

On The Rock: 7

The Keys of the Kingdom

Matthew 16.18-19

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will **give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven”

Jesus promised Peter that He would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What are these keys?

The only reason we have keys is to lock or unlock things such as doors. Now Jesus wasn't talking about physical keys but in a figurative sense. He would show His disciples some principles that would unlock the kingdom of heaven.

We also need to understand what Jesus meant by the kingdom of heaven – a kingdom is the domain of a king, his realm and place of authority. For Christians the kingdom of heaven is the realm of God's rule and authority – God rules and reigns by His word. I believe that Jesus was telling Peter that the keys of the kingdom were the principles of the word of God which would unlock the blessing of God.

We can only receive anything from God by faith – be it salvation, gifts of the Holy Spirit, guidance, wisdom, healing or material blessings. Faith comes from hearing the word of God. So there is a connection between receiving the things we need and the word of God.

Let's look at some of these keys. Some of these we have previously covered but it is good to re-cover some ground:

1. God's people were commanded to stay in the Word

- Moses gave instruction to the children of Israel concerning their attitude toward the Word of God. In **Deuteronomy 6.6-9** he told them to be diligent to speak God's words, to teach them to their children in every aspect of their daily life. They were to display them on the doors so that they continued to read them and live them.
- Joshua perpetuated the command of God by reminding the children of Israel to continue in God's word so that they would be successful and prosperous. They were not to turn from it but to observe it, i.e. be doers of it. **Joshua 1.7-8**
- Solomon gave his son strict instruction to continue in the words of God and to pay attention to them - **Proverbs 4.20-23**. The issues of life proceed from the heart, the godly man/woman needs God's word to guard their heart.
“Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.” vs23 (Amp)

- Even Jesus told us to stay in His word so that all we need would be provided - **John 15.7**.
“If you live in Me [*abide vitally united to Me*] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.” (Amp)
- We must continue in the the things we have learned from the Word of God. In **2 Timothy 3.14-17** the apostle Paul wrote some instruction to a young man who was a trainee minister of his
 - He tells him “*continue in the things which you have learned..*”
 - He had been brought up on the Word and must continue in it – it would lead him, guide him, instruct him, train him for life and service.

2. God's Word Is Eternal

- He will not change one word that He has spoken from His mouth (**Psalm 89.34**). Men can offer their thoughts, opinions, diagnoses; governments can legislate and pass laws but that doesn't alter God's Word. It is eternal, it has stood the test of time and will continue to stand.
- Jesus said that His Word would endure (**Matthew 24.35**) and Peter echoed that in his letter (**1 Peter 1.22-25**). God's Word endures, even when the heavens and the earth have passed away it lives, abides and lasts forever.
- God's Eternal word is forever settled in heaven (**Psalm 119.89**) that means regardless of whether we believe it or not, it is true, established and not one letter will fail of God's word (**Matthew 5.18**). The truth of the matter is that men change, feelings change, circumstances change but God's Word remains.

3. God's Word is Truth

- The entirety (all) of God's Word is truth. The Bible declares that all of the Word of God is true in it's entirety, from Genesis to Revelation (**Psalm 119.160**).
- In His prayer to the Father, Jesus declared that God's Word is truth. **John 17.17**
- God cannot lie, He cannot break His word, He has given us His promise and His oath (**Romans 3.1-4, Hebrews 6.18**)
God cannot lie – men, feelings, circumstances can. The truth changes facts (telling it as it is, is stating facts).
- The Bible tells us that God has magnified His Word above His own name (**Psalm 138.2**). God has bound Himself to His covenant, ie His Word. He cannot work outside of His Word. This is one reason why some people don't see the results they might want – eg maybe asking God to do something that He has already said is done.

4. God's Word Must Be Our Primary Source of Sustenance

- Just like a baby needs to be fed so it can grow. We need to feed on the word of God so we can grow and mature.
 - *'pure milk of the word'* - **1 Peter 2.2**. Babies begin on milk which provides all that they need for those first few months then they develop and feed on solid foods. Peter here tells us that like newborns we need to desire and develop the taste for the pure word so that we grow up in our walk of faith. This leads us on to..
 - *'solid food'* - Those who continue in the word of God should move from the basic principles of the word onto more weightier things. We cannot sustain a healthy walk with God by continuing to feed on milk. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and told them they ought to be on solid foods and not still being fed milk **1 Corinthians 3.2**
The writer to the Hebrews says the same - **Hebrews 5.12-14**
- Man cannot live on bread alone (**Deuteronomy 8.3**) – He needs the Word that comes forth from the mouth of God.
 - The natural man cannot live on just bread, he needs a varied and balanced diet – how much more in the things of God.
 - Everything thing the natural man needs, there is also a counterpart for the born again spirit man
- **Psalm 119.103**. The psalmist came to find out for himself that God's Word is sweeter than honey.
 - I believe from the word of God that when you feed your flesh, the spirit man lacks and eventually dies within, but when you feed the spirit man, the flesh profits from it (**1 Timothy 4.7-8**)
- Job too treasured God's Word above His natural food. **Job 23.12**

5. God's Word Must Take Priority In Our Lives

To conclude, a reminder of some of the things we have already seen.

- God's Word is true and should be desired more than gold, more than life itself. **Psalm 19.7-9**
- We must give the Word our full attention. **Proverbs 4.20-23** . It should be kept before our eyes and in our hearts - **Deuteronomy 6.6, 11.18**
- We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. **James 1.22**
- Putting God's Word into action will put our lives on a firm foundation – on the rock (**Matthew 7.24-27**)