

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM



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JESUS SAID...

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” Matthew 16:19 (NASB).

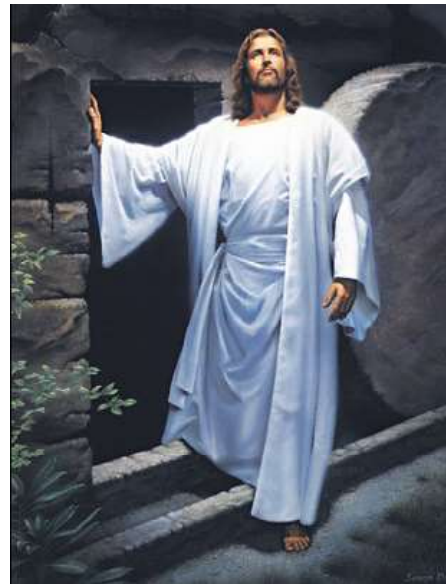
The Lord Jesus has put into the hands of all of us who believe in Him the most powerful thing imaginable - the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven! What a tremendous privilege - to be involved with the Lord in opening the door of the Kingdom of Heaven to people whose hearts are open to the Lord.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Jesus gave the worldwide preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom as the greatest sign of His coming again.

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” Matthew 24:14.

Literally, every ethnic group will hear the Gospel of the Kingdom before He returns. It is not only the Gospel of *salvation* but the Gospel of the *Kingdom*. The glorious work of our Lord Jesus on the Cross and in His Resurrection is the doorway into the Kingdom of God (John 14:6). It is what is beyond the opened door that is the all-important purpose of our salvation.



The All-Important Message

Beginning with John the Baptist, then throughout the ministry of the Lord Jesus, and continued through the ministries of the apostles, they all preached the *Gospel of the Kingdom* (see Matthew 3:1; 12:28; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:1,9,11; Luke 9:2; 10:9; 16:16; Acts 19:8).

Even after the Resurrection, the Lord appeared for over 40 days and

taught his disciples about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

The book of Acts sums it up in the description of Paul's ministry in the last two years of his life before his martyrdom:

“Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” Acts 28:31.

The message of the Kingdom of God is what people are longing to hear. It is all about the King. Who He is determines what the lives of those in His Kingdom are like. Just as in our natural world. What the government of that nation is like affects the lives of its citizens.

When Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”, the background of his thinking would have been what he knew of kings or emperors. They were known for their self-centred rule and brutality. Jesus reply was,

“My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:33-36).

The good news of the Kingdom of God is that the Kingdom is filled with the nature of the King Himself. All power and authority are His. He is the Creator of all things...

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” Colossians 1:15-17 (Rev.4:11).

...but, above all, He is LOVE (1 John 4:8). This automatically outworks in peace and joy filling the Kingdom. This is the Gospel (“good news”) of the Kingdom. It is not a natural kingdom. We can't set it up on earth like other kingdoms thinking it will be good with Christians heading it up. No, it is the Kingdom of Heaven expressed on earth. In other words, It is the Kingship of Christ in the lives of those who have received Jesus as their Saviour and Lord (King). We are already in the Kingdom!

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves” Colossians 1:13 (Mark 4:10-11).

What are the Keys of the Kingdom?

What has the Lord put in our hands? As believers in Christ, we hold the precious keys which open the door to the Kingdom of God for multitudes of people. To know what they are we only have to look at Jesus. He used them while He walked in our midst and ministered to the people.

LOVE

“For God so [greatly] loved and dearly prized the world, that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life” John 3:16 (AMP).

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love...Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” John 15:9-13.

The Father’s love for us was so great He gave His Son for us, and the Lord Jesus ministered to people from the depth of His heart of love, ultimately suffering and giving His Life for us. So now we too, as His followers, operate from love for those who do not know the Lord. Dwelling within our hearts is the Holy Spirit. With Him are all the fruit of the Spirit which are now part of our nature as a new creation in Christ (1 Cor.5:17; Gal.5:22-23). Love is now the rule of our lives. It is the heart of the Kingdom.

“...God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” Romans 5:5.

This love overflows in empathy and desire to see the Lord meet the needs of people.

“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else...” 1 Thessalonians 3:12.

COMPASSION

Compassion is love ready for action. The compassion of Jesus was always followed by meeting the needs of the people (Mark 8:1-9) .

“Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow...When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her and said to her, “Do not go on weeping.” And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise!” And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother. Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God...” Luke 7:12-16 (NASB)

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were

*harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd...”
Matthew 9:35-37.*

AUTHORITY

“Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness” Matthew 10:1

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” Matthew 28:17-20.

Absolute authority belongs the Lord. As a believer and follower of the Lord Jesus, we have been given authority to pray and act in His Name - as His representatives (John 14:13-16).

POWER

Power is authority in action.

“A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years...after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. For she had been saying to herself, ‘If I just touch His garments, I will get well.’ And immediately...she was healed of her disease. And immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that power from Him had gone out, turned around in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched My garments?’ ... And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be cured of your disease’” Mark 5:25-34 (NASB).

As believers in the Lord Jesus, we have received the amazing gift of power - the HOLY SPIRIT. We are witnesses of the resurrected Lord, demonstrating that He is alive and doing the same things He did when he walked on earth (Acts 5:32).

“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth” Acts 1:8 (NASB).

Paul described the power operating in his ministry in his letter to the Thessalonians...

“...because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. ...” 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

Miracles are the Evidence of Who Jesus Is...

“Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves” John 14:11 (John 10:37-38).

...and that the Kingdom of God has come

“But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” Matthew 12:28 (Luke 17:20-21).

Jesus declared...

“The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water” John 7:38 (NASB).

LOVE, COMPASSION, AUTHORITY, and POWER combined, operated in the early Christians lives by the Holy Spirit indwelling them, and they ‘turned the world upside down’ (Acts 17:6 KJV).

We all, as believers today, have also been given the gift and empowering of the Holy Spirit. We, too, have been given the Keys of the Kingdom! We, too, are called to preach the Kingdom of God and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ. As we, the Body of Christ, step out in the supernatural ministry of the Lord, we, too, will turn this very needy world we live in, upside down! Jesus said...

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” John 14:12 (Mark 16:17-18).

As we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, our hearts in unity with the Lord, we can say with Him - we can do nothing by ourselves; we can do only what we see the Father doing.

“Jesus gave them this answer: ‘Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.’” John 5:19.

The King is Coming!



When the Lord Jesus returns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, He will gather together all the believers and hand the Kingdom over to His Father -- that is, all of those who are redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, who are new creations in Christ, and Citizens of Heaven (Revelation 17:14; 1 Cor. 15:24).