

Minor Festivals: The Confession of St. Peter – January 18th

Everything needs a solid foundation. Buildings need a solid foundation, otherwise they may end up looking like the *Leaning Tower of Pisa*. Marriages need a solid foundation of commitment from which trust, love, and happiness may grow. Education needs a solid foundation on reading, writing, and arithmetic, otherwise higher learning cannot be achieved. Science needs a solid foundation on facts and evidence, otherwise we cannot understand the natural and social world we live in. Everything needs a solid foundation.

The same is true of our Christian faith. Faith must have a solid foundation otherwise it is futile and will leave us without hope. Every year on January 18th, we celebrate the minor festival of *The Confession of St. Peter*. Peter's confession of Christ was, is, and still remains the foundation of the Christian Church. Peter's confession of Christ is the hope and certainty upon which the Christian's faith is built.

Jesus had been over 2 years into his ministry. The people had heard his teachings. They had witnessed his miracles. They had followed Jesus as one who had come with divine authority. It was now that Jesus turned to his disciple's and asked, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" The disciples had a lot of answers. They said some people believed him to be John the Baptist. Others thought he was the prophet Elijah come back from the dead. Still others thought he was one of the other prophets, a teacher, or a very righteous man. But the disciple Peter was the only one who had the right answer, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It is important that we celebrate this minor festival as we continue to live in a world where the majority of people do not know who Jesus is. It is probably true, that if you ask 100 different people, "Who is Jesus?" You will probably get 100 different answers. Some will say he was a great man of influence. Others might say he was a great teacher, maybe a prophet one sent by God. Others may even think he was just a man, while others will say he was a myth, a legend, or a fake. But what about Christians today? Who do believers say Jesus is? The answer is still the same. "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus called Peter *Blessed* for his correct answer, for only through faith did Peter understand who Jesus was. Peter in Greek is "*Petros*" which means "*Rock*." Jesus went on to say, "*And you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades will not overcome it.*" It was not on Peter that God would build his church (*such as the Catholics believe, that Peter would go on to become the first pope of the Church, and thereby establish the authority and succession of the papacy*), but rather God would build his church on the rock-solid confession of Christ that the disciple Peter gave. In the Christian Church today – every sermon, every Bible class, every Sunday school lesson, every shut-in or hospital call, every outreach visit – the one truth that is always proclaimed is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Only in Christ is there forgiveness of sins. He is the Son of God, who carried and paid for our sins on the cross. He is the Son of God, who ransomed our souls from hell with the giving of his life. He is the Son of God, who lives from the grave, as he arose and proclaimed forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe on his name. As Christians we have a rock-solid foundation to our faith, for our faith stands on the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. A foundation that Satan can never overcome, as Christ lives and reigns eternally. May Peter's confession of Christ, always be our confession to the world, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Read...**Matthew 16:13-20** as today's Scripture Lesson.

Blessings to you and your families,
Pastor Matthew Guse