

Matthew 16:18-20 Binding and Loosing

We are attempting to finish out Matthew 16:13-20. Our focal point and focus is on verses 18, 19, and 20 for today to finish out this section. The entire section is entitled The Public Opinion of Jesus. But He had some personal things to say to the disciples here in these last three verses.

You remember Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do people say that I am," and they gave the opinion of what the people thought of who Jesus was at that time. But He asked them pointedly, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter speaking for the entire group says, "You yourself are the Christ, the son of the living God." *Christ* means *anointed*. "You are the fullness of the anointing of God in human form, the Son, the one who inherits all things from the living God." That is quite a statement to make. And we unpacked it for you to show you that it is more than just what the English words say, it is the meaning behind them.

So then we enter into a section that we call The Three Promises. We have studied two of them:

(1) In verse 18 Jesus says to Peter - after He makes this proclamation, **I also say to you that you yourself are Peter, (πέτρος, petros, a stone) and upon this rock (this πέτρα (petra), different word) I will build My church** (or more literally *My assembly* as we discussed last time we were together).

The Greek word for *church* is not found in the New Testament at all. It is always this word **ἐκκλησία** (ekklēsia) that means *an assembly of people*. The word *church* was used around the fourth century after Christ when people began to build church buildings and form church organizations. What we call *church* today is not in the Scriptures. It is the assembly of believers and we will see today in one of our texts in Matthew 18 that Jesus said, "Where two or three of you are gathered in my name I am there in the midst." Some of the best church I have ever had is when eating with somebody in a restaurant and having fellowship about the things of the Lord and eating together, not singing songs and enjoying the entertainment. Jesus is there in the midst whenever you are gathered together in His name and wherever you are gathered together in His name. That is the assembly, the assembly of believers. There is this assembly of the body of Christ throughout the world.

But it is interesting, The Promise number one: **πέτρα** (petra), "Upon this rock," **πέτρα** (petra). As we pointed out to you in many scriptures, Jesus is talking about Himself. The *stone* is Peter, **πέτρος** (petros). The *rock* or *foundation stone*, a different word **πέτρα** (petra), is Jesus Christ. "And upon this rock (meaning Himself) I will build My church. I will build My assembly." There is your first promise.

And we also took it in length where Jesus said, "I will build My assembly. I will build My church, My assembly." He did not commission us to build His

assembly for Him. He builds the assembly. And notice it is "My assembly," He says. It is not ours. He is still the head of the church. It still belongs to Him.

I said in a message that I gave over at Grace Baptist on a Sunday night, I gave a message that basically said our churches today function with the philosophy that Jesus died and was buried and rose from the dead and ascended up into heaven and left us in charge to run His church for Him. That is not true. Jesus ascended into heaven and sent His Spirit to run the assembly and to run the church. We are His servants. It is not ours. It is His. He saves those that He is going to save and draws them into the assembly.

So that is promise number one. Promise number two:

(2) **And the gates of Hades** - some of your English texts say *hell*. **And the gates of Hades will not overpower her.** Hades is not hell. Hades is the place in the lower parts of the earth. In fact, the word *Hades* means *the place of unseen spirits*. So when a person's spirit leaves their body and they do not know Christ they go into the lower parts of the earth and await their judgment. Luke chapter 16 presents to us the rich man and Lazarus and it gives you a detailed description of what it is like in Hades. There is torment there. **The gates of Hades.** *Hades* is the Greek word to the Hebrew word *Sheol* that means *grave* or *death*. **The gates of Hades will not overpower her.** In other words, death is not going to hold those who belong to the assembly, those who belong to Christ. Death will not prevail against the church or the assembly.

Promise number three for today.

And I will give to you (verse 19) **I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.** Keys are a Hebrew symbol of authority. Keys lock and unlock things. So it has to do with entrance and prohibiting people from entering in.

In Revelation 1:18 it tells us that Jesus said, **I am he who lives, and became dead; and, behold, I am living for evermore, Amen; and I have the keys of hell** (literally *Hades*) **and I have the keys of death.** Jesus has the keys. He has the authority to lock people up in Hades or free them. The gates of Hades will not hold His people because Jesus will unlock those gates.

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Many people have wondered over the years, what is the kingdom of heaven? Are we talking about up in heaven? Are we talking about here on the earth? What is the kingdom of heaven? The kingdom of heaven is where God rules over His people. It is not a geographical area. Wherever God's people are and He rules over them, that is His kingdom. His kingdom right now is made up of people not geographical areas.

So right now the kingdom of heaven is here because Christ is here. But it tells us in Revelation 11:15 that in the future, in the end of the age that the kingdom of heaven will be around the whole world, because Christ will have come and He will set up His rule on the earth

and His kingdom will be the whole world. But right now the kingdom of heaven is over His people.

That is why Paul emphasized in the book of Colossians that we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We get in turmoil over our citizenship here on the earth and how our country and how the world is just not working very well right now. Well we are not citizens here. We are citizens of the kingdom of heaven and we are under His rule.

So, **I will give to you the keys.** He says, **I will give to you** (group). **I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.** Now He tells us what the keys will open and close. What keys are these going to open and close. **And whatever you should bind upon the earth will have been bound in Heaven. And whatever you should loose upon the earth will have been loosed in Heaven.** Notice I translated those verb tenses: *will have been*. Something in the future, that is what the perfect tense denotes. Something will happen in the future that has already been decided in the past. Something that is presently true, that was established in the past, that is the perfect tense. So it will have already been happening, already happened, loosing and binding. The keys have to do with loosing and binding.

Now I do not know, maybe some of you might have heard over the years of the teaching and doctrine of binding and loosing. Christians teach it. Christians have practiced it and they teach it right out of this verse. The doctrine teaches that every time Satan attacks the believer, the believer must claim the promises of God over him or her and their life, and literally command Satan to be bound and claim his or her own loosing in Christ, freedom in Christ.

It goes something like this, speaking to Satan, "I bind you in the name of Jesus and I claim my freedom in Christ." Every time Satan attacks supposedly you are supposed to chant that formula in some way, shape, or form, to bind Satan from harassing you and attacking you and then claim your own loosing from his attack. Binding and loosing and it is taken from Matthew 16:19.

Well, we want to explore what the words *binding* and *loosing* mean and to what they apply. This is Biblical and Scriptural what their meanings are.

In Jewish social life, social life not Biblical life, *binding and loosing* were technical legal terms. *Binding* means *to forbid something to be done*. To *loose* is *to permit something to be released or to be undone*. So if you were forming legislation, it would be making the rules and regulations that people are bound to the law, just like today, people are bound to the law. And to get rid of that law is to release the people from that law. Binding and loosing. Because to *bind* the means *to tie up, chain up, or to tie something to something else, tie up, to bind*. And to *loose* basically means *to untie, to unloose something, to set them free*. So we see that binding and loosing is the authority to legislate and to make rules. It is a technical legal term.

In the New Testament these two words mean something special when they are used together, binding and loosing. But I want to take each one of them separately so that we can understand their spiritual meaning in the Scriptures.

So we take binding. Again *to tie, to chain up, bind someone to something*. To bind is *to forbid something to be done*. Here used with keys - remember "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven" - it means to forbid something from entering. Something is locked up. Something is bound. You cannot get in.

Loosing means to *permit, or release, or loose something*. So when dealing with keys, it is unlocking, it is loosing the gates and allowing people and permitting people to come in.

He is telling Peter and the rest of the disciples, "I'm giving you the keys, I'm giving you the authority to bind and to loose," but in reference to what?

Well one of these words - and this is fascinating, it has been one of my favorites over the years - the word for binding and loosing in I John 3:4-8. Listen to this. And I am going to get technical because of how important that is to understand this text because it is confusing to a lot of people unless you understand the verb forms that are here.

I John 3:4, **Everyone practicing the sin principle...**

Notice I said *practicing sin*.

...is violating the law: and sin is violating the law.

Being a lawless person, without God's law over your life.

Verses 5 and 6, **And you know that He (that is Christ) was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. ⁶ Everyone abiding, (present participle) continuously abiding in Him does not sin...**

"Does not sin," how do you like that one? Does not practice sin.

...but everyone who is sinning has not seen Him, neither do they know Him.

Now all of these words for *sin* have to do with continuous action nonstop. We are talking about an act of committing a sin; we are talking about a lifestyle of sinning and being out from underneath God's rule.

Verses 7 and 8, **Little children, let no man deceive you (or lead you astray) the one practicing righteousness is righteous, even as Christ is righteous. The one practicing sin is of the devil; because the devil is sinning from the beginning.**

I like that. You know who the sinner is? Satan. Satan is the sinner. He is sinning all the time.

But it is interesting what Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:2-3, **In time past we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working (or energizing) in the children of the disobedience.** Do you know that every human being is being energized by a spirit, either Christ or Satan?

Verse 3, **Among whom also we all had our manner of life in times past in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and we were by nature the children of wrath, even as the others.**

We were the children deserving of God's wrath just like everyone else. We were living fulfilling the desires of our flesh and of our mind because the prince and power of the air energized us, energized those desires, and provided from the world for the fulfillment of those desires. But when we were saved, when Christ came in, we no longer serve those desires even though those desires are still there, we have been delivered from Satan.

Satan the energizer of these desires has been removed and the Spirit of Christ is there.

That is why we keep telling you about the birth of Christ, experiencing a spiritual birth.

The Spirit of Christ must come in and Satan has to be booted. Satan can still harass in the flesh, but he is no longer in the control room; the Spirit of Christ is there.

Now listen to I John 3 again: **He that practices sin is of the devil; for the devil is sinning from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, in order that He might destroy the works of the devil.** Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. That word *destroy* is our word *loose*. He might unbind and unloose a person's life from being bound and tied to Satan and living under Satan's influence to fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind. What a beautiful word that describes salvation. Salvation is not religious, it is spiritual. Literally the spirit of Christ comes in and unbinds Satan's control over a person's life and binds us to the Spirit of God. That is what the text is saying.

And everyone who has born of God doth not practice sin; for God's seed is abiding in him... See there is where the spiritual birth comes. God's seed has been born in me. Therefore I cannot practice sin.

...and he is not able to practice sin, because he has been born from out of God.

So the verb tenses show that continual practice of sin has to do with the person who is not saved, who has to continually serve and feed the fleshly desires all of the time, cannot stop. That person can honestly say, "The devil made me do it."

But when Christ comes in, Satan who is the sinner, who is giving people the energy to fulfill the desires of the flesh and mind, he is ousted, and the Holy Spirit comes to live within a person. Now the Bible says that a person filled with the Holy Spirit can commit an act of sin, but they cannot continue in sin. I have said this before in the past as a challenge to the group, that if you want to go out and sin just go ahead and do it. I told the church group that one time and people were shocked, "You are not supposed to tell people to go out and sin!" Because if you are born of the Spirit of God you can try. You might do it and get it get away with it once, but you will be convicted. You will feel guilty. The Holy Spirit will bring you back because you cannot practice sin and have the Holy Spirit living inside you. You can commit an act of sin because the flesh continues. It is sin, but it is not in control over me anymore, Christ is.

In fact back in I John chapter 2 that is what John said. **I am writing this letter to you, little children, in order that you should not sin. But if anybody should sin...**

And in the Greek, it indicates *an act of sin*, not a practice but an act of sin.

...if anybody should sin, we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous one. We can come to the Father and seek forgiveness and confess our sins because of Christ. He will be there to convict us of those sins.

So it is interesting that the salvation process is called *loosing, unbinding, untying* as a means. So we see that this word does not have anything to do with spiritual warfare per se, but it has to do with salvation. But it also has to do with how believers function together.

Back in our text in Matthew 16:19 we have the two words binding and loosing used together. If we turn ahead a couple of chapters to Matthew 18:15-20, we will see the spiritual meaning when they are used together.

Reading in Matthew 18:15-16, **Moreover if your brother should sin against you...** These [verses] are to Christians. **If your brother in the Lord should sin against you go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: and if he should hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he should not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.** That is a law taken from out of Deuteronomy 19:15. So if you should sin against me and I go to you and tell you, "You have sinned against me," and you say, "No, I didn't. I deny the whole thing, get away from me. Or even if I did sin against you, I am not interested in repenting at all." Then you go and bring two others because the scripture says everything is to be established by two or three witnesses. And some people think you take two or three people with you in order to stick up for you and tell the guy he has to repent. No, these two or three witnesses are there to listen to both sides and establish what the truth is.

Verse 17

And if he is found out that he has sinned, and he will not hear them then tell it to the assembly. And if he should fail to listen to the assembly, let him be to you as a heathen man (that is *unsaved*) **and a publican** (that is *a tax collector*). In other words let him be to you as an unsaved person.

Verse 18

Truly I say unto you, "Whatever you shall bind upon earth shall have been bound in heaven: and whatever you should loose upon earth shall have been loosed in heaven." So He is telling you, if you bind this person to his sins and send him on his way, he is bound to that sin, he is not forgiven. But if he repents and you forgive him and you loose him from his sins then he has been loosed. That is authority that has been given within the church or the assembly.

Verse 19

Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. Another verse that has been misused. If two of you on earth should agree. The word *agree* is **σύν** (sŭn) + **φωνή** (phōnē). We get our word *symphony* from it. It does not mean *agreement*; it means we are playing the same song. You might have a different instrument, a different part. You see what is happening here? Sin divides people. Get the sin problem solved so that you can be united and be in symphony with one another, you see. If you are not in symphony with one another and you

have sinned against each other, whatever you ask is not going to be answered. Period. It is because of sin. So you come together and get the sin problem taken care of and then you will be in symphony.

Verses 19-20

If two of you should agree (or be in symphony) upon the earth as touching anything, that they should ask it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together into My name, there am I in the midst. If there is two or three of you that have gathered together Christ is there in His fullness in the midst of those two or three people. That is the assembly. That is the church. There could be two people. There could be 20. There could be 200. There could be 2000. It is the assembly of the church.

Back to our text in Matthew 16. So we see that binding and loosing has to do with sin. The church or assembly has the authority to proclaim to everyone who repents of their sin that they will be loosed and forgiven for their sins. But if anyone refuses to repent of their sins the church has the authority to tell them you will be bound to your sins; you will not be forgiven for your sins. That is pretty authoritative. But notice it is because of the verb tenses: **Whatever you should bind upon the earth will have been bound in heaven, whatever you should loose upon the earth will have been loosed in heaven.** These perfect tense verbs. Again, the perfect tense means it is something that is true today based upon a past action.

This is a future tense, a future perfect: something that will happen in the future based upon a past action. This is something that has been established and determined in heaven ahead of time. The church brings the message. You want to be forgiven for your sins then repent before God and you will be loosed from your sins, you will be loosed by Christ. But if you refuse to repent - you just want to play the religious role - if you refuse to repent the church has the authority to say, "You are bound to your sins and you will not be forgiven for your sins."

Now I have authority to stand before you this morning to tell you this not because I am in the ministry, or not because I am a pastor; but because God has determined it and has declared this from heaven. I am only the messenger. It is true for all of us. Binding and loosing has to do with sin and confession of sin brings the loosing. The refusal to repent brings the binding. It is not spiritual warfare. It is heavenly legislation that is already in effect as you and I sit this morning.

Then lastly verse 20, The Command to them. **Then He gave charge to His disciples in order that they should tell no one that He Himself is Jesus the Christ.** Two things:

(1) Notice what He told them not to tell people. Do not tell people that I am Jesus the Christ, not Jesus Christ. I told you before Jesus Christ is not His name, first and last name. His name is Jesus. His title is The Christ. And it was not until later on in the in the first century that they dropped the *the* and called Him Jesus Christ. But Christ is not His last name, Christ is His title. *Christ* means *anointed*. It is the Greek form of the word Messiah in Hebrew. Do not tell anyone that I am Jesus the anointing of God.

(2) It brings me to the second thing. Why would He tell them not to tell people? You will see this a couple times through the Scriptures, Jesus telling the disciples, "Don't tell anybody what happened. Don't tell anybody who I am." Stop for a moment and take notice that the Lord was not interested in any human activities that are going to honor Him. He is not interested in parades. He is not interested in special performances. He is not interested in anything human or worldly that would crown Him as King. He came with a mission and He was not going to let anything interfere with that mission. Can you see the crowds gathered around Him and clamoring like they did when He walked into Jerusalem, hailing Him as the Messiah, not knowing that by the end of the week He is going to hanging on a cross and they would all scatter. And they would say, "This is not what we asked for."

I am thinking of our own ways in which we celebrate and honor the birth of Christ, and the crucifixion of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ, all in worldly terms and celebrations. Trying to glorify Him in a worldly sense with human means. When in reality it is the preaching of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and Him crucified and all that it implies on the cross. So He was not finished with His mission. So He told them do not tell anybody who I am. You would think by now they would just be going, "Oh! We got to get out there and tell people this. This is revelation." But He says, "No, don't tell anybody. Let it be."

Next week we begin a new section, believe it or not. Matthew chapter 16 has more verses than verses 13-20, I thought I would let you know that. Alright, let's close with prayer.