

Visions and Revelations

Message 14: The Apostle Peter (5)

Note: This is a lightly edited transcript meant to aid saints in personal and small group fellowship and pursuing.

Well, we are coming to message 14, the visions and revelations of the apostle Peter. Right? Now, let me first tell you that my physical strength and my voice are all limited. So I will try to work with this outline, to speak slowly, and to just cover what the Lord desires to speak to us. I ask you brothers to stand with me. Let us work together. So in the beginning, it says, "The revelation of Christ." The Father gave Peter a revelation, and Peter was bold to declare it: "Who are You? You are the Christ, you are the Son of the living God." This stirred up Christ. Christ was excited: "Simon Barjona, you are blessed. This is the revelation from the Father. It's not from flesh and blood, but from the Father. I say also unto you."

You see here, after the Father gives a revelation, we already feel nothing in the whole universe can be more precious. We see Christ, we understand Christ, we receive Christ, we love Christ, we desire to follow Christ, we gain Christ, day by day we want to have a life with Christ. We can say that "What am I short? I am short of nothing. I have Christ. Christ is everything to me. Christ is everything to all the believers." Isn't this good? This is marvelous. But this will not bring in the satisfaction of Christ Himself. That's why He stood up. He told Simon, He said, "you are blessed. You have a revelation that was from God the Father, but I also say to you."

In His speaking, "I also say to you," there are three points. Number one, "You are Peter. You are no longer Simon, you are Peter." Then secondly, "On this rock I will build My church." We just talked about how this very Christ unveiled by God should be everything. Then, all of a sudden, this Christ brought in another term: "On this rock, I will build My church." You have Christ, you also have the church. You have Christ, you also have a church, and not the church, but "My church." Not only "My church," but this church needs to be builded up. Then, eventually, with this, He told Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heavens." You know, brother, the kingdom of heaven needs keys to open it up. "I will give you keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Now we come to the next point. "On this rock, I will build My church." This is a big statement. If you ask the Lord, "Lord, what are You doing?" He says, "I am building the church." "Why did You save me?" "For the building of the church." "Why did You save us all?" "For the building of the church." "For two thousand years, why did You gain so many Jesus lovers willing to give everything to You?" He says, "Not just for me, but for the building up of My church." You know, brother, we need a revelation of Christ. We also need a revelation to see the church. From God, we know Christ. From Christ, we should know the church. "Upon this rock, I will build My church."

Last time we talk about how "church" is *ekklesia*, called out to the caller, who is Christ Himself. Christ calls us out unto Himself. We become a great universal entity. In this entity, you have the apostle Peter, apostle Paul, apostle John. In this entity, you have all the fathers. In this entity, you have those who were so much of a blessing to God and to man, such as Calvin, such as Zinzendorf, such as Luther, with all these, and even today, we can say these men are all part of the church. And more than that, when we come to the church you see brothers, many spiritual men you can love and appreciate. You can see in this church is Madame Guyon, in this church, there is brother Watchman Nee, in this church, there is Brother

Lawrence, in this church, there is Hudson Taylor, in this church, the church of Christ, in this *ekklesia*, there is also so many spiritual men, and more than that, plus you and I. There is an entity, a great entity, a universal entity. As long as there is time, this entity is enlarging, this entity is reproducing, this entity is blessing, this entity is bearing the name of the Lord as His testimony, this entity appears in so many localities, for what? For us, for man to know, we all need the lover, the creator, the savior, also the Lord, to be our Savior and everything. You know, brother, we should be thankful.

So, eventually, Paul defined the church. What is *ekklesia*? *Ekklesia* is the body of Christ. This body includes you, includes me, includes everyone who has been born again, been saved. Once you are saved, we are saved into the church to be a member of the body of Christ and to be a portion of the operation of the body of Christ. Each one becomes so valuable, so useful before the Lord, because together we are the church.

I wonder if you see a vision. I see a vision. I would say, "Paul, you are so great. But you belong to the church, I am also part of the church." I would say, "Peter, you are so marvelous. You belong to the church, I am also part of the church." And you can even say today, "Oh, my elder is so spiritual, he is part of the church, so am I. A brother so-and-so is so spiritual, he is part of the church, so am I." Because we altogether are the body of Christ.

This body is His testimony, and this body needs to be builded up. Think about what does "builded up" mean? Basically you consider any building. Means what? I bring things not related to become related. I bring things isolated to become a part of the overall structure. I bring things that have very little value into something of a grand, precious building. You know, brother, if we see a physical building, we have this view: "What a marvelous building!" Now, how about a spiritual building? The Lord says, who are we? We are a spiritual body that needs to be builded up as a testimony. So what are we? We are members to be builded up.

Now, we come to the building. You, as a brother, me as a brother, you as a sister, she another sister, we all are individuals. The Lord says, "I want to put you together, not put you together, but build you up together. Everyone has to rely on others. Everyone has to depend on others. Everyone has her value. Everyone can become a supporting element to the testimony of the Lord." So there are elements of the building up of the church. Let's see, what are the elements for the church to be built up? Number one, of course you need the revelation of the Father to see Christ. Number two, of course you need the revelation of Christ to see the church. More than that, Christ, Christ as the rock, needs to be broken in order to become a spiritual rock. You have to understand this. It's very interesting. When the Lord says, "Upon this rock I will build My church," we only see the glorious part. We say "Praise the Lord, the creator is the rock! The creator of the universe is the rock! The center of the universe is the rock! The one that upholds everything is the rock! The one who is going to inherit the whole universe is the rock!" The Lord would say, "This is true. But remember that I cannot be a dry rock. I must be a rock that can flow waters, can flow out blessings." So He says, "I need to be broken in order to become a spiritual rock. I am the rock. Not a physical rock, but a spiritual rock. I can become a spiritual rock." Right? So when the Lord Jesus was on the cross, at the end, He said, "Finished." Finished means what? "I have accomplished everything, accomplished everything. I become a real rock! I become a salvation! I become a Savior! But that is not enough. All those who are saved have to be on this rock builded up together. I want to build the church upon this rock. I finished My work."

So the soldier came and pierced him then blood and water came out. Blood of course is to cleanse us from our sin. Water caused him to become a spiritual rock. And this rock is not just for us to build upon, it's

with us, follows us, blesses us all the time, and brings us all together to have a life relation with him. So we are joined with him. We have a life association with him. We have life relatedness with him. We can enjoy him as the real life supply, the bountiful supply with all the riches of this marvelous Triune God. For what? For us to be built together.

More than that, it's not only the Father's revelation and the Son's revelation, the Son also needs to go through a process – so it's not a dry rock, but it becomes a spiritual rock. Paul says, this spiritual rock follows us. We can be built upon such a rock, then what? Then, he also said, Simon. Simon is a hearer. I hear something, and I am willing to obey. What a good name – I am willing to obey. Now you must be transformed to become a Peter. The word Peter is the word rock. There are two genders. When the Lord used the word rock, it's feminine. When the Lord used the word Peter, it's masculine. One is *petros*, one is *petra*. *Petra* is feminine, *petros* is masculine. What does that mean? The Lord is the base, we are the manifestation. The testimony's growing, blossoming, and enlarging has a lot to do with how this *petros* can testify of the Lord Himself (*petra*). You know brother, this is very good.

Four things, what is the process? I need the revelation of the Father. I need the revelation of the Christ. Then I have to see Christ today is the spiritual rock. He finished everything for me to be built upon and for me to be in life and to be related to Him. More than that, the Lord Jesus doesn't just make me a good Simon, he makes me a valuable *petros*. I am not just a good Simon who listens and follows, a good boy. I am the one testifying with the rock nature, with the rock constitution, that I want to testify of the Lord. Here it says, *a rock, one with Christ (petra) in nature, in constitution, in operation and in purpose*. What is my name? My name is Titus. What's your name? Your name can be John, Paul, can be Timothy, can be anything. But everybody should have one real name. I am Titus, but I am also Peter. I am also *petros*. I am joined to Christ as the spiritual rock. With his life supply, I am transformed from the old Titus, the natural Titus, original Titus. With a talent, ability, but of men, Titus, now I am transformed more and more into *petros*. Something solid with me matches Christ. Not only matches Christ in life, matches Christ in constitution, in operation, in purpose. In everything I am one with Christ. This causes me to be able to be built up with the other brothers in the church.

Now, we come to another point: *the process of building the church*. We say we like to be built up. How can we be built up? There's a process right? What is the process? Number 1, *a process of revelation*. A person without revelation can never be built up with anybody – revelation to see Christ, and revelation for you to see the church. Then eventually with such a revelation, you realize, I need to be built up in the church life, in the body, with the saints to bear the Lord's testimony. How? It is by the growth. I have a proper growth in life. What is the kind of growth? It is a matter of transformation. I am transformed from one stage of life to another stage of life, from one stage of glory to another stage of glory, from one step of maturity to another step of maturity. Eventually, I labor with a transformed being. I fight to produce the corporate operation. What is the process? Let me repeat to you the five things. Number one: revelation. Number two: out of revelation, growth. Number three: in growth, be transformed. Number four: with your transformation, labor and fight for the building up of the body. Eventually what do you produce? A corporate entity. This is a glorious matter. *The process of building the church is a process of revelation, the revealing of Christ by God the Father*. Number one: *the revealing of the church by Christ*. Then, *by the growth of the saints according to revelation*. When I have revelation, I see something of Christ, I see something of the church. Brothers, I begin to have a real operation, I begin to lay hold, "Lord, I must grow, so I can have more Christ, so I have to be more of a blessing to the church and in the church, and so I can be blessed by the church. I need to grow."

Then let's ask another question. How can you grow? If you grow with a revelation, you need to grow. How can you grow? Number one: *grow up in the words of the Lord*. In your growth, you cannot bypass the law. The Lord said very strongly, I am Spirit, I am life, that's very strong. And he also declared very strongly, I am the Word of life. Christians have three very crucial things. Number one is spirit. If you don't have spirit, you don't have anything. If you are not strong in spirit, you'll be short of everything. If you are strong in spirit, you will have everything.

You have to be strong in spirit and more than that, you also have to have the second thing. You must have the body. You must have the church life. You must be with brothers and sisters. Look I am here. Within me, I have a spirit. Surrounding me, there are all the brothers and sisters. I'm in spirit, I'm with brothers. When I am with brothers, I must be in spirit. When I am in spirit, I must be with the brothers and sisters.

But in the middle, there's a basic core, that is the word of God. You must have the words of the Lord. Eventually at the end of Peter's life, he said, brothers, let me tell you who you are. You should "as newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it, you may grow unto salvation." Do you see that? How can you have a process of growth, so eventually you can be a building member of the body? Number one he said you have spirit, no problem. You have saints, no problem. But pay attention to the Word, pay attention to the Bible, pay attention to the words of Christ, pay attention to Christ in the Word. The Lord spoke and in all the Bible, Christ is the real content and substance. The Word gives you milk. He said "What is the Word?" The Word is the guileless milk of the Word. When you have the Word, you enjoy the milk, you enjoy nourishment. So here, how do you grow? I say you already have a spirit, and you already have the other members, the brothers and sisters. Now everyone of us must say "Lord, I want to love Your Word. I want to be in Your Word. I want to enjoy Your Word. I want to be with Your Word. I want Your Word to be my food, and my supply, in my daily life. I want Your Word as the guiding principle in my walk. I want Your Word to be builded up in me that I could have a stature that satisfies Yourself."

Let me repeat to you, you hold the Bible, what is the Bible? The Word. The Bible is the Word. What is in the Bible? It is Christ. How do you touch Christ? Through all the words portraying Christ. The whole Bible is focused on Christ. When you come to the Bible, you enjoy Christ, you enjoy nourishment, you enjoy the food supply, and you enjoy something the Lord has richly given to you in the Word. In the Word, there is Christ. But remember that with Christ, there is always the Word. When you say "Praise the Lord I see Christ!," where's the Bible? You can say according to the Bible, Christ is my savior, Christ is my blessing, Christ is my leader, Christ is my water of life, Christ is my everything. Christ totally satisfies me, because I have the Word, and in the Word there is Christ. The Word leads us to Christ, the Word provides us Christ, and the Word regulates us to be in Christ. With the Word, we know how to behave, with the Word we know how to be before the Lord. You want to build up the church? Building up the church is not through talents coming together. You like music and I like music, which is good. It's better than not coming together. But don't think that is the building. Building is where I love the music, you love music, and we come together to enjoy Christ together in music, and the music gives you and gives me Christ together. We are builded up. By what? By the regulating of the Word. This is precious.

Furthermore, all the saints with revelations must grow up according to every one's own portion as everyone is gifted. This is very interesting, isn't it? Do you know who you are? Are you a brother? Praise the Lord, you are a brother. Are you a sister? Praise the Lord, you are a sister. You may say, "I'm a full-timer." Hallelujah, you are a full-timer. Who are you? An elder? Praise the Lord, you're an elder. But whether you're an elder, or a full-timer, or a brother or a sister, we can consider all of these as a status in

the church life. In the spiritual body, we *all* are either joints or portions. With everyone, nobody can say “Now I’m in the church life, I am nothing. I’m just so new, I’m so young.” No brother, even if you are so young, or even if you are so new, you have your portion. You have your part. And if you grow a little, with a little maturity, then you become a joint.

We need to realize that everyone needs to grow up according to the portion as everyone is gifted. I’m gifted at my portion. For instance, when a brother sings who really sings hymns beautifully, people appreciate it. This is his portion. But he develops his portion by knowing the salvation of Christ, by knowing the love of Christ, by knowing the redemptive work of Christ, by knowing God’s purpose, God’s economy, God’s operating, by knowing what the Lord is doing every day with us. All this can become the real substance of his music. Some people sing a song and it is very beautiful; some people sing a song and it is touching; some people sing a song such that after the hymn is over, it’s over; some people sing a song and after that singing, a lot develops—many will love the Lord, many will consecrate, many will give. Why? Because the ability of the one portion is able to operate so well.

So, brother, you have a portion. What is your portion? We don’t know. Maybe even you don’t quite know. But the Lord put you in the body. He placed you in the body as a part, as a portion, maybe even as a joint. You have your particular meaning. You should say, “I don’t quite know exactly what I am, but I know one thing: Without me, something will be short in the church life! I have my portion and I want to express that portion. My portion must begin to function.” When many saints are, by the Lord’s mercy, growing properly according to their portions, this growth becomes such a blessing. Do you realize, when you give a good testimony many can be moved? Do you realize, when you give a message concerning the gospel, many can be saved? Do you realize, when you share something of your experience of Christ, many will love the Lord because of that? This is our growth. First, we have the Word by having the Spirit and having the saints. Then we see that I have a portion. My portion grows, my portion develops, my portion operates and my portion blesses.

So in order to grow, we have the Spirit; we have the members of the body; we have the Word as the center, guiding us all. Who am I? I am just a tiny little member of the body—a small portion. But I grow, and with my growth, your growth, and many brothers’ growth, eventually we grow up into the headship of the Head, Christ. We grow into Christ Himself. This verse says, “But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ” (Eph. 4:15). This “truth” is the Word, so we can say: “holding the Word in love, we may grow up into Him, who in all things is the Head.” The Lord becomes the real Head.

Do you know how frustrated our real Head, Christ, is with us? Almost all the members are disobedient. The Head says, “Do this,” but we say, “No.” The Head says “Don’t do that,” we say, “No.” It seems as though we are professionals at saying “No.” We always tell the Lord, “Lord, I love You. I love You so much.” So the Lord says “If you really love me, then love me in this way!” but we say “No.” So you need to grow. You need to have the Spirit. You need to have the saints with the Word. You also need to treasure your portion, to develop your portion, and to let your portion grow until this portion can have the full exercise with the Head. You need to grow up into the headship of the Head.

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Maybe I will give you an illustration. If you sleep a whole night with your hand under your head, then the second morning this hand is still there and it is still healthy, but it doesn't quite listen to the head. Something is painful, some muscles are frustrated, some joints don't work well. You want to move the hand, but it doesn't move as it ought. There is no problem with the head, and even the hand is still a good hand, but for some reason, the hand did not "grow up into" the head! There are problems.

Do you know what the Lord's frustration is in building us up as His own testimony? Most of the saints are not in the Word. Most of the saints do not treasure what they have. Most saints do not really treasure their own growth with their own portion. So, eventually, the headship of the Lord cannot be that free. He wants us to preach the gospel, but we say, "No. We want to watch football!" He wants us to go to be with the saints, but we say "No, we want to go to McDonald's!" He wants something, we say "No." Eventually, the Lord says we have a function we can grow so healthily. Our growth manifests by these two things: with Spirit, with the saints in the Word. With my portion, I develop it. So these portions are joined to the head. When the Lord moves the hand, He becomes so free! If I have my hand under my head and sleep then by the morning my hand is not good at all. I don't cut it off. I don't say "You are terrible!" I begin to move my hand, right? I begin to exercise my hand. I begin to stretch out my hand more. I begin to do all these things to my hand with the hope that, eventually, the circulation becomes normal, healthy. Now it grows up into the headship of the head, so whatever I want the hand to do, my hand can render full operation. This is what the Lord desires for us with the process of growth. May the Lord have mercy, and may the Lord bless us. Lord be with you, amen.