

## The Kingdom of God – Part 8

### The Keys to the Kingdom

1. Introduction: One of the most “memorable” moments of my life was the day when I was handed the keys to my dad’s El Camino truck for the very first time. It was for me a burst of freedom as well as an acknowledgement of my father’s trust that I would be a safe driver. For most teens, this rite of passage...getting their drivers license marks a new kind of freedom, they have “come of age” and are ready to take on the world.
  - a. Now that I have been on my father’s side of this same situation, I know that what my parents felt wasn’t joy but probably trepidation and anxiety. They had to have a certain sense of “Oh God, what have we done now.”
  - b. When I handed over the keys to my car to my children, I never have lost that lump in my throat that comes with watching your offspring walking in front of a wild animal. While they drive away without the least concern, I almost say a prayer for them.
2. A key is a wonderful thing...isn’t it? But placed in the hands of the wrong person (a thief, untrained driver, etc) it can become a dangerous or harmful thing. Like most things in life, a tool can be used or it can be abused.
  - a. Think about the value of a key to a bank vault in the keys of the bank teller. It is necessary to access the wealth of the depositors. We wouldn’t question that. But put that same key in the hands of a thief, and it becomes something perverse and wrong. The thief could bring disaster down on all of the depositors.
3. **Let me give you a quick couple of highlights about keys before we go into our scripture:**
  - a. **Keys open doors that are locked**
  - b. **They activate function** (start a car)
  - c. **Keys provide access to secure areas.**
  - d. **Keys represent ownership & control.**
  - e. **Keys represent freedom,**
    - i. They release prisoners (what unlocked Peter’s chains and the doors when he was in prison and freed by an angel?)
4. In the Book of Matthew, Jesus speaks about “keys to the Kingdom of Heaven” to his disciples. I am not sure that they understood what he meant. I am not sure we do either. Today, we are going to unwrap the mystery of the keys of the kingdom and try to understand how we might use what we (his disciples) have been given.
  - a. Matthew 16:13-20 *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.”*
    - i. First, let me point out that Jesus gave this exact same authority to the rest of the disciples in Matthew 18:18. So this passage is not the cornerstone of the Pope’s authority to be infallible.
    - ii. The next thing that I find notable in this passage is the fact that the word KEYS is plural. This means that there is more than one key to the Kingdom of Heaven is given to us.

- b. Understand this:
  - i. People for centuries have wrongly interpreted this passage (via RCC) that Peter had the key to heaven and stood at the pearly gates. What is wrong with that view?
    - 1. First of all, there are multiple keys, not a single one. This implies that the keys have different purposes and unlock different things.
    - 2. Second, Jesus didn't say "heaven" He said "the Kingdom of Heaven" which is an entire different reality.
    - 3. Folks, the fact that first Peter, then the disciples and then each of us have been given the "keys" (plural) to the Kingdom of Heaven means that **Jesus has given us the means (keys) to unlock all of our inheritance, all of the plunder He took at the cross, and all of the miracles God has in His storehouse in heaven to advance His reign upon the earth.**
  - c. A couple of principles about the kingdom:
    - i. Life in the Kingdom is really about returning to the governing authority of God in the earth and learning how to live and function in that authority.
    - ii. The Kingdom of Heaven is not a secret society, but its keys have to be learned.
    - iii. When you know & use the keys to the Kingdom, you will never again say, "All I have is..."

5. So what are these "keys" and what do they do?

- a. **The key of supernatural authority.**
  - i. *"And the "key" of the house of David I will lay upon his shoulder; He shall open and no one shall shut, He shall shut and no one shall open."* Isaiah 22:22.
    - 1. This key mentioned in Isaiah refers to the key of authority that the ruler of a city would carry. He didn't carry it in his hand but upon his shoulder, and it was both a symbol and a reality that he possessed the authority of a ruler.
    - 2. Jesus is the person prophesied about here in the role of the Messiah.
  - ii. Jesus later told his disciples that *"all authority under heaven and earth has been given to me, go therefore, and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."* (Mt 28:18-19)
    - 1. Keys are a symbol of authority (Isaiah 22:22). Here they mean authority and power to do the works of Christ (Matthew 18:18; Matthew 16:15-20; John 14:12-15).
    - 2. And Jesus delegated His authority to his disciples (his church) to carry out His work. That authority extended to the same arena that Jesus operated in. (healing, casting out demons, etc).
    - 3. What use is this? **I had a talk with Theresa Rosian whose daughter had a severe headache last week. Terry listened to the sermons and listened when people prayed for her, and so she told her daughter, "let my lay my hands on your head and pray for you." When she did it, she noticed her hand getting very warm. At the same time, her daughter said, "my head is getting hot." And then when they were done praying...her headache was gone.**
      - a. Folks, that is ACTING in the authority which Jesus has given you. That is USING the key of authority.
- b. **The key of Kingdom opportunities.**
  - i. *"And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church in Philadelphia) write: These are the words of the Holy One, the True One, He Who has the "key" of David, Who opens and no one shall shut, Who shuts and no one shall open: I know your [record of] works and what you are doing. See! I have set before you a door wide open which no one is able to shut;"* (Rev 3:7-8).

- ii. Jesus is the person in heaven this is talking about. He has keys to open opportunities for ministry that no one can close. When God opens a door, He expects us to walk through it. Henry Blackaby says to “*find out where God is at work and join Him.*” This is the key of opportunity.
  - 1. Rev. 4:1 “*After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven*”
  - 2. Folks, things must happen in the spiritual realm before they can occur in the physical. **When God opens doors, it means that He has moved in the spiritual realms (often as a result of our prayers) and made it possible for us to find favor in the physical realms.**
  - 3. Our work at the Sahara Trailer Park: do you think the favor we found there was just a coincidence? Do you think that the openness of folks to receive prayer is normal? I can tell you first hand it is not!
  - 4. **This coming weekend there will be in Slavik Village something called “Breakthrough Cleveland.” They will be feeding 1000’s of the hungry meals, doing ministry and offering prayer to folks. It is a collection of churches working together to minister in the name of Jesus. It has been in the planning for well over a year.** Do you think it is a coincidence that they are doing the same things we did at Sahara? Nope! It is an open door over our region of favor and opportunity. We must not miss this key to the Kingdom of Heaven! Use it! Pray for opportunity!
    - a. Colossians 4:5-6 “*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*”
    - b. Ephesians 5:15-17 “*Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*”
- c. **The key of divine revelation.**
  - i. Matthew 16:16-17 “*Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." I Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."*”
    - 1. The context of this passage about the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven is based upon Peter’s confession of a supernatural revelation that he had gotten from God and expressed out loud.
    - 2. Jesus tells him that “this was not revealed to you by man but by my Father in heaven.” The word “revealed” means to unveil what was once hidden.
    - 3. Jesus is telling Peter that he had just experienced a divine revelation of something that was once hidden.
  - ii. Do you understand the concept of “supernatural revelation?”
    - 1. When I speak of revelation, I am not talking about extrabiblical revelation that supersedes or contradicts the bible.
    - 2. The bible talks about two kinds of revelation: Logos (written word of God) and Rhema (personally revealed word of God).
      - a. Have you ever been reading your bible and a word, sentence or concept seems to jump off the page at you? It seems as if it were written specifically for you, for what you are going through or what you were thinking about that very day? That is a Rhema.
      - b. If you are in this church very long, you will hear and see examples of Rhema from folks.
      - c. God is always speaking. The problem is we aren’t always listening. It is our job, our calling as a Christian to hear God speak to us.

3. Peter heard in his spirit, and understood beyond his capacity to even describe what he knew or how he knew it, that Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God.
  4. Dr. Purvis would call it, “knowing in your knower that you know that you know that you know.”
  5. If you are a child of God, you have been given ears to hear God. He wants to direct your paths.
6. There are other keys we will not cover today...keys of Faith, Confession, and Prayer.

You unlock the treasure maps of the kingdom of heaven when you are willing to listen and to act upon what God is saying. It is why these keys we have discussed today are so important to the Christian life.

- a. About a month ago, I went on a treasure hunt. I shared bit about it with you at the time. I would like to share with you a video that documents folks who make a lifestyle of using the keys to the kingdom.
- b. Share my testimony while on a treasure hunt at Metro Church in Cleveland. Video “treasure hunts”.
- c. We will be conducting several treasure hunts during Old Fashioned Days and will be meeting at the Open Door Coffee House.
- d. You can learn and see this on August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm.