**Scripture:** Matthew 16:13-20 & John 20:19-23

**Singing:** 367:1, 4, 5 – 132:1-5 – 356:1-3 – 372:1-2

Introduction: Do you value the *governing structures* in your life?

**Keys of God’s Kingdom (1)**

I.What is meant with keys? II. Who owns the keys?

II. Who are called to use these keys? III. How are these keys to be used?

**I. What is meant with these keys?**

A. Only Scripture mentioning these keys is Matt. 16:10

 1. Context is crucial

 a. Jesus is readying them for their task: *need firm footing*: vs. 18!

 b. Jesus gives clear direction about their authority: vs. 19

 c. Jesus emphasized right attitude: 18:1-14; 21-35

d. Jesus set out the only right method: 18:15-20

 2. Other references to keys are Luke 11:52; Rev. 1:18; 3:7; 9:1; 20:1

B. The function of keys explains the intent of this symbol

 1. The Jewish use of the phrase *to bind or loose*

 2. The ordinary use of keys is to *open and close doors*

 a. keys give *power of access* – *responsibility to care*

C. What did Jesus give to the apostles in giving these keys to them?

 1. He gave them authority to *forbid or command*

a. they were bound by OT Scriptures

b. they were guided by the Holy Spirit’s ministry John 16:12-13)

 2. Their authority is limited to ***whatsoever*** (Matt. 16:19) *not* ***whosoever*** a. see examples of Acts 15:28-29 etc.

D. Today church leaders don’t have the same extent of authority as apostles:

 1. They bind/loose only *on the authority of written Scriptures*

**II. Who owns these keys?**

A. Jesus’ owns and remains the owner these keys

 1. As church leaders we have *delegated and limited authority*

 2. Church leaders are to give account: Heb. 13:17; Ezek 33:1-9; 34:7-10

B. Church Leaders are to be held accountable: Acts 17:11; Galatians 2:11

 1. Believers have responsibility to challenge or question decision with an

 appeal to Scripture

 2. With Scriptural grounds are established, we are to honor their decisions

**III. Who are called to use these keys?**

A. Originally this began with the 12 disciples: Matt. 16:19; 18:18 & John 20:23

B. After the apostolic period, the use of keys continued in *office-bearers*

 1. NT distinguishes two kind of office-bearers who are to **use** these keys

 a. 1 Tim. 5:17 speaks about *ruling* and *teaching elders*

 ● ruling elders are the *fathers of the congregation*

 ● teaching elders are the *mothers of the congregation*

C. Each kind of elder received **primarily** one “key of the Kingdom”

 1. Elders that teach: *key of preaching of Gospel* (which elders oversee)

 2. Elders that rule: *key of Christian discipline* (in which pastors assist)

**Reflections**

A. Do you/I pray for those *placed in authority over us?*

B. Do you/I realize how *privileged* we really are to hear the Gospel preaching?

**Thoughts on Preaching**

Jesus told Peter to feed the sheep, not to flog them.

Preachers are to aim at pricking the heart, not stroking the skins.

Christian ministry exists for the promotion

of the throne of God in the heart of men.

John Newton’s grand point in preaching was to break the hard heart,

and to heal the broken one.

In preaching we have to measure up people’s lives to the holy law of God.