

Week of January 22-28

## **BUILDER'S "ASSURANCE"**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Matthew chapter 16

Our church is currently involved in a building project as we construct a new facility to house the ministries of Calvary Assembly. During this process, we are carrying builder's risk insurance until the structure is complete. Should there be any loss due to fire, theft, natural disaster, etc., our investment is protected. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus provided his church with something even better: builder's **assurance**.

**"I will"** – *Jesus, the head of the church, "will," not "may," or "might"*

**"build"** – *implies deliberate planning and anticipated growth*

**"my church"** – *not ours but his, he cares and loves it more than we ever could since He died to purchase it for himself, a church without spot or wrinkle*

**"and the gates of hell"** – *the forces of the devil in all their scheming*

**"will not"** – *there are no ifs or maybes here*

**"overcome it"** – *the devil can't win, defeat or destroy the people of God. He can harass and torture saints, burn down buildings, imprison and even put saints to death BUT he cannot overthrow, destroy or overcome the church.*

Through the centuries, the church has had its periods of ebb and flow. The Dark Ages were certainly part of the ebb while the Reformation and the Pentecostal outpouring have been some of the flow. Recently, the United States church is facing ebb times. 3,700 churches close their doors each year. Half of all churches last year did not add one new member through conversion growth. Only 15% of churches in the United States are growing and just 2.2% of those are growing by conversion growth. The health of church leadership is even worse. 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout, or conflict in their churches. Only 10% of pastors who begin ministry will actually finish in the ministry.

Reading statistics such as these can be quite sobering and even depressing. It's in times like these that today's Scripture reading can be such a comfort to us. Jesus will build his church! He started with 12 disciples. One betrayed him. One denied him. The other 10 deserted him. Forty days after his death and resurrection, the church was up to 120. 10 days later, the church had grown to over 3,000 and hasn't looked back. Today, nearly a third of the world, 2.3 billion people, claims the name of Christ. In the last hundred years, Christianity has quadrupled in numbers. Christians are a majority of the population in 158 countries and territories, about two-thirds of all the countries and territories in the world. Jesus made a promise to his church and he intends to keep it. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations. Finally, at the end of days, there will be representatives from every tribe, language, nationality and color before the throne and the devil will be in the lake of fire. Now that's builder's *assurance*.

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Memorize Matthew 16:18 and, then, spend some time thanking the Lord for his promises to his church.

**Take-a-way:** *Jesus provides more than builder's risk insurance in case of loss, he provide builders' assurance there will be no loss.*