

Upon this Rock

Այս Վեհին Վրայ

Matthew 16:13-18

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock[Ⓜ] I will build my church, and the gates of hell[Ⓜ] shall not prevail against it. (Mat 16:13-18 ESV)

Introduction:

In 301 AD Armenia accepted Christianity as its national religion. Yet the Armenians did not have an Armenian Bible. By Divine revelation, Mesrob Mashdotz invented the Armenian alphabet, and he translated the Bible with his fellow scholars. However, that translation was in classical Armenian called *Krapar*. In the middle of the 19th century, there was an awakening and a desire to make the Bible accessible in a language understandable to the common people. In 1846, thirty-seven men and three women founded the first Armenian Evangelical church in Pera, Istanbul (then Constantinople). One of the important contributions of the Armenian Evangelical Church was the translation of the Bible into modern day Armenian.

Today we are celebrating 175 years of the Arm. Evang. Church. The question I ask myself, is it those 40 people who built and established the church?

The passage I read was Jesus asking his disciples: "Who do people say I am?"

Peter answered:

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

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church. (16:16-18a ESV)

The question I'll ask: What does **"on this rock I will build my church"** mean?

Three important truths: **"I (Jesus) will build upon this rock."**

Let me warn you:

Thinking about the 175th anniversary, it is not the 40 individuals who built the Armenian Evangelical church.

It is not the Alexanderian, Azhderian, or the Housepian couples who built the Pilgrim Armenian congregational church 120 years ago (1901).

The church is not a charitable organization formed by good people, or a social club for ethnic people to come next to each other.

Jesus says, **"I will build my church."** The author and the foundation is Jesus Christ HIMSELF.

Please notice Jesus did not say to Peter, **"I built my church"**, he said **"I will build my church."**

In the Jewish context, the Temple was the center of worship. Yet, Jesus gave a new meaning for the temple of God. He said:

"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" (Mark 14:58 ESV)

He **will** build a new temple, not by hands, or stones. But He himself became the new temple of God.

He died on the cross and rose from the dead. After his resurrection, Jesus built the church starting with his disciples.

It all began in Jerusalem, and Jesus keeps building around the world. The future tense **"I WILL build my church"** shows that Christ continues building it until today all over the world. Jesus Christ is building His church.

-The church is the visible and tangible expression of the life of the risen Christ.

-Thus, the church is not static, a one-time structure or organization. The church is a living body, renewed every day, because Jesus Christ lives, Jesus Christ works, Jesus Christ acts and transforms lives, (today we just baptized Shane.)

Let me go back to my main verse:

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church

So who is this rock? What is this rock?

Peter, Cephas, Πέτρος which also means rock. How come such a weak person, who denied Jesus, who spoke impulsively, who cut the ear of the servant, and so on... is the rock?

The answer is in the verse above:

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (15,16)

Even though this truth was revealed to Peter by God the Father, it is a profound proclamation of faith and declaration. **"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."**

This is statement of faith. This is an important declaration of faith.

Paul says, **"because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."** (Romans 10:9,10 ESV)

Two important words: faith (to believe) and confess (or declare.)

Anyone who declares with faith that Jesus is Christ is Lord and Savior, and believes in his/her heart, he/she becomes a living stone, a rock.

Let us be careful not to be confuse the living stones with the Rock who is Jesus Christ himself.

Christ is the cornerstone of the church. We, the living stones, are being built into a spiritual house. (1 Peter 2:5)

Application:

175 years later, where are we regarding the statement Peter made?

"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

This statement should be our own and show in our lives.

We are living stones when we believe (faith) and when we declare (confess) who Jesus is in our lives.

The challenge is collective and individual.

Do we confess Jesus Christ as Lord, King, Savior, Redeemer, healer, comforter, Teacher, both individually and collectively?

I leave the answer to each of you to answer.

Amen