

Questions for Your Journal

Use these following questions to evaluate what you learned from Sunday's sermon.

Summary:

- The main thing the speaker wants me to do, be, and/or feel as a result of this message.

Application to My Life:

- What did God say to me through this message?
 - How does my life measure up to this word?
 - What action(s) will I take to bring my life in line with this word?
 - What truth do I need to study further?
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The Keys of the Kingdom

There are few passages of Scripture that have suffered as much scrutiny as Jesus' commendation of Peter's confession in Matthew 16:17–19. Since the first century, theologians and Bible scholars have debated the significance of Peter as the foundation of the church, the meaning of the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," and the authority implied by the ability to "bind" and "loose" things on earth. While the debate will continue, there are some better ways of interpreting the passages than others, and when the passage is properly understood, it gives direction and meaning to us as members of Christ's church.

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

After Jesus commends Peter for his confession of faith, He tells him, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven," (Matt. 16:19, *NASB*). The first part of this verse is easier to make sense of than the second. The symbol of the key is used throughout Scripture to represent power and authority, especially exercised by those who are deemed worthy of such honor (e.g., Is. 22:22; Rev. 3:7; cf. Lk. 11:52).¹ In Matthew 16, then, Peter and the apostles were given the power and authority to proclaim the good news of Jesus' coming Kingdom thus "opening the door" through which people could enter. When we look to the book of Acts, we see that Peter's preaching and the extended ministry of the apostles truly "opened the way" into the kingdom for thousands.²

The second half of the verse requires more work. In Jesus' day, Jewish Rabbis spoke of "binding" and "loosing" as the ability to declare what behavior was "forbidden or permitted" according to the Mosaic Law.³ Jesus' disciples, on the other hand, would have the ability to declare what was permitted or forbidden in the kingdom. This is extended in Matthew 18:18 where Jesus uses the exact phrase again. This time He gives instructions for dealing with an unrepentant person who has professed faith—i.e., "a brother" (Matt. 18:15). If after approaching the individual privately and with one or two other Christians they still do not repent, the church is told to call them to repentance. If they won't listen to the

church they are to be treated as “a Gentile and tax collector” (Matt. 18:7). This decision is the weighty determination that a person’s obstinate unrepentance for behavior forbidden by God reveals the fact that they remain outside the kingdom of God. In such cases, the doors of the kingdom remain shut to them until they enter by way of faith in Christ.

While this explanation might not clarify every question a person has about the passage, it does bring into focus its relevance for our lives together as a church. Since the keys of the kingdom are tied to the proclamation of the gospel, we make use of them whenever we preach the Word and correct one another according to the commands of Christ.⁴ When we’re clear that the only way into the kingdom is by faith in Jesus “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” and a commitment to live our lives according to His Word, we open the gate of the kingdom to all the Father draws near.

Encounter

Take a few minutes to read Matthew 16:13–20 in a couple of Bible translations. Make a note of any differences between the translations and anything that especially jumps out at you.

Reflect

Matthew 16 is largely concerned with the different perspectives people had about the life of Jesus—the Pharisees’ perspective (vv 1–12), the disciples’ and the crowds’ perspective (vv 13–20), and Jesus’ own perspective (vv 17–28). **Read Matthew 16. Which perspective surprises you most? How would you have responded to Jesus’ prediction about His death?**

According to Jesus, one of the most important questions we can answer is, “Who do you say that I am?”(Matt. 16:15). **In your own words, finish this sentence, “Jesus is...”, with a focus both on His identity and His relationship to you.**

Jesus commends Simon Peter for confessing Him as the “Christ, the Son of the Living God,” and tells Him that the Father in heaven revealed this truth to him (Matt. 16:17). **Read 1 John 5:1–5. According to this passage, who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? What does believing in Jesus lead to in their life?**

Matthew 16:19 contains familiar, but confusing words: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom...whatever you bind/loose on earth will have been bound/loosed in heaven.” This phrase appears again in Matthew 18:18, providing a clue to its meaning. **Read Matthew 18:15–19. According to this passage, what is the “binding” and “loosing” authority of the church?**

Examine

Based on 2 Timothy 3:16 (“*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*”), this series of questions is intended to help you figure out what you should do or believe in response to this text. (*This passage may not have a clear answer for each question. Just use them to prompt your thinking.*)

1. What does this passage tell me to believe?

(How does it teach me?)

2. What does this passage tell me not to believe?

(How does it reprove me?)

3. How does this passage tell me not to live?

(How does it correct me?)

4. How does this passage tell me to live?

(How does it train me in righteousness?)

Embrace

After spending significant time with this passage, you've probably learned a lot and heard God speak to you through His Word. Look back at your responses to the previous questions and ask God to show you how you can respond to this text this week.

Write down some ideas for how you can respond to the truth of God's Word.

About The Map

The Map exists to help you consistently reflect on Scripture as you pursue maturity in Christ. When you devote yourself to reading God's Word, and meditate on what you read, you're allowing Him to shape your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

NOTES:

1. Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 476.
2. Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 426.
3. Ibid.
4. R.B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ* (Repr. 2015; Edinburgh; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1967), 302-303.



Disciple-Making Guide

Kids Kindergarten through 6th grade receive Adventure Tokens for discipleship activities completed during the week. They can spend them at the Adventure Store on the last Sunday of the month.

Big Picture Questions for Unit 1: “God Created Everything”

Preschool: Q: What will happen when Jesus comes back?
A: *Jesus will make all things new.*

Kids (1-6): Q: What will happen when Jesus returns?
A: *Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.*

This Week’s Family Reading Plan

for Preschoolers: *Noah and the Ark**

Day 1: *Mark 16*

Day 2: *Luke 24*

Day 3: *John 20-21*

Day 4: *Matthew 28*

Day 5: *Acts 1*

*Preschool readings are taken from *The Big Picture Interactive Bible Stories for Toddlers, Old Testament* (B&H Publishing Group), available at Amazon.com & LifeWay Christian Store.

Key Passage for Unit 1: “God Created Everything”

Preschoolers: “Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new” (Revelation 21:5, *Christian Standard Bible*).

Kids (1-6 grade): “Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new” (Revelation 21:5, *Christian Standard Bible*).

Northway’s Family Ministry uses *The Gospel Project* to help preschoolers, kids, and students grow in their knowledge of Scripture and of Jesus Christ, about whom it was all written (Luke 24:44-49).



Adventure Token Coupon

Fill this out and bring it to Bible Study for your tokens!

I worked on learning my big picture question and key passage _____.

I read my Bible at home _____.

Child’s Name _____.

Parent’s Signature _____.

30 BIBLICAL BASICS

CORE BELIEFS

God | 2 Corinthians 13:13

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Personal God | Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace | Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible | 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God that guides my belief and action.

Identity in Christ | John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church | Ephesians 4:15

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth.

Humanity | John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion | Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Stewardship | Psalm 24:1-2

I believe that everything I am and everything I own belong to God.

Eternity | John 14:1-2

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus will return to judge all people and to establish His eternal kingdom.

CORE PRACTICES

Worship | Psalm 95:1-2

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer | Psalm 66:18-20

I pray to God to know him, to find direction for my life, and to lay my requests before him.

Bible Study | Hebrews 4:12

I study the Bible to know God and his truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness | Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Total Surrender | Romans 12:1

I dedicate my life to God's purposes.

Biblical Community | Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, in the life of others, and in the world.

Spiritual Gifts | Romans 12:4-6

I know my spiritual gifts and use them to fulfill God's purposes.

Offering My Time | Colossians 3:17

I offer my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving My Resources | 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Sharing My Faith | Ephesians 6:19-20

I share my faith with others to fulfill God's purposes.

CORE VIRTUES

Love | 1 John 4:10-12

I am committed to loving God and loving others.

Joy | John 15:11

Despite my circumstances, I feel inner contentment and understand my purpose in life.

Peace | Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because I have found peace with God, peace with others, and peace with myself.

Self-Control | Titus 2:11-13

I have the power through Christ to control myself.

Hope | Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Patience | Proverbs 14:29

I am slow to anger and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness | 1 Thessalonians 5:15

I choose to be kind and good in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness | Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness | Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Humility | Philippians 2:3-4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

The 30 Biblical Basics are the skeleton of a person being formed into the image of Jesus by His Spirit (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18), a helpful framework for the Christian's thoughts, actions, and character. As we commit ourselves to growing in Christ through the process of spiritual formation, we pray these statements become increasingly true of us. When they are, we'll be able to carry out the biblical mandate to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27), and to truly **love, live, and lead like Jesus.**