

# Lesson 3: The Keys to the Kingdom

Healing Streams Ministry, Savannah, GA. All scriptures are from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

## Introduction

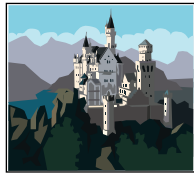
In the previous lessons we noted the powerful connection between our negative emotions and many diseases and the uncomfortable fact that such emotions of the carnal nature are actually sins. How are we to get free? As it happens Jesus has foreseen our need and promised us keys—keys to His kingdom! In this lesson we will look at what the Kingdom of God means in terms of our daily experience, what the keys are, and what it is that the keys unlock.

## The Keys to the Kingdom

Jesus has given keys of entry to His disciples. The keys are the power to bind and loose. We are to bind the enemy and carry his works captive to Christ and we are to loose people from their sins and release them to God, ourselves included.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:19

The keys give us access to the Kingdom of God on earth. By the text we see that these are keys meant to be used "on earth" and they are given to all who receive the same revelation



that Peter received—for the revelation of Jesus Christ is the Church's great foundation. This Kingdom is a present reality to all believers (Col 1:13), but entering into it is not automatic—that is why we need the keys! Keys are for entering into places that we would otherwise be locked out of. If we are to use the keys we need to know what they are and how to use them, but it will also help us to know some things about the Kingdom to which they give us

access. A kingdom is the realm where a king reigns—the king's dominion. Paul gives us a clear description of what the Lord's reign is like:

For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17 WEB

Righteousness in the sense of saving grace is "right standing with God"—something we are given through the new birth and faith in what Jesus has done for us at the cross. But this accurate definition may keep us from seeing the vast righteousness of the kingdom, because what is fully meant by righteousness includes everything that is right (good, beautiful and true) which flows from God: lunch with a friend is righteousness; doing a job well is righteousness; playing with puppies and babies is righteousness, enjoying a sunset or a good book is righteousness. It certainly isn't unrighteousness! In this wider sense righteousness is anything the Holy Spirit would lead you into doing or appreciating. Such righteousness is the very life of heaven on earth.

*For the Kingdom of God is... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.  
Romans 14:17*

Likewise, the peace of the Kingdom is vast. It is not like that of this world—which is so easily lost. The peace of this Kingdom is deep and everlasting—nothing on earth can shake it; nothing on earth can take it from you. Earth's joys are fleeting, but the joy of this Kingdom is available to everyone at any moment for it proceeds from the glad hearted God who wants to share His joy with us. And who can say enough about the Holy Spirit? He is the very presence and power of Jesus on earth with us. This is what the Kingdom is "made of"! Now if we were suddenly told that all the right ways of living, all the peace, all



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the joy that we have ever wanted *and* the presence and power of God were on the other side of town just waiting for us, we would all be catching the next bus.

**Just where is this Kingdom to be found?** Jesus told Nicodemus that unless he was converted (born again) he would neither be able to see this Kingdom nor enter into it.

Jesus answered him, "Most assuredly, I tell you, unless one is born anew, he can't see the Kingdom of God..." Jesus answered, "Most assuredly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into the Kingdom of God!" John 3:3, 5 WEB

Perhaps that has already happened for you. You can now see the Kingdom because you have eyes of faith to see the King! And you have been "conveyed" by the Father out of darkness into the kingdom of His Beloved Son (Col 1:13). Conversion certainly gets us into a portion of the Kingdom—but we are still searching for entry to that place where all the righteousness, peace and joy can be found—along with the Holy Spirit! Have you ever been conveyed to the airport of a foreign country, but never left the airport to explore the country or share life with its citizens? So too we may be in the Kingdom of God, but still not sharing in its life. And this life is all around us! Jesus tells us that it is literally as close as the air that we breathe—for it surrounds and fills us.

Amazingly, this kingdom is always within reach of and always "hiding" inside every believer. We are in it like fish in the sea: the fish is in the ocean and the ocean is in the fish.

"The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:15

"For behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21 WEB

**It is a realm that requires childlike trust and cleanness of spirit.** If all of these highly desirable things are already within us and are all around us, what is keeping us locked out? According to Jesus, conversion in the form of the new birth gets us into heaven (Jn 3:16); becoming as little children gets us into the kingdom. Note how stringent the warning is: unless we are converted *and* become as little children we will *by no means* enter into this kingdom.

**The big "key" is becoming like a little child!**

And He called a little child to Himself and put him in the midst of them, And said, Truly I say to you, unless you repent (change, turn about) and become like little children [trusting, lowly, loving, forgiving], you can never enter the kingdom of heaven [at all]. Matthew 18:2-3 AMP

*Truly I say to you, unless you repent (change, turn about) and become like little children [trusting, lowly, loving, forgiving], you can never enter the kingdom of heaven [at all].*  
Matthew 18:2-3 AMP

Jesus is not speaking about entry into heaven here. In Matthew's gospel the Kingdom of God on earth is usually referred to as the Kingdom of Heaven. To this day little children enter the Kingdom and show forth its fruit far better than most believers (Mt 19:14). And this is true of little children no matter what the religion of their parents. Most little children haven't even been converted (know and believe in the King) and yet they still live in the Kingdom. What is it about little children?



We can safely assume that Jesus wasn't holding up as an example a little child "in the flesh" but one that was in the right spirit. All such children exemplify the life of the Kingdom (Mt 19:14; Mk 10:14; Lk 18:16) better than most believers—regardless of the religion of their parents. They are humble, unself-conscious, willingly dependent for all provision upon their parents and freely love the people they meet. They are also teachable, fearless explorers of their worlds, and live with openness and transparency in the present moment. If anything troubles or hurts them they run to their parents, are quickly set right, and easily let go. In fact, once hurts begin to accumulate and they start carrying yesterday (and its pains) with



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them, they become self-protective, leave childhood behind and become like us! Jesus says that self-protectiveness is guaranteed to rob us of life (Mt 16:24-27; Mk 8:34-37; Lk 9:23-25).

**We lock ourselves up in a dungeon of pain and bondage.** Due to an accumulation of life's hurts that we did not release, we left childlikeness behind by binding the pains and injustices of the past to ourselves. Un-forgiveness is the number one block to healing and to the Kingdom's peace and power. It leads to unanswered prayer, un-received mercy, hardness of heart, spiritual bondage and painful inner torment.

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions. Mark 11:25-26 WEB

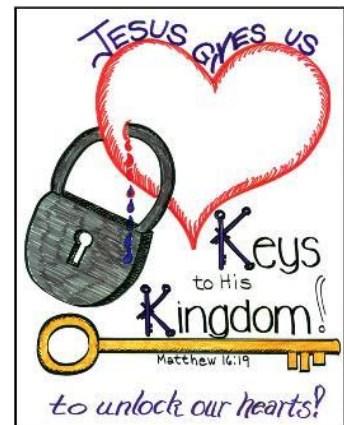
And in wrath his master turned him over to the torturers (the jailers), till he should pay all that he owed. So also My heavenly Father will deal with every one of you if you do not freely forgive your brother from your heart *his offenses*. Matthew 18:34-35 AMP

Hidden and unrecognized unbelief can also bar our entry into the Kingdom, because it "hardens" the heart before God as powerfully as un-forgiveness does.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God... So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Hebrews 3:12, 19

**We will concentrate on four keys** (see end of chapter for more keys)

- Confess, repent of recognized sin and **receive** full forgiveness (consider these as "halleluiah moments"—see below).
- Confess, repent of un-forgiveness and **release** full forgiveness (towards God, self or others—until no pain is left in the memories).
- Confess, repent of unbelief and **believe** the truth with a full heart of faith (Ro 15:13).
- Use the key of **knowledge**: discerning the spirits; discerning truth (Lk 11:52; He 5:14).



Because God gives us sovereignty over our hearts, it is not what happened to us that is the real issue. It is how we have reacted to hurt and injustice that determines our life, our peace and our emotional freedom. We will encourage you to use the keys to forgive others and to fully accept yourself.

**At first it will seem like we are making the problem worse** because we will be showing you the connection between physical, mental and emotional health and what the Bible clearly describes as sin issues: bitterness towards others, unbelief, envy, not accepting oneself, living stressed up, etc. But because Jesus died to free us from sin's penalty and power there is a pathway of cleansing and freedom. Learn to say "Halleluiah!" when the Holy Spirit reveals sin in you that you had not seen before—it means He is getting ready to cleanse you and give you greater entry. So, set your heart on pilgrimage (Ps 84:5) and **get really, really good at using these 4 keys!**

## Notes/Journal



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## Exercise

Make a list of “locks” you may need the four keys to open. Be very honest—don’t gloss things over. Ask the Lord to begin helping you in each of these areas. Then, pay special attention to things coming up in the lessons that will help you get victories over these obstacles.

I need to forgive myself for (1<sup>st</sup> key) \_\_\_\_\_

People I need to forgive (2<sup>nd</sup> key) \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of doubt and unbelief (3<sup>rd</sup> key) \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of low discernment (4<sup>th</sup> key) \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion Questions



Ask the group how many of them *before this lesson* could have said what the keys to the kingdom are or even what the kingdom is. Can they tell it now? Have they been taught much about the Kingdom before (is lack of teaching common)? How much did Jesus teach about the Kingdom? Rick Joyner says that the church has done a good job of preaching the gospel of salvation (getting us into heaven), but has rarely taught the gospel of the kingdom (bringing heaven down to earth)—and that this gospel of the kingdom must be preached before the Lord returns (Mt 24:14—look it up!). Discuss the difference between these two gospels. There is much more to the message of the Kingdom than could be covered in this lesson, but of the four keys listed here which are needed the most? Which are used the least? Discuss the relationship between each key and entering into the kingdom by becoming childlike. (See the end of this chapter for other keys.)

## Main Points



- The Kingdom of God is right ways of living, peace, joy and the Holy Spirit.
- Entering and living in the Kingdom is not automatic, even for believers.
- We enter the Kingdom by conversion and by becoming like little children.
- We lock ourselves out by holding un-forgiveness and unbelief in our hearts.
- Jesus gives us keys to gain access to the Kingdom of God on earth.
- 4 keys: receiving forgiveness, giving forgiveness, believing truth, discernment.



## Digging Deeper

This is a diagram of the levels of reality revealed by scripture. Note the fallen counterparts of spiritual darkness to those of Light—both centered on the earth. Consider the relationship of the Kingdom of God to other levels of reality—of light or darkness. Consider also the relationship of the Kingdom of God to earthly kingdoms existing in the natural/physical realm.

- Heaven—eternal dwelling of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, angels, saints (1Pe 3:21)
- Kingdom of God—invisible, spiritual reign of heaven reaching to earth (Ro 14:17)
- Church—the Body of Christ, partly visible, humanity organized by God (Mt 16:18)
- New nature—the new creation, Christ's life in us, regenerated spirit (2Co 5:17; Col 1:27)
- Earth and its heavens—natural/physical realm of 5 senses and matter (Ps 24:1-2)
- Fallen nature—the flesh, Adam's life in us, spiritual death (Ro 8:6-9)
- World—the *Kosmos*, partly visible; humanity organized by Satan (Jn 12:31; 1Jn 2:15)
- Kingdom of darkness—invisible, spiritual realm surrounding earth (Eph 6:12; Col 1:13)
- Hell—eternal place of punishment for Satan, fallen angels, demons, the damned (Mt 5:30)

## Sword and Shield

In light of this teaching about the Kingdom, review the following scriptures—just a fraction of what is in the scriptures about the Kingdom. Note the dynamic tension that evidently exists between **seeking entry** and that of **receiving entry** as a gift. Seek to understand the **presence** and **present tense** of the Kingdom. Receive it by faith.

And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." Matthew 19:23-25

Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you." Matthew 21:31

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in." Matthew 23:13

For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:30-32

"The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it." Luke 16:16

Being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The Kingdom of God doesn't come with observation; neither will they say, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20-21 WEB

But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." Luke 18:16-17

## Prayer Focus

First read through this powerful prayer and look for the keys and the ways in which the Kingdom will come as we exercise them. Then pray for His Kingdom to come into your heart, into your life and throughout this course! **Expect this Kingdom to come.**



“Pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.'” Matthew 6:9-13 WEB



## Renunciations and Affirmations

Confess/renounce previous agreements with untruth; confess/believe Truth as your new Way of life.

*Father, thank You for translating me out of darkness and into the glorious kingdom of Your Beloved Son! I repent of and renounce all false ideas about where the joy and peace are that I have been searching for—You have placed it all around me and within me! Thank You for showing me these four keys to the kingdom. Help me to get really good at using them to unlock my heart from unforgiveness towards myself, You and others and from all the ways in which I have not really been believing in who You are and what You have promised. Help me exercise the gift of discernment that comes with the fourth key. Thank You that it is Your desire to lead me into this kingdom!*

## Putting Feet to Your Prayers/Stretch Yourself!

Get a jump on things! Go back to the exercise lists and begin praying for victory now by forgiving others and by receiving forgiveness for yourself where needed. Give the keys the workout they deserve!

Become a careful observer of little children. Following Jesus’ example note well their positive characteristics and then pray for those good ways to be restored into your life (see list below). Take time out during the day to enjoy that moment the way a child would.

Perhaps it would be good to **consider the ways of a child** in the flesh. Make a list of some that come to mind. Following the example of Paul, have you put off these childish things (1Co13:11)? Childish ways even block children from being childlike!

Childlike ways for me to grow into

Childish ways of mine to leave behind

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**More keys!** Some of the other Keys of the Kingdom. See if you can name more.

- **Authority**—resisting and rebuking the enemy is a key to freedom (see next lesson)
- **Surrender**—the grace of yielding to God in any situation frees us (see “The Cross” page 109)
- **Praise**—the power of aggressive praise frees the heart from heaviness (see “Pick Axe” page 7)

