

Heidelberg Catechism-83-84-The Keys of the Kingdom: Preaching

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Many people can unlock a regular door using a credit card or a screw driver. Doors are not very secure as you might think. But doors are more secured when they are keyed from both sides – when you enter and when you leave. Keep that in mind as God speaks today concerning the keys that open and shut the doors to his kingdom.

Our headings are: What are the Keys of the Kingdom, and How is Preaching a Key to the Kingdom.

Our goals are: That you will make use of the keys of the kingdom to strengthen your soul, bring in the unsaved into the kingdom, and to lock out those who are living unrepentant死不悔改 lives.

What are the Keys of the Kingdom?

83 Q. WHAT ARE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM? A. The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline toward repentance. Both preaching and discipline open the kingdom of heaven to believers and close it to unbelievers.

1. What are the keys of the kingdom? The **preaching of the Gospel and Christian discipline** are the **keys** of the kingdom. It is **impossible to enter into the kingdom without the keys**. The walls are too high to climb over, and too thick to break in. You need the Door...and you need keys for the door. Every other religion on the planet tells you that your salvation is in your hands – by what you do- but the Bible vehemently disagrees. You need keys that only Jesus Christ possesses to enter into his kingdom. And he offers them to you. On the other hand, these same keys lock out the rebellious from the kingdom. Today insurance companies want quick latches on the inside so you can leave your house quickly in cases of a fire. But there were no quick latches门锁 long ago. The action to put someone out was a determined已经决定了的 deliberative act with the keys.

2. Jesus Christ gave the right to the elders to administer the keys to the kingdom. At creation, God gave Adam the command to rule the earth – until other men came. Then the authority was shared. Genesis 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

So it is not surprising that God, once he had recreated再创造 mankind in Jesus Christ, that he specifically called man back to guard his kingdom. Of course the elders rule under God's authority, just as Adam ruled under God. God is always King.

Mathew 16:19 "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."

3. Jesus never gave this authority to one man (Peter) as the Romanist assert. Peter had no such authority and one man does not have the authority to rule the church of Jesus Christ that way. (BTW, for a church to be a church it must have a plurality of elders.) Jesus gave this authority to his church. Jesus even gave his **disciples** the authority to declare that sins were forgiven by him. John 20:22 And when He had said this, **He breathed on them**, and said **to them**, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

And consider Apostle Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders – a warning which showed how important Christ's church is to him.

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take **heed to yourselves**为自己谨慎 and **to all the flock**, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood**.

This is why the elders must rule wisely and carefully under Jesus Christ.

4. So don't jump head first to be an elder. It is a weighty job. Punishment for failing to fulfill the work properly is very severe. The shepherds are to lead the sheep...not lead them astray 弓向歧途 If you lead someone astray, Jesus said it would be better for you if a millstone were tied around your neck and you were drowned in the depths of the sea.

How is Preaching a key of the Kingdom

84 Q. HOW DOES PREACHING THE GOSPEL OPEN AND CLOSE THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? A. According to the command of Christ: The kingdom of heaven is opened by proclaiming and **publicly** declaring to each and every believer that, as often as he accepts the gospel promise in true faith, God, because of what Christ has done, truly forgives all his sins. The kingdom of heaven is closed, however, by proclaiming and publicly declaring to **unbelievers and hypocrites** that, as long as they do not repent, the anger of God and eternal condemnation rest on them. God's judgment, both in this life and in the life to come, is based on this gospel testimony.

1. God's kingdom is opened by the public calling of men to repentance and faith through Jesus Christ the Lord. After a man is saved, the preaching of the Gospel urges him to remain faithful in the kingdom. Nicely put: In preaching of the holy Gospel, the Shepherd calls and the chosen **hear His voice-salvation** and **follow him - sanctification**. Others who hear that voice and stand still, will die in their sins.

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings 传美事 of good things!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God 信心是从所听的道来的, 所听的道是借着基督的话来的

2. Why is preaching so critical? If the church fails to preach, millions will march right into hell.

2Corinthians 5:18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and **has given us the ministry of reconciliation** 和好; 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the **word of reconciliation**. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors 使者 for Christ, as though God were **pleading through us**: we **implore you** on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

This is the only means of reconciliation. Even the best type of human love and relationships will not allow you to enter heaven. I saw a sign on a church building recently: It's all about relationships! What an error! One pastor correctly wrote: *"There is no gift, no act, no deed, no human character or quality that is good enough to merit entrance into the Kingdom of God. This bars Jew and Gentile from the Kingdom. The wall is too high, the moat 壕 too long and the Kingdom impregnable for the human outside of Jesus."* Consider another supporting verse!

1Corinthians 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom **declaring to you the testimony of God**. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 4 And my **speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom**, but in demonstratio 证明 of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

3. And what awesome comforts come when you enter into the kingdom of God. And what wonderful gifts God gives to his children. One preacher summarized it well: *"The Canadian world is obese 痴肥, gross and addicted and they are unhappy. The African world is sick, starving and unhappy! The citizens of the Kingdom of God are in Canada and Africa comforted and joyful, worshipping God because they have heard and they embrace the preaching!"*

Isaiah 52:7 How **beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news**, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

4. The implication here is that Ministers and elders must make diligent efforts to present the full 完整完备的 Gospel of Jesus Christ. The law could not effect any change in any man's life. But the Gospel

can. So ministers are to call men to repentance with love, care, persistency持久性和 patience. Preaching must be true, regular, and faithful. It is not a matter of whether there is preaching (there is preaching everywhere), but whether there is pure纯净的 preaching – with no adding or subtracting from the Word of God and rightly dividing it to the hearers.

2Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth** 正确地讲解真理的道

The people hear of Christ's life, death (active and passive obedience), and his resurrection as foundation根基 of all sermons. Even if you are tired, you may not short-circuit the presentation of the Gospel. Children often don't care too much if something is bothering their parents, and neither does the non-believer. So you always have to be ready. A doctor on an airplane might want to get some rest before he gets to his destination, but when someone falls sick on a plane, the doctor knows he had a sworn duty...and performs it.

5. Furthermore, you may not think much of us as preachers – as we are men of sin, but **you must have an absolutely heavenly view of the message we preach. The message is the key to life.**

6. In a general sense, fathers are to call their children to repentance and friends must call their non-believing friends so that they could enter the kingdom. Even preachers can privately call men to faith and repentance. **But the public preaching of the Gospel is the officially designated way of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** See why you need to invite people to come to worship!

7. God's kingdom is closed to the wicked and hypocrites by publicly warning that if they do not

repent of their sins through Christ, that they would face eternal condemnation in the fires of hell.

John 3:31 "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 "And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 "He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. 34 "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. **36** "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Even during the time of the Lord the Jews were stubborn...refusing to hear the prophets before and Jesus himself. They could not accept the substitutionary atonement代替性的赎罪 or the idea that Jesus would be a suffering servant. They killed the messengers before and then killed Jesus.

Conclusion:

The keys of the kingdom open the kingdom to the believer and close the kingdom to those who refused to submit to the Lord. There are 2 keys: the **preaching of the holy Gospel** and the **exercising of Christian discipline.** The elders of the church are therefore to call men to repentance and discipline the rebellious. Those who reject the keys are condemned. Those who receive them are saved and sanctified.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: 1. **You have received these keys through the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Only he had the keys and he offers them to you. *Revelation 3:7* "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens..." 2. **So how then shall you live?** Use the keys...faithfully, fully to enter and remain in the kingdom. Become students of the Word and listen to good preaching. Never refuse admonition for your soul. 3. **Are you offering these keys to those who are outside** so that they may enter into the kingdom of the Lord?

Finally, God's Word is not something to take lightly – as if it were some innocuous无伤大雅 system of belief that you may receive or reject. You reject the truth of God's Word, you die in your sins. But if you want to be saved, confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins...and that is what I am proclaiming to you to do today!