to Peter. He wants to make sure I am confronting what you have just said. And it's not Peter he's dealing with.

He's dealing with the devil who's going to come in. Do you realize if Jesus had not dealt with this, what would have happened to the church? Peter is your chief apostle. He is the great preacher on the day of Pentecost.

He is the man respected across nations. Can you imagine if Christ had not dealt with them? Can I remind you, Peter is on the foundation. He is a stone on the foundation.

And yet look at the conflict. Some of you's get in a conflict and you go, I wonder if I'm on the foundation. You're on the foundation in the conflict.

If this battle in my mind is going on, if I can think dark thoughts like this, am I really saved? Well, how could this happen to me? You're on the foundation like Peter. And I don't believe in giving false hopes, but I hate for people who the devil's trying to destroy their hope. They are on the foundation.

They are born again, but all hell is raging. And they get so confused going, if this is happening to me in my mind, in my heart, in my circumstance, where am I? Thank God you're being built on the foundation and all hell. You better be careful how that's interpreted.

All hell shall not prevail. I'll never have dogs, never have battles, never have struggles. I'll be immune from the devil.

Who ever told you that? It's going to be a picnic, happiness, joy. Then you get in a fiery trial. You feel like God's left you.

No feelings, dark thoughts of the mind, words coming out of your mouth. All hell is let loose on you. You go, is this the victorious Christian life? Is this the church? Is this what it means to be a part of the church that all hell, the gates of hell cannot prevail against? Yes.

Welcome to the church. Do you realize this is the conflict on the foundation, in the church? The devil's not attacking the Catholic church in this city today. He's got it.

The Mormons, the JW's, the little place down the road, the Baptist church or the charismatic church that teaches, you can go out and sin and drink and fornicate. I'm sure the Lord understands. We don't believe in using that terrible word sin or that other word repentance.

They're chaotic words that we've learned to interpret differently. The devil's not bothered about them. It says in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 26, be ye angry and sin not.

Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. It's dealing with anger. Any of us have a problem with anger.

Any of us struggle. You're going to bed and you're angry. You're angry in your heart.

Husbands, wives, don't turn that light off until you've made right. Turn your back to put the light out. You're going to speak to her.

Too many use a giggle. Get worried. So he's dealing with anger.

Be ye angry and sin not. Don't let the sun go down. Don't switch the light off.

Don't go to bed. Husband, wife, never go to bed without fuming. Even if you have to dig her in the ribs at one minute past midnight.

Listen to the next verse. This is very important. Verse 27, neither give place to the devil.

He deals with anger saying, don't let the sun go down on your wrath. Neither give place to the devil. It's all about a Christian.

Oh, I'm immune. I'm born again. Okay, so you've got the teaching.

A Christian cannot be indwelt with demons, demonized. There's no mild cases of demonology. None.

They're absolutely wrong out there. All the teachers on demonology, every, I'll challenge any of them, all of them. They can't prove me wrong.

There's no mild case of being demonized. To be demonized is serious, severe inability. You can't function.

Oh, I'm worried if I've got a demon in me. Why? You're tempted. You're upset.

You're going through darkness. I think I'm Judas. I met three people who thought they were Judas in my lifetime.

All three of them were the sweetest Christians. I'm convinced I'm Judas. You need to do a lot better than you're doing if you're going to be Judas, I tell you.

It says neither give place to the devil. The word place there means a foothold or a beachhead. A real Christian can give place to the devil in his heart and life.

I'm angry and I'm letting the sun go down. You're giving the devil a place. Peter, you allowed the to use you to rebuke the master.

It says over in Luke chapter 22, 31, just a little bit later, weeks, if not months later. And the Lord said to Simon, do you see it? The Lord said, Simon, Simon, and he says it twice to get his attention. Once isn't enough.

So you know who he's dealing with. It's that natural man, the old man who Peter is apart from the grace of God. Behold, Satan had desired to have you that he may sift you as we notice.

Satan could not come against Peter without going and asking Jesus. Do you actually believe that if you're walking with God, Satan cannot even come to attack you with an onslaught or to sift you or attempt to sift you unless they ask permission. The devil's got to go to Jesus, knock on the door, say, can I sift him? Can I attempt to sift him? Remember like in Job in the Old Testament, you put a barrier, you build a wall, you put a hedge of protection.

I can't touch him. Of course he's going to love you. You blessed him, you guard him.

I can't even touch his possessions. I can't touch his children. I can't touch his body because you have put a hedge around them.

That's Old Testament. That's pre the New Testament. Do you really believe that Satan has to go to Christ before he comes to you? And so Peter, Simon, sorry I got wrong, Simon, Satan had desired to have you that he may sift you as we, like with a scythe.

I'm looking for a scythe at the minute. You can't find them. My dad used to cut grass with a scythe.

And if we run out of fuel during this next crisis, I want a scythe or my lawn is going to be terrible. You know what a scythe was? It just cut everything down in front of it. It just swathed everything.

You know what Satan is asking? Let me sift him as we. But I prayed for you, Simon. I'm warning you what's coming.

I'm telling you, I'm prophesying. I'm revealing to you, Simon, that Satan has asked. And he doesn't say, I stopped him.

I'm not going to let him do that. Oh no. And he says, he says, I prayed for them.

That's the answer. That's in the foundation that by faith fail not. He didn't pray that his faith, that he wouldn't fail.

He prayed that his faith would not fail. There's a difference. Do you see on this foundation, when you're building on this foundation, there is a conflict, there is a warfare, there's a hellish onslaught.

The devil comes with darkness. He wants to destroy you, annihilate you, mess with your mind, mess with your very thoughts big time. He wants to get you so confused.

You question what this is about. But I tell you, there's one who has prayed for you. There's one who's prayed that your faith doesn't fail.

I am praying that your faith, that faith in the son of God, I know he's the Messiah. I know he's the Christ. I'm praying for you, Peter.

That's the only thing that doesn't matter. Let hell come against you. I am praying that your faith will come through it.

Oh, you might not look too good by the end of this, but I will bring you through. And that when you are converted or when you turn again, it's already born again, regenerate. But when you turn again after this, it'll seem like you're wiped out.

You're finished. You're going to even doubt. Am I even on the foundation anymore? Do you know what happens just after this? The hour of darkness comes, disseminate.

Jesus says, Peter, the rest of yous pray. You want to pray. In the next hour, the next few hours, you want to pray.

Do you know why? Because of what's just coming tonight. Guess what they done? They slept. And he comes back, said, could you not even pray one hour? He says, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

And he says, pray. And there's a reason there to pray. Pray lest you be tempted.

Christ knew. See, if you pray through this night, you'll be ready to meet this. Do you know what it tells me? They weren't ready.

Peter wasn't ready. Matthew wasn't ready. Thomas wasn't ready.

An onslaught of hell comes. What is this? There's the beginning of the church. There's a victorious church being built on this revelation.

Look at it during the hour of darkness. Look at Peter denying his master three times. He's there warming his hands by the world's fire.

Soldiers, a little girl. Hey, I recognize your accent. You're one of those Galileans.

You know Jesus. You're one of his disciples. I am not.

What does Jesus prophesy? Peter, before that cross twice, you'll deny me three times. Do you know what Peter said? He's built on the foundation. He said, who knew, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both in the prison and the death.

So, he got that started now. See, he wasn't rebuking Peter. Jesus said, you don't need to go to death.

He said, oh, I've got that now. You rebuked me. You corrected me.

So, we're moving. This is education on the foundation. Some of you think, what sort of Christianity is this? And what sort of Christian I am? You look like Peter to me.

As a shepherd, I've got an awful lot of patience. You know why? Because I see this. I understand this.

Here is Peter. And he says, yes, I will die with you. And say, I've got that asserted now.

Master, I've got this asserted. I won't deny you. Hell's not going to sit me.

I'll come through. Listen to what he says. And I tell thee, Peter, the clock shall not crew this day before thou hast thrice denied that thou knowest me.

I do not know him. Is this a victorious church? Third and last, let me finish. Do you know a story? Do you know after he denied him, and Christ is in the judgment hall, and it says wherever Peter was standing by those fires, and as the clock crewed the second time, and he's denied him for the third time with a note, I do not know him.

Just before this, he says, I will die with you. I've got that revelation cited. And he said, I don't know him.

And it says that Jesus looked at him. Wherever he is in that judgment hall, he could look straight out, and he saw Peter. Just take one glance at him, right at that point.

And it says Peter went out and wept. Thank God, like Judas, he didn't commit suicide. Do you know what he done next? He said to the others, some of yous are a trouble when you backslide.

Some of yous can backslide and not affect anyone, but some of yous are troubles. And Peter, it says, when he'd done that, said to the others, let's go and fish him. I'm finished with preaching.

I'm over. Now I know none of you being built in this foundation have ever been there, and never could be there. I know that.

Peter's unique, isn't he? And there's Peter says, I've made a pig's ear of this. What have I done? He says, come on guys, let's go back to fishing. Christ called you away from that net.

And he takes the others back to his fishing nets. And they're out there. They don't catch anything.

This is after the death. Here's Jesus on the shore. Guys, caught anything? This is the second time.

This isn't the other time. Remember the other time this happened? He said, threw out the nets. Peter threw out the nets.

And then all the, this is another time. This is at the end. Why don't you throw it out over the right side? And he brought in all the fish and they come in a net.

And that's where Jesus said, Peter, do you love me? Denied me three times. Now I'm asking, do you love me? Saints of God, some of you don't understand what the conflict's like on the foundation, in the church. So you go, what's wrong with us? Maybe we're a church and you're a member of that.

You're a stone being prepared for the day of Pentecost, for a move of God and revival. But you don't even understand how this could be. Third and finally, a divine challenge to bear the cross.

Straight after this, straight after Jesus rebukes Peter, get thee behind me, Satan. Thou savourest, you Satan savour, not the things of God, but the things of man. That's how you can identify the devil.

It's fleshly. You don't need to suffer. You don't need to pray.

You don't need to read your Bible. Any one of you says to another one, you don't need to read your Bible daily. Who do you think God's speaking? Some nice Christian sits with you, says you don't need to get up in the morning or pray before you go to work.

Is that just an opinion, an idea, a biblical argument, or is that the devil? You need to learn how, you know, Candice and me, we did this with one another. I told you before walking away from breakfast, school of Christ, one morning we had guests and they left. I said, Keith, can I say something? You shouldn't have said the things you said.

It took me 24 hours to respond. I kept my mouth shut. Some of you aren't wise enough.

I just kept my mouth shut. I did not want to admit that. And you just prayed through.

24 hours later, I come back. Thank you. Thank you.

It hurts to hear truth. But she loves me more than all of you. So she actually says, Keith, she done it at the right time in the right way, biblically.

And I knew what I'd said wasn't good around that table. It wasn't bad. You wouldn't think it's bad.

It was just below what I should have been. Verse 24, if any man notice the order, and this is the last thing, the challenge to bear the cross. I'll just finish briefly with this.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross. What's the three C's here? The cross, the conflict, no, the cost. How do I know you're a real believer? Because you'll come through all of that and you'll come right back to the call of the cross again.

The cost, the cost. I'm wrestling this morning in prayer. I'm not just preaching messages.

I am wrestling. Since I am in travail, travail, I've preached all through these years, but I'm telling you my trials I'm walking through and I'm going, Lord, I see myself in this message. Help me to pray through, help me to touch you and to see the hand of God in my circumstance.

It's not easy. I don't have it all sussed here. I know my doctrine.

I know the character of God, but I've got to pray through lest any bitterness gets in my heart. God forbid. I'm not blasé about this.

Oh God, preserve me. I am in a conflict. And you know what the call is? Back to the cross.

That's the only place of safety. And this is right after this attack on Peter. This attack of hell, get thee behind me, Satan.

Jesus immediately gives a divine challenge again to bear the cross. He had it at the beginning, but it's again a call. Come back to the cross.

Deny yourself. You know why? Because the devil can only work on flesh that isn't denied or crucified. If you don't deny yourself, your self is wide open to the devil, his suggestions, his leadings, his decisions, his direction.

You will say something to another believer you ought not to. Deny himself. Listen, if any man come after me, oh, I'm following Christ.

Where's your cross? I'm a follower, a disciple of Christ. I am radical about Jesus. Where is your self denial? You're not following Christ if you're not denying yourself.

A man or a woman who doesn't discern or know themselves are very dangerous in the church. Uncrucified flesh is the most dangerous thing in this room. It's not the Pope.

No Catholic priest has ever done me harm. Thank God it wasn't 500 years ago that they burned me at the stake. No Catholic priest has caused me one moment of concern.

Do you know who those that set themselves against me and lied and tried to destroy me? You know who they are? All through the years, Pentecostal, spirit-filled, tongue-speaking Christians with great ability to preach. They're the ones, not the Catholic priests. Are you shocked by that? Saints of God, this is the warfare.

Jesus is saying, Peter, if any man will come after me, follow me. He has to deny himself. You have given room to the devil.

You need to take up your cross and follow me. You can only follow Christ with the cross. You will not follow him.

You can't go where he goes. You cannot go where he leads unless you've got a cross. It's the cross is the power, not resolutions, not strong self-will, not your ability.

That cross is the power of God. When you stand with faith, I am crucified with Christ. It's no longer I that liveth, but it's Christ that liveth in me.

And the life that he liveth in me, I now live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. That's where the power of this is. Saints of God, if we're going to follow him, and what is this following? Saints, what is all this about? This is how Christ builds his church.

You want to know how Christ builds a church? It is the cross, this dealing with that old nature. And you know what? Satan coming against you is in the will of God. It's in the plan of God.

This is how he builds a church. Okay, Satan, I'll let you come in because in this onslaught, you're going to reveal what's in Mary or Ethan or Shona or anyone else that's weakness. I'll die for you.

I'll follow you to death. I don't know him. Devastating.

Who is that? That's a stool being built, raised up to be a house for God. A church without the cross would be tragedy. It'd be filled with pride, arrogance, selfishness, bitterness, unforgiveness, immorality, and anger, and much more.

A crossless church would become a religious institution, an organization. It would become a higher oracle, hypocritical business for the promotion of men. Men would join the church to get what they wanted, to have ministries, to hear their voice, to have their gifted displayed, to be noted and commended.

That's what a church without the cross looks like, following Christ. And there are multitudes in the church. They are following Christ.

They are. They're preaching Christ, talking about Christ, but there's no cross. And all I hear, the ethos, the ideology, the theology is from the pit of hell.

You don't need to go the way of the cross. You don't need to suffer. You don't need to go to Jerusalem.

You don't need to die. You don't need to deny yourself. You don't need any of that.

Men would join the church, exalt themselves, and finally exclude Jesus Christ from the church. And it happened at Laodicea within 70 years of Pentecost. Knocking on the door, is there anyone in there to let me in? Just one in an entire church in Laodicea.

Is there anyone who hears my voice? It's a church, worship, prayer meetings, gatherings, evangelism, everything, fellowship. No Christ. Because there's no cross.

Because they had a Christ, but no cross. And when you've got a Christ, but no cross, and you try to follow Christ without the cross, you end up with something so perverted, you can't even imagine. Since I'm telling you what it looks like for a Christian and a church to be built on the foundation.

This may not make you whoop and wah and shout and go hallelujah. But this will help you to astain the darkness of night, the onslaught of hell, the battles, the failures. Get up again, repent, go to the blood, and let's keep walking with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Will you stand with me? Lord Jesus, we bless you, we praise you here this morning, oh God. We need the grace of God in this meeting. Lord God, thank you for your hand here.

Thank you for your power, the very testimony and reality that we're preaching the cross on the door. Lord God, that we want to submit and follow and desire you and deny yourself to take up our cross to count the cost. Lord God, we see in this chapter the revelation of your son, Jesus Christ.

We see that victorious vision of the church. Lord God, we begin to see the cross, the means by which you are going to build this church upon the foundation. We see the terrible conflict that rages around every genuine stone and genuine believer in Christ.

We see again that fresh call to discipleship, to pay the price, to count the cost and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. My God, will you work in these lives this morning, build a church here in our midst. My God, in the midst of this conflict, of this onslaught, of these hellish battles, we pray for divine revelation of your personality, of your finished work on the cross, but more of that, of your call to identify in this crucified life where we deny ourself, we resist ourself, we reject every word, every thought, every decision that doesn't make us more Christ-like in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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