

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 17 August: 10:30 AM.

Osagie speaking

Sunday 24 August: 10:30 AM.

Lance speaking

Sunday 31 August: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Monday 1st September:

Mentoring training

Sunday 07 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

Saturday 13 September: **SCIENCE & FAITH: ENEMIES OR ALLIES?**

Sunday 14 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 21 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 28 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

3-5 October: Young Professionals' retreat

Sunday 21 December: 10:30 AM. Carol service



For centuries, Christians have debated whether Peter himself is the “rock” or if Jesus was referring to Peter’s faith or confession. But whatever your view on that, we can’t miss the bigger picture: Jesus is revealing his vision for what the church is and what it’s for.

Let’s reflect on what this passage teaches us about how *Jesus himself* saw the church.

1. The Church Belongs to Jesus

Jesus says, “I will build *my* church.” The church doesn’t belong to Peter, to pastors, or to any group. It belongs to Jesus. He is the builder, and he is the one who gives it purpose and power. That should both comfort and challenge us—comfort us because we are in his hands, and challenge us to stay aligned with his vision.

2. The Church Is Built on People of Faith

Jesus gave Simon the name “Peter,” meaning “rock,” not because Peter was perfect, but because of his faith-filled confession. God loves to build great things on imperfect people who trust him. The church is not made of bricks and mortar—it’s built on people like Peter, people like us, who confess that Jesus is Lord. (2 Cor 12.9-10)

3. The Church Is Indestructible

Jesus says, “The gates of Hades will not overcome it.” In other words, not even death can stop what Jesus is doing through his church. This is not a fragile community that might fall apart under pressure. It’s a Spirit-filled movement that is meant to last, grow, and stand firm against the darkest forces in the world. An individual congregation can be vulnerable (see the letters to the churches in Revelation 2-3), but the church universal is here to stay.

Peter the ‘rock’ and key-holder

Jesus only used the word “church” twice (Matthew 16.18 and 18.17). We are in the middle of a mini-series exploring Jesus’ expectations about his church according to Matthew chapter 18. I thought it would be useful to write something about what he said in chapter 16.

In Matthew 16:17–20, Jesus makes one of the most significant statements about the church in the entire Bible. After Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Jesus responds with words that still shape how we understand the church today:

“You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

4. The Church Opens the Kingdom Door

Jesus told Peter: *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."* (Matthew 16:19)

Sure enough, in Acts 2, it is Peter who stands up on the day of Pentecost to declare the way into God's kingdom—through repentance and baptism. The church has always had this role: helping people enter a life with God.

Our message is fundamentally good news. As Dallas Willard commented:

"Having the keys is not a matter of controlling access to the kingdom, as is often thought. Keys do not first mean the right to control access, but the enjoyment of access. Imagine a man who carefully kept his doors locked and his keys in hand, but never went into his house! Having access to the kingdom, living in it, is what matters."

Conclusion

In short, Jesus didn't talk about the church as a club or an institution, but as a living, powerful community built on faith, charged with opening the kingdom to the world, and unstoppable in the face of death. That's the kind of church we're called to be. Let's thank God for that—and let's live like it's true.

Your brother, Malcolm

Our Daily Bread

According to Premier Christianity magazine:

"In a Church of England survey of 2000 people, people were asked to match famous lines to their sources. The Lord's prayer was more recognised than the national anthem, Shakespeare or Star Wars."

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank account: Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC

Sort Code: 401915

Account Number: 04759613

Watford Media



SCIENCE AND FAITH

Enemies or Allies?





David Hutchings
Fellow, Institute of Physics
and Research Fellow,
University of Durham

Saturday 13th September
10am – 1pm

ALEXANDRA PARK SCHOOL
RHODES AVENUE
LONDON N22 7UT



Douglas Jacoby
MTS, DMin, Athens
Institute and International
Bible Teaching Ministry


@northlondonICOC

Click or Scan for
more info



Zoom ID: 970 4495 5808
Passcode: 795498

FREE Event
Sponsored by



INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
Charity Number 1092123