

The Main Thing!

Promise: faith in Jesus as the Christ results in eternal life

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

Isa 51:1-6; Ps 138; Romans 11:33—12:8; [Matthew 16:13-20](#)

(12th Sunday after Pentecost (Pr 16), 8/23/20)

“On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” – v. 30

Lead In – Steven Covey is remembered as the author of “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” which sold over 25 million copies. He is also remembered for the aphorism, “The main thing is keeping the main thing the main thing.” Indeed it is! And it is not as simple as one might think...

I. The Main Thing Biblically With the Christian Faith

- What is the Bible primarily all about? And Jesus?
- John’s Gospel states clearly the main thing...
- Jesus’ question is of paramount importance!

II. The Point of Christianity And the Proper Response

- A lot of people say a lot of things about Jesus...
- “But who do you say that I am?”
- Long awaited Messiah. Son of God!

III. The Rock Upon Which Church Endures Forever

- Flesh and blood did not reveal this to Peter!
- Word of Holy Spirit is not formless! *Enthusiasts*
- The Confession belongs to the Church...
- Community of faith endures forever!

Parting Shot – And so the question lingers this morning. Jesus asks us, “Who do you say that I am?” And I don’t believe this question is only asked once and only belongs to the beginning of our journey! It is why every time we gather we confess Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, and we do so in His relationship to the Father and the Holy Spirit as we confess in the words of the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. This is what we believe, teach, and confess that we might have life in his name and endure onto the age to come. That is the main thing! We need to keep it that way!

Main Point is not... the examples by which we can live our lives; or, the teachings that can order our lives; or the hidden and deep secrets that our keys to our future; or help us to tap into the Genie in The Bottle named “Jesus” to grant all our wishes.

Jn 20:30-31 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Mohammad, the Koran, and Muslims say Jesus is a prophet. They hold to his birth to the Virgin Mary, BUT NOT that Jesus is “God in the flesh”! They do not believe He died on the cross, and that He

Matthew 16:13-20 ESV

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And 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. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

rose again on the third day. Although a prophet, he is not the greatest prophet.

Claims about Jesus Today: A great teacher. An outstanding example of a holy life. An inspiration. A political revolutionary way ahead of his time...

Jn 6:44 ⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Luther: “But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith. ... In this Christian church day after day...”

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

Simon son of Jonah get nicknamed *Petros* by Jesus as the one making the foundational confession, the *Petra* (rock) upon which the church is built. But the foundation is also the apostolic confession, and all the church continually makes this confession! It is the church’s confession.

Eph 2:19-20 ⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

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Psalm 138

¹I will give you thanks, O LORD,
with **my** whole heart;*
before the gods
I will **sing** your praise.

²I will bow down
toward your holy temple
and **praise** your name,*
because of your **love**
and faithfulness;

³for you have glorified your name*
and your word **above** all things.

⁴When I called, you **answered** me;*
you increased my **strength**
within me.

⁵All the kings of the earth
will praise **you**, O LORD,*
when they have heard
the words **of** your mouth.

⁶They will sing of the ways **of** the LORD,*
that great is the glory **of** the Lord.

⁷Though the LORD be high,
he cares **for** the lowly;*
he perceives the haughty **from** afar.

⁸Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you **keep** me safe;*
you stretch forth your hand
against the fury of my enemies;
your right **hand** shall save me.

⁹The LORD will make good
his **purpose** for me;*
O LORD, your love endures forever;
do not abandon the works
of your hands.

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