

Message Three

The Exercise of the Kingdom for the Building Up of the Church

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:16-18, 21-28

I. Matthew 16 reveals the way to build up the church and also reveals the enemy of the building:

- A. Christ, the Son of the living God, builds the church on Himself as the rock, with stones such as Peter, a transformed person – vv. 16-18.
- B. The gates of Hades, Satan's authority of darkness, attack the church to frustrate the Lord from building up the church – v. 18.
- C. In order to build the church, the Lord had to pass through death and enter into resurrection – v. 21.
- D. Peter, with a good heart, rebuked the Lord and tried to prevent the Lord from going to Jerusalem to be crucified – Matt. 16:22:
 1. It was not Peter but Satan who came out through one of the gates of Hades, the gate of Peter's self, to try to frustrate the Lord from building the church – v. 23.
 2. The self, the mind, and the soul-life are the three main gates through which Satan comes forth to attack and damage the church – vv. 23-26.

II. The building up of the church depends on shutting up the gates of Hades through the exercise of the three keys – vv. 24-26:

- A. We need to learn to exercise the key of denying the self – v. 24:
 1. The self is the created soul plus the satanic mind, the mind of Satan, which was injected into the human soul, making it the self, the embodiment of Satan – Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 16:22-23.
 2. The self is the soul declaring independence from God; the enemy of the Body is the independent self, which is the greatest obstacle to the building up of the Body.
 3. If we exercise the key of denying the self, it is impossible for us to be offended; we need to lock up the self in every situation – cf. Luke 23:24; Acts 7:60.
- B. We need to exercise the key of taking up the cross – Matt. 16:24:
 1. To take up the cross simply means to take up the will of God; the cross is God's will – 26:39.
 2. The words, "Let him...take up his cross" means that we are not forced to bear the cross but willingly take it up, as the Lord did.
 3. We also need to carry our cross, that is, remain on the cross, keeping our old man under the termination of the cross day by day – Luke 14:27; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Phil 3:10; 1 Cor. 15:31.
- C. We need to exercise the key of losing the soul-life – Matt. 16:25:
 1. To save the soul-life is to please the self by allowing the soul to have its enjoyment; to lose the soul-life is to lose the enjoyment of the soul.
 2. If we are willing to lose all our present soulish enjoyment for the Lord's sake, for the sake of the church and the saints, others will be nourished and built up by us – Heb. 12:2.
 3. The kingdom reward of sharing the King's joy in ruling over the earth in the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens depends upon whether we save our soul-life in this age or lose it – Matt. 16:25-28; 25:21, 23.

Message Four

Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and Discipling All the Nations for the Spread and Development of the Kingdom of God

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:14; 28:18-20; Mark 1:14-15; 1 Thes. 2:12

- I. **“This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end shall come” – Matt. 24:14:**
 - A. The kingdom of God is a divine sphere for God to work out His plan; it is a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish what He intends – Mark 1:15; John 3:3, 5; Matt. 12:28; Rev. 11:15.
 - B. The fundamental problem in the universe is rebellion against the authority of God – Isa. 14:12-14.
 - C. Through the gospel of the kingdom, God brings people out of the authority of darkness and under the ruling of His heavenly authority so that they may become His kingdom – Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:5-6.
 - D. God commands everyone to repent for the kingdom – Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Acts 17:30.
 - E. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations before the end of this age – Matt. 24:14.
- II. **“Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” – Matt. 28:19:**
 - A. In His divinity, as the only begotten Son of God, the Lord had authority over all; however, in His humanity, as the Son of Man and the King of the heavenly kingdom, all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him after His resurrection – vv. 1-10, 18.
 - B. Because all authority has been given to the resurrected Christ, He sent His disciples to disciple all the nations; they go with His authority – vv. 18-19.
 - C. After Christ as the Last Adam had accomplished His ministry on earth, passed through the process of crucifixion, entered into the realm of resurrection, and had become the life-giving Spirit, He came back to His disciples in the atmosphere and reality of His resurrection to charge them to make the heathen the kingdom people by baptizing them into the name, the person, the reality, of the Divine Trinity.
 - D. According to Matthew, being baptized into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is for the constituting of the kingdom of the heavens – v. 19.
 - E. In Matthew 28:20 the Lord charged us to teach the newly baptized ones to observe all that He has commanded us – v. 19.
 - F. “Behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age” – v. 20.
 - G. In His resurrection the Lord is present, and we have His authority, commission, and position to disciple the nations for the spread and development of the kingdom of God.