

Three Keys To Spiritual Authority

Genesis 41:38

This morning I am continuing in the series of messages on Keys to the Kingdom and how it all applies to us. This morning we will be looking at Keys to Spiritual authority. I firmly believe most people who profess to be Christians are living far below God's normal for our lives, simply because we have not learned what is ours in Christ and how to exercise the authority we have as His children.

In our day and time, one must keep any valuables they have under lock and key or thieves will break in and steal what they have. **Living the Christian Life is no different. We are constantly confronted by an enemy who has come to steal, kill and destroy.**

John 10:10 (AMP) **The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).**

The Bible teaches us that God's Word is more precious than silver and gold. Psalms 119:72 (KJV) The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. Yet with that truth, there are many who profess Christ who do not ever study God's Word or seek to apply the truth of that Word in/to their lives.

Proverbs 16:16 (KJV) How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

As such, we need to understand that there are precious truths in the Word that are also in effect under lock and key and in order to access and utilize those truths, we must be given the key and the authority to use that key.

If you have been "born again", you have been given the keys to the kingdom and you just need to learn how to access and use those keys. Let me review quickly the foundation for the studies I have been

sharing with you on Keys to the Kingdom through some basic scriptures, but first let us look at the definition of the word KINGDOM.

- 1. a country, state, or territory ruled by a king or queen. (a realm, domain, dominion, country, empire, principality,
 - a realm associated with or regarded as being under the control of a particular person or thing.

- 2. **the spiritual reign or authority of God.**

When this is viewed in the light of:

Revelation 1:6 (KJV)

⁶ And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This is repeated in:

Revelation 5:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Just in case you may think these scriptures from Revelation are only speaking of the rule of Christ at His 2nd coming, we find this same truth stated which refers us to the rule of God in the lives of the people of God.

Matthew 16:19 (KJV)

¹⁹ And 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.

Isaiah 55:11 (KJV)

¹¹ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

Psalm 22:28 (KJV)

²⁸ For the kingdom *is* the LORD'S: and he *is* the governor among the nations.

Psalm 103:19 (KJV)

¹⁹ The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and **his kingdom ruleth over all.**

Psalm 145:13 (KJV)

¹³ Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.

Luke 12:32 (KJV)

³² **Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**

Luke 17:21 (KJV)

²¹ Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you.**

Luke 22:29 (KJV)

²⁹ **And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;**

John 3:3 (KJV)

³ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Colossians 1:13 (KJV)

¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Hebrews 12:28 (KJV)

²⁸ Wherefore, **we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved**, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

Matthew 21:22 (KJV)

²² And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

John 16:24 (KJV)

²⁴ Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

James 4:3 (KJV)

³ Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

1 John 3:22 (KJV)

²² And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

So with those scriptures fresh on our mind, I want us to look at 3 Keys to spiritual authority which we can apply to our lives and we will begin by looking at the life of Joseph.

So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God ?" Genesis 41:38.

With these words came the most amazing promotion anyone can imagine. Joseph was transported from being a prisoner to the top man in the nation of Egypt, next to the Pharaoh himself. Joseph did more than climb the ladder of success. He bypassed all the rungs and went from the bottom to the top almost overnight. How did he do this? What could possibly prompt an ancient pagan monarch to recognize the spirit of God in a man whom he had never met before?

As we look at these principles from the life of Joseph, we might also need to be reminded of the importance of God given dreams. **Every person needs to understand that God does have a prescribed plan for his or her life. It is never too early to ask God to reveal his will**

for your life and I want to encourage you through the message today to follow the dream that God gives you.

Success is never automatic.

I recall someone, who is now with the Lord, saying that **talent is just another name for hard work**. Most people who succeed worked hard to attain their success.

To succeed in the Kingdom of God also requires diligence and hard work. It also requires a great deal of faith, for **success with God is not measured by the same standards the world uses**. In regards to faith, I want to give you some information which may also be helpful. I know all of you have heard of Mustard Seed Faith, but I want to give you some food for thought concerning that..

Matthew 17:20 (KJV)

²⁰ And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

All of the messages I have heard preached on this passage of Scripture focus on the size of the mustard seed as to the size of a person's faith, **but I think that is the wrong focus**. Keep in mind the scripture says "faith as a grain of mustard seed." The definition of the word "as" is: to the same degree or amount.

Since a mustard seed is an inanimate object and since faith cannot be measured, it must not be referring to size but to something else. A mustard seed is inanimate so can have no faith. But it is totally dependent upon God for everything which happens in its life as a mustard seed from beginning to end.

God has a purpose and a plan for that mustard seed and He also has a purpose and a plan for each of us, and to be honest, that plan can only develop to its proper fruition by allowing God to be in control.

First in this message, I will focus on **three very important principles/keys** that Joseph employed in his life that caused his eventual rise to prominence and authority. These principles are taught over and over again throughout the Bible and apply to us today.

1. The first key or principle is that of Spiritual Covering – Learning to live a life of submission

One of the first things we learn of Joseph in Sunday School is about his coat of many colors. Most of us go no further than the fact that this was a gift from his father and it was because he was special to his father. But I think there is a real spiritual significance of his splendid coat of many colors that is applicable to our lives. Note that the coat of many colors was a gift from his father and as such, it is symbolic of the type of the covering that we receive from our heavenly Father when we receive the gift of his Son. Jesus covers us in his righteousness lifting us from sinship to sonship. **Our identities change as a result of His covering.**

The idea of “covering” is found throughout the Bible. **“Covering” symbolizes dependence through submission and without it we are very vulnerable to Satan and his attacks against us.**

The book of Ruth is sometimes referred to as “the romance of redemption.” There is an incident where Ruth slips into the barn and lays at the feet of the man who would one day be her husband. The man’s name was Boaz and during the barley harvest, which demanded his full attention, he slept in the barn. Very quietly Ruth sneaked into the barn lay down at his feet. Listen to what the Bible says about this event:

Ruth 3:1-11 (KJV)

¹ Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?

² And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor.

³ Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the

man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

⁴ And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

⁵ And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

⁶ And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.

⁷ And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

⁸ And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

⁹ And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman.

¹⁰ And he said, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter: *for* thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

¹¹ And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman.

Imagine Boaz's surprise waking up in the middle of the night and finding a beautiful woman lying at his feet! At first glance some might think of Ruth as being a seductress but that was not the case.

By asking Boaz to cover her with his garment Ruth was asking him to marry her. Ruth's former husband had died and afterward Ruth moved to Israel with her mother in law, Naomi. It was the custom in Israel for a near kinsman to marry a widow in order to preserve the family name and inheritance. Ruth, who had no right to ask for marriage since she was a foreigner, took a great step of faith when she lay at the feet of Boaz. Boaz could have accused her of immorality and made things very difficult for her. Instead, in a spirit of love so similar to that of our Lord's love for us, Boaz left his barley harvest to attend to the more important business of obtaining Ruth as his wife.

Ruth's act of submission changed her life forever and it was for the good.

Here then are two stories that signify the idea of submission by covering. The first was Joseph's coat and the second is the garment of Boaz.

In the life of Joseph we see a man who understood submission to those who had authority over him.

While he was a boy, Joseph submitted to his father who in turn loved him very much. Later while in Egypt, Potipher promoted Joseph because he knew he could trust him. He knew Joseph would never betray the trust he had received. Even self-gratification could not lure Joseph away from that place of respect for the authority he was under.

The same was true when the keeper of the prison promoted Joseph. This man was willing to bet his life on Joseph's faithfulness to submit to him for if Joseph ever took advantage of the position he was given and used it as a means of escape, the keeper of the prison could very easily have been executed.

Then came the moment of greatest promotion for Joseph. The Pharaoh himself, the king of Egypt, made Joseph his Prime Minister after Joseph interpreted his dreams. Joseph maintained a life of submission, never abusing the trust placed in him and **through this he became the instrument whereby thousands were spared from a horrible death that would have befallen them through famine.**

******To rise to a place of great spiritual authority, one must be in submission to the authorities under which God places him or her.

In the life of Jesus there was an incident that demonstrates this principle so clearly. It is the story of the healing of the Centurions servant. Here is how the Bible describes what took place:

Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him."

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Notice the depth of what Jesus is saying here concerning the Centurion. He simply believed that if Jesus said something, it was done. **He did not ask for a sign.** He did not express any doubt in his heart that if Jesus spoke it that it would be accomplished.

Most of the time, when we pray to the Father, deep in our hearts if we would be truthful and admit it, we just **HOPE** that God will hear and answer. If that is your testimony concerning your prayer life, then confess it as what it is, sin, because you do not fully believe, and you are not fully trusting in the one who is always faithful.

Begin to develop in your life, those intimate times with the Lord that will lead you into a deeper trust in his Word and His faithfulness to His Word. Trust His proclamation that His Word will never return unto Him void and that it will always accomplish the purpose it was sent for in that which it was sent unto.

Also note Jesus' response to the Centurion's words, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But **just say the word, and my servant will be healed.** For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

He did not approach the Lord in a beggardly fashion or try to bargain with Him concerning what He wanted done. He simply stated the facts and trusted in Jesus' response.

When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

Matthew 8:7-10

This is the type of faith that moves mountains. Jesus honored this man's faith and the servant was healed. Notice what the centurion said; "I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me".

This brings us to the second key to spiritual authority.

2. **To have authority, one must be under authority. This is a key principle in the kingdom of God.**

I have noticed that as I have studied these past years concerning God's Kingdom and discovering truths of that Kingdom, and keys to unlock the "gold nuggets of Truth" locked away within that Kingdom, that **sometimes there are sub-keys of truth that must be used to get to the full impact of the truth being revealed.**

That is especially true concerning authority. **There are at least five areas or sub-keys where God asks us to submit to authority he has placed over us before we can exercise the full authority that God has given to us.**

For example, you go to work for a business and after being faithful to your employer for a period of time, you might be given a key to unlock the doors and open up the business for business. As you continue to work and be trustworthy in your work, you might be given authority over other employees and you might eventually be given a key to the owner's office and maybe even the combination to the safe, etc. Your progress in your trustworthiness opens the door for you to be trusted even more.

That is a simplification of the process but the principle is the same in the Kingdom of God. **The more God can trust us to do what he tells us to do in His Word, the more of His Word He entrusts us with to do. As we progress in exercising faith in His Word, we find we have gained more authority to use that Word, not only in our own lives, but also in the lives of others.**

The first sub-key of being under authority is that of submission to Christ. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:3, “The head of every man is Christ”. In that text Paul referred to headship as an ordinance or a tradition that must be observed. Paul stated that Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23) and he asked the church to recognize this fact and live in submission to Christ.

The second sub-key of being under authority is that of submitting to our parents. Paul said,

“ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Ephesians 6:1.

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Colossians 3:20.

Obeying parents is not something young people always like to do. Your parents might ask you to stay at home and study or do some work when you want to be with your friends and have fun. **If you refuse to accept the authority of your parents** then you are actually refusing to accept God’s authority, for it is God who gives authority to parents.

The third sub-key of being under authority is submitting to civil authority.

The apostle Paul wrote:

Romans 13:1 (AMP) LET EVERY person be loyally subject to the governing (civil) authorities. For there is no authority except from God [by His permission, His sanction], and those that exist do so by God’s appointment. 2 Therefore he who resists and sets himself up against the authorities resists what God has appointed and arranged [in divine order]. And those who resist will bring down judgment upon themselves [receiving the penalty due them]. 3 For civil authorities are not a terror to [people of] good conduct, but to [those of] bad behavior. Would you have no dread of him who is in authority? Then do what is right and you will receive his approval and commendation.

This means that we need to obey the laws of our country and this includes things like speed limits and other traffic laws. Some Christians believe there are no consequences to speeding and believe they “can get away with it”. **But, when we disobey traffic laws or any other civil law, we are really disobeying God and that is sin and sin always has consequences that we will suffer.**

The fourth sub-key of being under authority is that of submission is to those who we work for.

Peter wrote:

Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 1 Peter 2:18

In Bible days slavery was practiced in a way that was somewhat different than what we usually think of when we think of slavery. Some people entered into slavery willingly as a way to pay their debts. Some translations use the word “servant” instead of “slave”.

The principle which Peter sets before us is this: we are to submit to those who are over us when it comes to our employment. It does not honor God when we cheat or do not give an honest days work for the pay we receive.

This same principle applies to students. God asks you to honor your teachers by showing them respect and doing the work they ask you to do. This is an important area of submission.

The fifth sub-key of being under authority is learning to submit to spiritual authority.

The Book of Hebrews states:

Hebrews 13:17 (AMP) Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them [continually recognizing their authority over you], for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account [of their trust]. [Do your part to] let them do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you [either].

God has placed pastors, elders, deacons and other leaders in the church for important reasons. Learn to appreciate them and respect them. Do not disregard the things they say and the influence they try to have in your life. **Submission to spiritual authority is an important key to success.**

These five sub-keys can be summed up in the words honor and character!

Joseph honored every person that God placed over him. He honored his father, which God said is very important. One of the Ten Commandments is:

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. Exodus 20:12

Some Christian young people think they can disobey their parents and dishonor them by insisting on having their own way. When young people do this they are adopting into their lives patterns that will be repeated in other relationships and prevent them from realizing the dream God has given them for their life.

In the Book of Proverbs we read:

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck. Proverbs 1:8

In the life of Joseph we find a man who honored everyone in his life. Even his brothers who hated him and sold him into slavery were one day honored by him.

We live in a world where contempt is very common reaction of people. Contempt is shown for people who are not as smart, have a different color of skin, are of the opposite sex, who make mistakes, or those who have a physical or mental deficiency as well as for a host of other reasons.

It is a common thing in our society for people to show contempt for those in positions of authority but they are the ones who suffer for it in the end.

In His Kingdom, God is looking for those who will respect and honor others with their lives and those who seek to walk in obedience to HIS authority.

3. The Third Key of spiritual authority is Faith.

There is something that really stands out in Joseph's life and that is the fact that Joseph learned submission. If you study about him, you will find He never complained no matter how difficult his circumstances were. He also learned to honor those who were over him, even those who mistreated him.

We read about the faith of Abraham but Joseph also had to have had great faith. The writer of the Book of Hebrews, when giving his roll call of the heroes of faith that serve as examples to the church said this about Joseph:

Hebrews 11:22 (AMP) [Actuated] by faith Joseph, when nearing the end of his life, referred to [the promise of God for] the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his own bones.

Though Joseph was very successful in Egypt and had become its Prime Minister he knew that God's purposes were greater. God had a chosen people and it was this group that commanded Joseph's greatest loyalty.

Joseph's faith was in God and not in Egypt.

How many times, I wonder, would most people have given up if they were called upon to endure all that Joseph endured.

Please understand fully that life is full of processes that God allows us to go through to refine us and make us better Christians. It is through these processes that we grow into maturity and thus are more able to fulfill the will of God.

As I look back over the years since I was saved on October 30, 1974, at 34 years of age, I see where God's purpose and plan was working in my life.

Looking at every job I have had in my life, some of which I thoroughly detested, I can now look back and see God's plan and purpose, as He worked all things out together for my good and His glory.

Romans 8:28-30 (KJV) -- ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

The same is true for all that pursue the will of God. **At times you might feel alone, uncertain, and question why you are going through what you are going through. The challenges are greater than you ever imagined they would be.**

Joseph must have felt this way many times. The truth is; God is never far from us and He is in control. Don't be afraid to take steps of faith, even if they seem to you to be giant ones. God will never let you down! **He is always working in our lives to perfect His plan and will for our lives.**

Jeremiah 29:11 (AMP) For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

Also, remember these truths from God's Word:

Luke 22:29 (KJV)

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

Hebrews 12:28 (KJV)

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

Let me close our study today with this passage of Scripture as our closing prayer.

Psalm 119:33-36 (KJV)

33

Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

In Jesus name, AMEN!