

Church Authority (149)

Read = Matthew 16 v 18-20

Intro - Jesus in Caesarea Philippi with His disciples asks his disciples some questions.

Who do men say I the Son of man am?

Who do you say that I am?

Christianity is a revealed religion

Who is the Foundation of the Church?

Jesus Christ

Remember these things men may say many different things about who Jesus is they're all hot air the important thing is, who do you say that He is, and is what you say in line with the Bible/God's Word. Because if not you are not a Christian, true saving faith is trusting in the real Jesus that is revealed in God's inspired Word and this is the only Jesus that exists and if your trust is not in Him you are just

believing a myth, a myth that you have made up in your own mind/imagination a false Jesus that is actually an idol constructed by your own fantastical thinking.

The true Jesus is the foundation of the church and the whole church is built upon faith/trust in Him.

I want to give you just two points this morning. One that we covered a little bit of last week in verse 18, and the second point from verse 19.

1. Spiritual War the Fact v 18

2. Authority/Governance v 19

1.Spiritual War the Fact v 18

Under this I want you to notice 2 things from this verse.

1. The Fact that there are gates of hell !

Strong powers indeed the strongest powers of hell, and the greatest authorities of hell. Ancient city

gates were the places of authority and the strong points of the city. I want you to always remember that there are the powers and authorities of hell, Jesus says so. In some churches they no longer believe this anymore but think that in the now there is no more spiritual evil and in doing so go on blindly duped by the very powers of hell.

2. They are fighting against the church. They are attempting to prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ. How do you think this manifests itself in reality? the powers of hell attacking the church today are revealed in very ordinary things that we hear and see and take for granted. This spiritual war is not usually revealed in dramatic supernatural events and encounters.

But we see this battle primarily going on through the Governments, Presidents and rulers of nation in this world who malign, make fun of, and mock/scorn and attack the church and cause of Christ. This is not just the sinful human nature let loose we see this from the Bible.

We know from Eph 6v12, among other passages, that there are ranks of evil powers or powers of hell in this world/angels cast out of Heaven with Satan.

Principalities, Powers, Rulers of the Darkness of this world, and wicked Spirits in Heavenly or High Places. These are different authorities or ranks in the powers of Hell, and they usually they do not work in a blatant, physical obvious way, drawing attention to themselves, but in a subtle way so as not to be seen or known. They are as it were the powers behind the throne.

We get a sneak peek at this in Daniel 10 to give one example, when Daniel in Persia was praying and fasting for three full weeks (v 2) and then after the three weeks a powerful angel appears before Daniel from God and tells Daniel in v 12-13 not be afraid and that his prayer was heard by God in Heaven and the angel had been dispatched to give answer, but *'The Prince of the Kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but low Michael the first of the chief Princes came to help me and I remained there with the Kings of Persia.'*

Now let's be clear about this if God sent an angel from Heaven, a Spiritual being of great power that caused Daniel to be sore afraid when he saw it, and God had sent it on the first day Daniel prayed but it did not arrive because it was being withstood/blocked/barred/held up by the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia, make no mistake the Prince being referred to is no man, but according to the language of the passage and Eph 6 it is referring to a spiritual Prince or one of the fallen angels that is behind the ruler or Kingdom of Persia.

Cause let us be honest the king of Persia would not even see much less be able to hold up or withstand an invisible spirit being sent from God, nor would Michael the first rank/most powerful angel in Heaven need to come as backup to help the angel get through to Daniel to bring the answer to his prayer.

There are Principalities, Powers, Rulers of the Darkness of this world, and wicked Spirits in high places working behind the rulers, governments, evil individuals, and gross sinners in this world, and it is through them the rulers and governments that the

powers of hell attack and attempt to prevail against the church. Attacks upon Local churches made up of Christians!

I tell you this so as you can see the reality of the gates of hell attacking the church today and are not just looking for supernatural and dramatic manifestations of the powers of darkness but see that they really do attack the church in the same Biblical way as they always did.

And also so that you will not be ignorant as many are in many churches who do not believe any of these things that are clearly taught in the Bible.

We note that the powers of hell cannot win because Jesus says they cannot prevail against it.

So no matter what happens to the churches in any particular country or region (which may die and close) in the big picture the true Church of Jesus Christ will always exist in this world and can never be eliminated, not by Communism, Atheism Islam nor any other Ishim or evil form of government.

2. Authority/Governance v 19

This verse is about the government of the Church or the authority given by Christ for the rule of His Church. We see here Christ giving keys to Peter/the Apostles/the rulers of the Church and talking about binding and loosing. Note it says, 'whatsoever is bound on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever shall be bound in heaven shall be bound on earth.' So what we have here is a Governing authority to be delegated.

The giving of the keys is obviously a metaphor or a symbolic thing as there is no physical key to the Kingdom, but keys are for opening a door or locking a door the person or authority who has the keys is a person who can open and close the door to men and women. And we also see binding and loosing, which means shutting and opening, a similar metaphor in fact 'bind' means fasten, tie, for example with a pair of shackles, and loosing means break, loosed, free, dissolve from the binding.

So there is to authority in the church to open and close the Kingdom (In other words to say who's a Christian and who is not.) and authority to discipline within the church to remove/bind and restore/loose.

MH says, *"The other part of this charter is to settle the order and government of this church v 19. When a city or society is incorporated officers are appointed and empowered to act for the common good. A city without Government is in chaos."*

The keys are not given to Peter alone as the Roman Catholic church says, that he is the only authority or his descendants the popes (Which is also wrong because the popes are not descended from Peter and this is proven by the family trees and history.). As I said last week it is all the apostles the Lord is talking to and answering questions and it is Peter who answers for them all, thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God.

MH puts it very clearly in saying, *"This is not to be understood of any peculiar power that Peter was invested with as if he were sole doorkeeper of the Kingdom of Heaven... No, this invests all the apostles*

and they're successors with a ministerial power to guide and govern the church of Christ as it exists in particular congregations of churches, according to the rulers of the Gospel."

It is interesting to note here that the Lord Jesus speaks to the apostles in the future tense verb 'I will give you the keys' in the future I am going to. This means that after Christ's resurrection He gave those gifts to men Eph 4 v 8.

1. See in this verse that the Lord Jesus is going to delegate authority for the Governance of His church to the rulers/apostles and elders. They have the keys to open and shut the kingdom to people and the authority to bind and loose, to discipline and to restore. The church is not a free for all where every man does that which is right in his own eyes and there are no consequences nor where everyone is an authority/loose cannon but the Lord Jesus commands and wants His church to be governed. And the church is governed when the true Biblical officers elders/deacons are implemented and when they try to

shepherd the church by the Gospel, by the Word of God.

2. Bound in Heaven, loosed in Heaven, this section has led many church governors, synods, counsels, and Presbyteries to think that whatever decisions they make in areas of discipline are automatically ratified in Heaven. This is wrong the authority given to the Church to shepherd and discipline its members is not unconditional.

Heaven does not sanction churches that make sinful decisions or bias decision. For example churches that decide to allow:

-gay ministers and make that ruling in there governing body:

-women minsters

-accepting those living in sin as members

-church courts (not that any such thing exists in the Bible) that make bias decisions against people just selecting the evidence that they want for the sake of

church politics. Some churches think they can discipline people who are innocent because it is convenient and less hassle to do so.

Christians need to learn and church governing bodies need to learn that if you wrongfully punish or discipline an innocent man or woman for convenience sake Heaven does not sanction your sinful judgement!

Heaven does not automatically ratify foolish unbiblical sinful church decisions because Heaven does not sanction sin, indeed there is not sin in Heaven and there will be many church leaders in the day of judgment who will be caught on in bearing false witness against fellow believers in church courts for their own benefit.

The puritan says it this way, *"Not that ~Christ hath hereby obliged himself to confirm all church censures, right or wrong; but such as are duly past according to the Word... The key turning the right way, such are sealed in Heaven by the Word of the Gospel."* (p233)

Keys of

- Doctrine
- Discipline
- Restoration

Conclusion and summary

1. Spiritual War the Fact v 18

- A. There are powers of hell today.
- B. They attempt to prevail against the church today.

2. Authority/Governance v 19

The Lord delegates authority to the rulers of His church that the Church may be governed correctly and Biblically.

The Church and a church by Biblical practice can open and close the door of the Kingdom, can invite

people to Christ through the Gospel for He is the entrance to the Kingdom and can say to a person, you are not a Christian, if they do not believe in Christ. They can do this if they go by the Scriptures then the opening and closing is correct.

The Church can also discipline/shepherd those within it, bind and loose, remove from and restore to fellowship.

But this is not unconditional and is only ratified in Heaven if the Scriptures have been followed and the keys and the binding and loosing are true because Heaven does NOT ratify sin, nor the sinful practices of church governments.

Lessons?

1. Pray, the War is Spiritual Government, countries etc

2.Churches Governing Bodies need Prayer.

Pragmatic Decisions

(Heaven does not cater to us, we cater to Heaven.)

3. Delegate authority.

Don't take it all on yourself?

Exod= Moses

Christ = Delegates to His people

4. Be under Authority?

Intercessory Prayer