

## Peter is Rebuked for being a Stumbling Block

Matthew 16:19-28

Matthew 16:19-28 - *“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.”* <sup>20</sup> Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. <sup>22</sup> Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” <sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

<sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. <sup>28</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

### Background Notes

When the Lord mean when He said to Peter, *“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”*? Was He giving Peter the power and authority to forgive a person’s sins and admit them into heaven? No! **Only God can eternally forgive sins**, and He has not delegated that authority to any human individual or priest. What is the meaning of this verse?

**The “keys.”** Keys are used for opening doors. Notice that the keys are for the Kingdom of Heaven - **not** heaven. John the Baptist and then our Lord Himself had announced that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. The Kingdom of Heaven had been preached and presented to Israel. The Lord sent His disciples out with the message of the Kingdom and told them to present the offer of the Kingdom to Jews only, not to Gentiles. *“These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (Matthew 10:5-7).*

In our studies in Matthew we’ve seen that the Jews rejected their Messiah and the offer of His Kingdom. They even attributed His miracles to the power of Satan. As a result Israel would be set aside for a time – temporarily - and the Lord would build His Church. The Church would be composed of **all** believers - Jews and Gentiles together in body of Christ.

The gospel of God's grace would now go out to the whole world. On the day of Pentecost, Peter had the great privilege explaining that the gospel of God's grace was now going out to everyone. *"And whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Acts 2:21)*. Peter had the honor of "opening the door" on the day the Church was formed. In addition, Peter had the privilege of opening the door of the gospel to the Gentiles in the home of Cornelius (Acts 10). So Peter was given the keys to open the door of the gospel of God's grace that was now being presented to everyone - not just to the Jews, but to the whole world.

**The "binding" and "loosing."** *"And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (v19)*. We know that this doesn't refer to eternal forgiveness of sin, as we've already mentioned. A couple of interpretations are possible:

1. One view is that the word "authority" is in the "declarative" sense. Illustration: If you're not a Christian, I can declare with the authority of God that you are bound and on your way to a lost eternity in hell forever, because this is what God's Word teaches. I must declare you bound on the basis of God's Word (even if I don't want to). On the other hand, if you're not a Christian and you realize that you're a sinner, and you know that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins, and you repent of your sins (notice I didn't say "do penance for your sins"), and turn to Christ as your personal Savior -- then, with the authority of God's Word, I can declare you saved and loosed from the penalty of your sins.

Notice that **I** didn't save you or loose you from your sins - **God did!** But I can **declare** that if you trust Jesus as your Savior, you are loosed from the penalty of sin, on the basis of what God has written in His Word. So my authority is in a "declarative" sense.

2. The binding and loosing authority can also be interpreted is in a "disciplinary" sense. In Matthew 18, this same authority of "binding and loosing" was given to all the disciples, and it was given in the context of Church discipline. Look at Matthew 18:15-18: *"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*

The application of this authority of binding and loosing is for discipline in the local church today. Before the Lord, local church leaders must exercise discipline when sin is affecting the body of Christ. Spiritual leaders have the authority (and responsibility) to discipline, even to the point of excommunication from the local church. They also have the authority to forgive and restore a believer to church fellowship when confession of sin is made. God's authority in heaven backs decisions made by church spiritual leaders. This is "authority" in the "disciplinary" sense.

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. The Lord revealed His death and resurrection to the disciples.**

*“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” (v21).*

This is the first time in our Lord’s public ministry that He mentioned His coming death and resurrection. He certainly had implied His coming death and resurrection when He spoke of the sign of Jonah in Matthew 12, and at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, John the Baptist had announced the Lord as the sacrificial “Lamb of God,” clearly meaning His death for sin. And in His early cleansing of the temple, the Lord had said, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”* -- certainly implying His death and resurrection (John 2:19). But here in Matthew 16:21 the Lord made His first explicit statement about His coming death and resurrection.

Up to this point His message was, “The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” But once the King and His offer of the Kingdom were rejected by the nation of Israel, the Lord began to speak of His coming suffering, death and resurrection. The Lord revealed His death and resurrection to the disciples.

### **2. The Lord offered “the way of the cross” to His disciples.**

*“Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You! But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (v22-26).*

The last verse of the chapter (v28) more properly goes with the beginning of Matthew 17. At the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples were given a glimpse of the Lord’s future earthly kingdom.

Peter didn’t like the idea that the Lord was on His way to the cross (v22). He rebuked the Lord and said, *“Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”* So the Lord had to rebuke Peter. He said, *“Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”* The Lord didn’t mean that Peter was possessed by Satan. No, the Lord meant that Satan was using Peter to suggest that the Lord should depart from the will and plan of God. The Lord told Peter that he was not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men. In other words, Peter’s thinking was “the way of the world,” not “the way of the cross.”

Then Lord offered the way of the cross to His disciples. A cross means one thing: **death!** Taking up the cross means to die to self - death to self-glory and pride, and death to self-indulgence. The way of the cross is offered to all believers. It's the Galatians 2:20 principle in action: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

And here's the wonderful irony of the way of the cross: if you "die" to living for yourself, and you start living for Christ, you'll find out what living is really all about! There is true joy and wonderful, abundant life in the way of the cross. And there's eternal reward as well. On the other hand, if you selfishly use all your time and talent and money for yourself, you will be frustrated, dissatisfied and unfulfilled in this life, and you will lose your opportunity to use your life for the Lord. We have only one life to use or lose for the Lord. No cross, no crown.

If you're not Christian, you will lose your life eternally. Even if you were to gain the whole world, and become the richest person in the world, you could end up in hell forever - because you can't buy salvation for your soul. When the Lord returns in His glory, you will forfeit your soul because you will be judged by your deeds (v27). What a difference if you become a Christian and choose the way of the cross! The Lord offered "the way of the cross" to His disciples.

## Practical Application

### Watch out for worldly advice!

Worldly advice. That's the kind of advice Peter gave the Lord: *"Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!'"* (v22). Peter meant well - but he was dead wrong! Peter's advice was **worldly advice**.

Watch out for worldly advice! Even believers who mean well may give you worldly advice. Christian parents, for example, can persuade their teens not to become missionaries, or against taking a "gap year" after high school to study the Bible. Why? They give their children worldly advice, because they want them to "get ahead" and have a "successful career."

How many Christian men and women make their decisions only on getting ahead and success in this world? Would you have made a few different decisions in the past if you had received some sound godly advice, instead of worldly advice? Be aware! Watch out for worldly advice!