

Power of Positive Confessions
Series: Keys to the Kingdom
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Welcome again to the North Hills Baptist Church. I'd like for us to stand and read our text this morning, and then I'm going to go into not a real lengthy discussion about what our text is saying to us, but don't hold me to that promise. It's in your bulletin.

You don't have to look in your scripture if you can't find it. But Matthew 16, 19, he says, 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. And then he confirms that promise, because in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

In Matthew 18, 18, he says, Severely I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, take Your Word today and put it into our hearts that we might understand more fully what You're saying to us through Your Word.

And Lord, if there be anyone here today in the sound of my voice that has never trusted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, we would ask that You use the words that I share with them today from Your Word, because it is truth, and change their lives for eternity. We're here on this earth for one thing if we're Your children, and that's to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost and dying world. Thank You, Father, for what You're going to do.

In Jesus' name, Amen. You can be seated. Over the years, I've read these verses of Scripture that I'm using this morning.

In fact, it's from those two Scriptures that I got the series that I preached many years ago, and have preached since, on keys to the kingdom. Keys to the kingdom. When He first gave me those verses, I said, Lord, what are the keys to the kingdom? You tell us here that You've given us the keys to the kingdom, but what are they? And over the years, I've read these verses of Scripture many times.

I've preached sermons from these two Scriptures, and the text, using them as a text. But as I was reading in my studies this past week, I began to see the truth of them and a deeper understanding of what He was saying to us. He has given me concerning whatsoever we shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

I did not understand what He was saying to us through that verse. I said, Lord, we're here in the world. What is loosening in heaven going to do for us here? And He very quickly reminded me.

He said, You're no longer of this world. You've been raised together and are seated together in heavenly places in Christ, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven, and that's where the spiritual battle is taking place. We have the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord in every situation in our lives.

There's another Scripture in Matthew 18 and 16 which I want to use just to verify about truth. It was talking about a wayfaring Christian, if you will, and going to him and speaking about being backslidden. And He says, If he doesn't hear you, then take two or three more with you, and in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

And then in Matthew 18 and 20, He says, Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. We're gathered together in Jesus' name right here today. And I guess you can tell the Lord is here with us.

And I don't say that I'm prejudiced, but I can tell you one thing that North Hills Baptist Church is absolutely the best and most loving church that I've ever had the privilege to be an associate pastor in. It is amazing. And I praise the Lord for leading us here every day of my life.

It's been great. And it's going to be even greater. 1 Corinthians 14, 29, He said, Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let others judge.

In other words, listen to what the preachers say to you, and then judge according to the Word of God. 2 Corinthians 13, 1, This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

And in 1 Timothy 5, 19, He says, Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. So if you're a student of God's Word, and you begin to study God's Word, you're going to come across things that you don't understand. I've been studying God's Word since I was knee-high to the grasshopper, I'd say, in church, in the Methodist church.

And I'm still learning things that God has in His Word. Things that I read, and I say, Lord, what are You trying to say through this? I do not understand it. And then weeks, months, maybe even years later, I'll read another verse of Scripture and bingo, there's the answer to that other one.

So study of God's Word is important. It's especially important to the young people of our day because of what's going on in our society and how our, quote, government is trying to take the Word of God and even close down churches, arresting pastors. There's been some in the United States arrested for preaching on the street corners now.

And I don't know whether you've noticed, but even in many of these towns now, they don't allow even Christians to go door to door and try to witness anymore. Used to, we could go door to door and leave a

pamphlet or something, and you can't do that anymore. So we need to understand what's going on today.

So I hope through the message today to impart to you why regular reading of the Scripture is important, as well as to lead you in learning how to pray with power through positive confessions. In addition, I hope to help you see how binding and loosing on earth also binds and loosing in heaven applies to our life. And I explain that, but I will do that further through the truth of the Scriptures.

So let me share some important Scriptures with you, especially concerning positive confessions, which is just another way of saying, speak in the truth. Learn to speak the truth. 1 Peter 5-7 says, Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.

Not just when we're going through a time of trouble. Any cares that we have, we should cast upon the Lord, because He does care for us. He cares for us deeply.

In Matthew 21-21, Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if you have faith and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. Well, boy, that was one I had a hard time dealing with. Lord, and I tried it.

Lord, move this mountain, cast it into the sea. That's not what He was really talking about. If He gives us something from His Word, we can count on it that He's going to bring it to pass.

In other words, He brings it to our prayer life that we need to pray this Word. And you can count that it's going to come to pass because of the promises from His Word concerning that. Mark 11-23, For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith will come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.

And we need to understand that more fully, what He's saying to us in our lives. Whatsoever he saith shall come to pass. Well, guess what? When I got saved, there was such a difference in my life at the Ford Motor Plant in Shreveport that I worked at that made a change in many people's lives there because after about a year I surrendered to the ministry and I went to seminary.

Well, before I graduated from seminary, I got to the point for that summer that I didn't have the money to finish school or buy my books. And I didn't know what I was going to do. And I called the company that I'd been working for who had sold out to another company in the meantime and wanted to know if I could go back to work there as an electrician.

And I worked there as a manufacturing engineer, first as a maintenance supervisor and then a manufacturing engineer. And they said, We're sorry, we just don't have an opening. If we do, we'll call you.

Well, final exams were that week, and I finished my final exam and went back to the house wondering what I was going to do for the summer and how I was going to make it through seminary. And when I got home, I had a phone call from that company. Our top electrician has had a heart attack, probably won't be back to work for several months.

How soon can you get here? He came back to work two weeks after I got there and I worked the whole summer and made enough money to pay for my next semester of schooling and my books and whatnot. God always has a plan. And we just need to listen to what He's saying to us in our lives and trust in Him.

Faith. Brother Jim preached on that last Sunday. Faith.

Jim Barnes taught us Wednesday night about focus. What we keep our focus on. I think the first process in all of this is to really establish what truth is because we need to learn to speak the truth.

We need to learn to speak the Word that never returns void, but always accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent. God tells us that in Isaiah 55, 11 that His Word will never return unto Him void. So I've learned over the years to start praying God's Word and leaving the results of it up to God.

It's okay to tell God what we want. Jesus in the garden prayed and said, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. But He paraphrased it later with, nevertheless, Father, not My will, but Your will be done.

So it's okay to tell God what's really on your heart and what you'd like to see for Him to do. But let Him make the final decisions in the trials that you're going through in your life. And I can promise you that whatever they are, whether they be financial, whether they be health issues for you individually, whatever it is, God will supply that need.

I've seen Him do the miraculous in my life concerning finances, concerning health issues. I've been diagnosed with cancer three times over 40-something years ago. I called for the elders of the church.

Had them come and pray over me. I had one surgery. When I came back out a bit, the doctor came in shaking his head and said, in all my years, 45 years of practice, I've never been wrong, but I guess I was wrong this time.

I said, no. I went and called the elders of the church and God has healed me. I've never had to have chemo.

I've never had to have radiation. And I'm still cancer free. And it's not because I'm a preacher, but it's because I really believe what God says in His Word.

We can trust His Word. John 17, verses 1-26. John is a great chapter to read.

There's a lot of promises in His Word. And I'm not going to read the whole chapter, but he goes down in verse 3 and says, this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. You know, many preachers today are preaching that, you know, just come to Jesus and everything is going to be okay.

You give your tithe to the church and you're going to have plenty of money. You pray for healing, you're going to be healed. Just have faith that it's going to be done.

Well, that contradicts what my Bible tells me. It said in the world, you're going to have tribulation. But do not fear, for I have overcome the world.

And we can say that too because of where our position is. If we've been born again, we are seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenlies, in the heavenly places, and everything, because we are in Him and He is in us, has been put under our feet. And from that perspective, we can look down here at what's going on in our life in an emergency and say, everything's going to be okay.

And it will. And let me tell you, the trials that you go through in this life, God is using in other people's lives to point them to the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Every time.

Listen for that still, small voice to speak. When you go to the grocery store shopping, listen for God to speak to you about being a witness to somebody you come across. I was at the Walmart down here one day, the neighborhood market, picking up a prescription.

There was an elderly lady that came in. She was there at the window before me and I was close enough I could hear the conversation. And

she began to cry, I don't have the money to pay for my prescription and buy groceries too.

And she turned around and left. Said, I'll come back and pick up the one that I can afford. And the Lord said, pay for her prescriptions.

Her prescriptions were over 200 and something dollars. But God spoke and said pay for them. So I did and I told them, don't tell her where it came from, just tell her it's a blessing of the Lord.

Listen for God's still, small voice to speak to you about ministry to others. He will speak in that still, small voice and if we're obedient to Him, we will be blessed, the one that's really blessed through it. I was in Conway one day after a meeting and went to the Burger King there and ate lunch.

And as I came in the door, there was an older gentleman sitting there at the door eating his lunch. And I sat down a couple of tables away and every now and then, I glanced over at him and when I started to leave out, I walked past him and the Lord said, you need to stop and minister to him. And I was in a hurry.

I had another meeting that I had to go to. And I got all the way to my truck and tears began to flow. And God said, go back and speak to him.

I went back. He had lost his wife two days before and he was beside himself. Didn't know what to do or anything else.

And I talked to him. I missed my meeting, but it was worth it because God used me in his life. He will do that for you.

Don't let that still, small voice get away from you and not hear what He's saying to you. The keys to the Kingdom, Jesus tells us here in Matthew, or John 17, verse 8. He says, I have given unto them the words which thou gavest Me, and they have received them. The keys to the Kingdom is the Word of God.

Every Word of God. This is inspired Word of God. It was breathed into the prophets of old.

And I can tell you right now that He breathed it into the preachers of today to share with you God's Word and what God is saying to them. You can trust God's Word. It will change your life for eternity.

When I went back to that battery plant that used to be Ford Motor Company for that summer to work, you would never believe what had transpired. There were Bible studies at noontime set up by people there that saw the change in my life. And they started having Bible studies at that Ford Motor Company plant.

It was a Cushnet and then Gould Automotive at that time. Couldn't believe it. The last day that I was there before I went back to seminary, they wanted me to turn in all my tools first thing that morning.

And I did. And I said, well, I'm not going to be able to work today. I need to work.

You're going to get paid. Just do whatever you need to do until quitting time. And I don't know how many times I got called over to work on a piece of machinery.

I'd go over there and didn't know what it was about. And they said, we just wanted to talk to you. Tell us what God is doing in your life.

Just God being God and using us to witness to a lost and dying world. Don't be afraid to witness when God puts seduction in your heart. Jesus goes on in verse 11 and says, Now I am no more than the world, but these are in the world.

And He says that I keep in Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me. That they may be one as We are. Do you believe that Jesus

answers His prayer? He prayed to the Father that He would keep us and make us one, not only with Him, but with each other.

I think He's done a pretty good job of that here at North Hills Baptist Church. This is the most unity church that I have ever been in in that respect. But I've been on staff now for close to 14 years.

We've had business meetings and I've never been in a business meeting that there was even a word of discontent or arguments or anything. And I tell you, I've been in some and I've pastored some that the stories were unreal. There was one here in this area that they got so bad, they were throwing handbooks at each other and the police had to be called to stop what was going on.

Thank God. North Hills Baptist Church is a great church to be a part of. And if you're out there and having problems in your church, come to this one.

But don't bring problems with you. Just leave them where they are. He goes on in verse 16 and says, "...they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through truth. Thy word is truth." That word sanctify means to set apart. To make us stand out, I guess in another word, we're set apart in this world.

Let me tell you, if you're in the Word and you're a Christian, God is going to send people across your path that are going to see that and they want to know what the hope is within you. And you can share that because you've been in the Word and all you have to do is share the Word with them and lean on that promise that whatsoever I said unto you, the Holy Spirit will give you recall to that. And that day of trial, you know, that was one of the things I used to worry about when I first got saved and felt the call to preach.

I said, man, I can't remember anything anymore. I don't know how to memorize Scripture. I don't know how these preachers do all that they do.

And the pastor that led me to the Lord, he and I got to be real good friends. And he never really pressured me about becoming a Christian. He was Baptist.

I was Methodist. But he just loved me and shared Scripture with me. And then in 1972, I believe it was, at a revival in the church, I felt led to give my life to Christ even though I'd been in the church and taught Sunday school and a whole lot of other things in the church.

But I was lost as lost could be. And I accepted Christ into my life. In fact, I got home.

Tears were in my eyes. And I called him and I said, whatever you do, don't leave. I don't know what's going on, but something is.

And I had an experience with God that changed my life for eternity. And Jesus goes on and says, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word. God wants to use us as His witnesses.

He will give us recall of what we have read in His Word. Don't worry about whether you remember it or not. I'll tell you, when you read it, God puts it in your memory bank through the Holy Spirit.

And at the time that you need it, He will bring it back to you. Whether you have the verse and the reference right, He will bring back the Word to you that is truth to speak to someone. I still know a lot of Scriptures including the references, but I can tell you at 83 pushing 84, I'm beginning to lose some of the ability to do that.

But I still have God bring it back. It may not be the Scripture reference and I have to look up some of the words in it, but He gives me the Word to speak. And the reason He says that He does that is

that they may be all one as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.

And the reason for that is that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. This is the ultimate purpose that God has for our lives and for what He's doing through our lives. And it's how we respond to the trials and tribulations that we go through in this life that the world can see and want to know why do you have that hope that you have.

And you can say it's because of Jesus Christ. Him and Him alone. He goes on in that following verse and says, The glory which Thou gavest me, past tense, I have given them, and I think that's present and future tense, that they may be one even as we are one.

I in them and Thou in me that they may be perfect in one and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me. Are we showing the love of Christ to those that we come in contact with? Because He says He loves them as He loved Christ. How much did He love Christ? He sent Him to the cross to die for us.

It shows how much He loves us. But the great thing is, after three days He raised Him from the dead and He is seated in the heavenlies and heavenly places and is alive today. And that's the reason that we can be victorious in our lives because we're seated there with Him.

He goes on and says, I have declared unto them Thy name and will declare it, that the love whereith Thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them. So, he prayed that. I believe he's answered that prayer.

I've experienced it in my life. And then Hebrews 10-12 says about Jesus, But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. And note the number of times he says in that passage in John that we're not of this world.

If we're not of this world, and even though we're in the world, in one sense, where are we? And seated in the heavenlies where He is and

we're with Him where He is. Ephesians 1-3 says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings and heavenly places in Christ. If you aren't being blessed in your life as a Christian, you need to see whether you're seated in the heavenlies or whether you've got your focus here on this world.

If your focus is in this world, you're not going to experience the heavenly blessings because you've got to be seated in the heavenlies. And that's where our position of warfare is. If your position in warfare is good, guess what? You're going to be victorious.

And I can't think of a better place to be than seated in the heavenlies where we can look down and say, Hmm, if I go this way, this is going to happen. But if I go this way, this is what God has promised will happen. And when you begin to do according to His Word, He promises in Psalm 32, 8, I will guide thee with mine eye, I will instruct thee in the way that thou should go.

He will carry us every step of the way in our Christian life. Every step of the way. So, 1 Corinthians 10, 1-13, and I'll go down to verse 11.

It's talking about the Israelite people wandering in the wilderness and the things that followed them and what they fell into. And he goes on in 1 Corinthians 10, 11 and says, Now, all of these things happen unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of this world are come. I can tell you from what I've studied in the Scriptures, the ends of this world are upon us.

Jesus is coming back, and He's coming back soon. Sooner than most people expect. And we need to get our focus right.

We need to faith His Word in our lives. Not only faith His Word in our lives, we need to speak His Word in and through our lives. Because it will do what God says it will do.

He tells us, that there is no temptation that is taken you, but such is common to man. But God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able or tried above what you are able, but with a trial or temptation, also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it.

I have preached my mother's funeral, and I have preached my brother's funeral. Those were hard things for me to do, but I had to do it because nobody else would step up and do it because they were not members of the churches up here, and I couldn't take her back to where she needed to be, nor my brother, either one. But God used it in the lives of those that came to their services.

And let me tell you, God is faithful to His Word. God does not save us to give us a life of luxury and ease. As many of the preachers today preach, according to many scriptures from God's Word, we are saved to serve, saved to proclaim Christ and Him crucified, saved to lead others to a saving knowledge of Christ, and saved to have all of our needs supernaturally supplied through obedience to His Word.

Many years back when we first moved here to Arkansas, and right after we moved to where we are living now and had to go into credit card debt to get a septic system put in and stuff like that, I didn't want to go into debt because God had led me to get out of debt, but I didn't have any choice. I quickly just prayed, God, I need to get out of this credit card debt. The interest will kill us.

Well, through some events that had happened several years before that I didn't know anything about, or well, I knew about, but I didn't expect what came out of it, but I had a, I guess you would say a second aunt or whatnot. She was my grandfather's sister. Well, she passed away, and it was seven, eight, nine years after she had passed away, and after we had moved to where we are, and there was a letter that came in the mail, and there was in that letter a check from her estate that paid off our credit cards.

I had no idea that we were even, and she left all of the nieces and nephews' money and stuff in, and later on the same thing with my father's mother, that she passed away, and three or four years later got money in the mail to check from her estate that did the same thing and paid off not bills that we had because I don't charge stuff on a credit card and pay interest on it anymore. If I can't pay for it in a month, I don't charge it. And he's been faithful to us financially to take care of everything.

In John 14, 26 we have this promise, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name. He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I must have said unto you. So don't be afraid of what you're going to say.

The Holy Spirit cannot bring to our remembrance of what God has said unto us if we do not read His Word on a regular basis. Don't worry if you don't understand it. He will give you understanding as you study in your Word.

And by now you should begin to understand that we should pray God's Word. We don't understand how just releasing God's Word into somebody's life, the truth of God's Word into somebody's life. Lord, You tell us in Your Word that by the stripes of Jesus we're healed, and I release that into whoever's name it is, life.

And I just ask You to bring Your Word to pass. I know what I would like to have You do and like to see them healed miraculously, but just bring Your Word to pass in their life. You'd be surprised at what it does.

You'd be surprised at what God does. I went to visit an ex-church member at Baptist Hospital here several years back. And the lady had brain cancer.

We wanted the elders to come and pray for her. We went up there and prayed for her and left the results up to God. She passed away a few days later.

But as soon as we prayed for her and we started out the door, the young lady that was in there with her roommate said, I'm a Christian, but I'm not a church, but I believe in the anointing of the elders. Would you pray for us? I said, I've got 13 symptoms of multiple sclerosis and I can't even get out of bed, much less do anything around my house anymore. So we went and anointed her with oil and prayed over her.

Her husband walked in the room as we were finishing up the prayer. That woman jumped up out of bed, ran and hugged his neck, ran up and down the halls with him. I've been healed.

I've been healed. She was discharged from the hospital the next day. Can I explain it? Nothing other than the Word of God.

Leave the results up to God. That's the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I don't know whether any of you recall, and I'll finish this up so we can get out of here, but Dr. Norman Vincent Peale had a book that he wrote.

In principle, he was expounding the power of positive thinking. There was a big flaw in that because it depended on us to do the positive thinking. And God says that the flesh is carnal or in enmity against God.

So anything we do in the flesh is enmity with God. So don't try to live the Christian life by your power. You can't do it.

You have to rest and trust in the Lordship of Jesus Christ to do it. And when you do, you will be blessed beyond measure. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we do thank You for what You've done in and through our lives and what You're going to continue to do through our lives. You tell us in Your Word that You shall supply all of our need according to Your riches and glory by Christ. We know that You're the promise

keeper as You promised in Isaiah 55-11 about Your Word, and as You promised in Psalm 32-8 that You will guide us with Your eye and instruct us and teach us in the way we shall go; So give us the courage and the strength to faith Your Word and obey it in our lives today even when it seems there's no possible solution. In Jesus' name, amen.