

Lesson 4 – 21 November 2010.

The King Delegates Authority

Lesson Scope: [Matthew 16:13-20; 17; 18:15-20](#)

Lesson Focus.

This lesson focuses on the authority of Christ, first of all, and then on the authority delegated to the church. No single church group has a monopoly on truth, but we are each accountable to the church of our choice so long as it is worthy to be part of His body. The keys given to the church are given to Christ's church. In order for the keys to be recognized, the church group must be seeking to do God's will. If a group apostatizes, the keys are of no effect, since that group has willingly surrendered them by seeking its own way.

Christ also came to establish a New Covenant with mankind. He taught its higher standard during His earthly ministry, and He sealed it with His blood at Calvary. He also has given us His Spirit to indwell our hearts, comfort us, and guide us. Contrary to the thinking of popular Christianity, God's people can live according to His Word. His grace and power are sufficient.

Jesus continued His earthy ministry despite growing opposition from the Jewish leaders. He had come to fulfill the Father's will, and He continued laying the foundation of His church.

Chapter 16 shows that Jesus and His disciples separated from the crowds and went to a secluded area near Caesarea Philippi. There Jesus strengthened the disciples' understanding of who He was and why He had come. In this setting Jesus asked the vital question, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter's answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," showed that he understood the foundation on which the church would be built. Jesus then solidified their understanding of His deity by allowing Peter, James, and John to witness His transfiguration.

The Son of the living God holds the keys to the kingdom. He delegates His authority and manifests His glory unto His faithful church.

Lesson Aim: To identify principles related to Christ's authority as it is vested in the church.

Theme Verse: [Colossians 1:18](#). “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

Lesson Text.

Christ's Authority Identified

[Matthew 16:13-19](#)

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. ¹⁵He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Christ's Authority Confirmed

[Matthew 17:1-8](#)

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, ²And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. ³And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. ⁴Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. ⁵While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. ⁶And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. ⁷And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. ⁸And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

Christ's Authority Exercised

Matthew 18:15-20

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. ¹⁸Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Questions for Study

Christ's Authority Identified

1. What aspects of Jesus' authority are mentioned in these verses?
2. Why is it necessary to build upon the foundation mentioned in Matthew 16:18?
3. How does the church loose and bind as stated in Matthew 16:19?

Christ's Authority Confirmed

4. How did the presence of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration confirm Jesus' authority?
5. In recounting what he saw and heard on the mountain, what did Peter identify as being even more sure (2 Peter 1:16-21)?

Christ's Authority Exercised

6. What is the primary goal of the three-step process described in Matthew 18:15-17?
7. Compare the binding and loosing in Matthew 18:18 with that in Matthew 16:19.

Analyzing the Passage

In Matthew 16:18, the name Peter is translated from the Greek Petrus, meaning "a piece of rock," whereas the phrase "this rock" comes from the Greek petra, meaning "the essential rock." My church (Matthew 16:18)

signifies Christ's ownership (through purchase) of the church. Hell here signifies the grave. The church is a living organism, and death cannot overcome it.

The role of a scribe is the focus on Matthew 16:19. Ezra, called "a ready scribe" in Scripture, was to set magistrates and judges and teach the laws of God. Likewise, Peter's declaration is evidence that he also qualified as a scribe, instructed in the kingdom of heaven. He understood the laws, principles, and methods of this kingdom. The church is not only to bar the gate of entrance for those who are unworthy, but she is also to use the keys to interpret divine will and erect the moral standard for the world. Finally she is to use the keys to minister to the faithful and keep the flock safe.

Matthew 18 lists a number of offenses that a child of God may experience. The text selected for the lesson gives direction on how to respond when wronged by another member of the church. We dare not be passive regarding sin. Rather, we must address it in a positive manner that brings the offender back into the fold.

Principles and Applications

Christ's Authority Identified

1. The authority of God the Father and the Son are one (Matthew 16:16). Peter's confession acknowledged Jesus' deity. The unbelieving Jews well understood that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God gave Him equal authority with the Father (John 10:33-36). We cannot fully understand the Trinity, but the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in attributes, purpose, and authority.

2. Man's understanding of the divinity and authority of Christ is spiritual-discerned (Matthew 16:17). The physical realities around us in creation point toward God, but they are limited in what they can communicate about Him. To know God, we need His written revelation and His Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds to its truth.

3. Building on Christ, the foundation, is essential to the church's authority and victory. (Matthew 16:18). A building receives stability and strength from its foundation. Likewise, the church is stable and strong only as she rests on her proper foundation, the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Both the doctrine and the practice of the church must be grounded on that foundation.

4. Christ delegated His authority to the church (Matthew 16:19). Christ

built His church to continue His ministry on earth. He started with a small group of twelve average men, expanding it first to include the Jews and then also the Gentiles. The church has authority to teach the Word and to regulate its practice for the benefit of believers. This authority is quite different from the authority that God has invested in civil government and its leaders.

5. The church is commissioned to make practical applications to Bible principles (Matthew 16:19). She must set standards to ensure that those who would join her are truly converted and willing to live a disciplined life. The church gives direction to the practice of the ordinances, to applications of Bible principles, and so forth for the uniformity, order, and protection of her people. She must also encourage spiritual vitality and guard against dead formalism.

Christ's Authority Confirmed

6. Christ's coming introduced a new order (Matthew 17:3-5). Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus at the Transfiguration. The two represented the Old Covenant, whereas the voice from heaven clearly identified Jesus and suggested a change with the words, "Hear ye him." Jesus came, bringing the good news of salvation effected through His death and resurrection. Now we have direct access to the throne of grace, and He is offering eternal life to whosoever will repent and believe.

7. The church can function with the authority of Christ only as she is obedient to His voice (Matthew 17:5). Christ remains both the head and the foundation of the church. To ignore His voice is to move away from knowledge, strength, and authority. Eventually, such drift will move a group so far that it loses Christ's authority to continue as a true church. A Scriptural church group will, like the Bereans, look to the Scriptures for evidence of truth and act upon what she finds there.

Christ's Authority Exercised

8. The Church is responsible to deal with sin (Matthew 18:17). This Scripture gives clear involved clear direction to how an offense should be handled. Those involved should first attempt to work out a solution in private, then with a small group of witnesses, and then before the congregation. This keeps unity in the brotherhood, since most issues will be resolved in private. Should someone need to be expelled, the purity of the church is maintained. The church loses ground, and her testimony is marred when she fails in her responsibility to deal with sin.

9. The church experiences power- in unity (Matthew 18:19-20). Every member in the church is joined to every other member in the body of Christ. The collective membership is one with Christ. By working together, the church is able to continue God's plan on earth, to receive power to live above sin, to be pure, and to walk with God. A collective effort on the part of the membership will preserve the church for future generations.

Important Teachings

1. The authority of God the Father and the Son are one (Matthew 16:16).
2. Man's understanding of the divinity and authority of Christ is spiritually discerned (Matthew 16:17).
3. Building on Christ, the foundation, is essential to the church's authority and victory (Matthew 16:18).
4. Christ delegated His authority to the church (Matthew 16:19).
5. The church is commissioned to make practical applications to Bible principles (Matthew 16:19).
6. Christ's coming introduced a new order (Matthew 17:3-5).
7. The church can function with the authority of Christ only as she is obedient to His voice (Matthew 17:5).
8. The church is responsible to deal with sin (Matthew 18:17).
9. The church experiences power in unity (Matthew 18:19-20).

Answers to Questions

1. What aspects of Jesus' authority are mentioned in these verses?

Peter's confession identifies Jesus as the Messiah. As the only begotten Son of God, He was fully human and fully divine. He is one of three persons of the Trinity. He is eternal. Jesus has authority to delegate authority to His church for the administration of His work on earth.

2. Why is it necessary to build upon the foundation mentioned in Matthew 16:18?

It is the only sure foundation on which we can build—all others are sinking sand. We build on Christ, who is the cornerstone. During His earthly ministry, He gave a flawless example of how to live fully within the Father's will. He has revealed Himself and His will through the written Word. To build on any other foundation is to lose His power and blessing.

3. How does the church loose and bind as stated in Matthew 16:19?

The church is responsible to use the keys to bar the doors to anyone

seeking entrance without the new birth. The keys indicate authority to make practical application to the Scriptures and to set standards for the spiritual safety of church members. The keys are given to Christ's church; those groups that are not within His will no longer have the authority from Him that the keys represent.

4. How did the presence of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration confirm Jesus' authority?

Moses carried the authority of the Law, and Elias that of the Old Testament prophets. The Jewish people held these men in high regard. At the Transfiguration, they appeared as subordinates to Christ, discussing His approaching death (Luke 9:31).

5. In recounting what he saw and heard on the mountain, what did Peter identify as being even more sure (2 Peter 1:16-21)?

Peter counted the written Word of God as more reliable than visions, dreams, and special experiences. Furthermore, the Bible is available to all, not just to a select few.

6. What is the primary goal of the three-step process described in Matthew 18:15-17?

The primary goal of this process is to maintain peace and unity within the church. The process requires a personal contact before others become involved. It seeks to restore the erring one. Finally, the purity of the church comes into focus if the erring one remains obstinate and must be removed.

7. Compare the binding and loosing in Matthew 18:18 with that in Matthew 16:19.

To bind and loose was to prohibit or permit what was practiced or believed. It means drawing lines for the spiritual safety of the church. Such decisions must be based on Bible principles and made under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke the words in Matthew 16:19 to Peter. They were not meant for Peter alone, however; the same charge was addressed to all the apostles in Matthew 18:18. The Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) gives a good example of the early church at work, binding and loosing.

Summarizing the Lesson

The church's one Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation by water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride,

With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.

Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth:
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses, with ev'ry grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her wars.
She waits the consummation of peace forevermore;
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest:
And the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the Three in One,
And mystic, sweet communion with those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly. on high may dwell with Thee.
—Samuel J. Stone

Research Guide

1. Read Paul's views on the authority Christ delegated to the church (2 Corinthians 10).
2. Read Acts 15 for an example of the church using the keys Christ gave.