

Message #1048
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"THE POWER OF ONLY TWO OR THREE"
{Matthew 18:15-20}

Trinity Presbyterian Church
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THE AUTHORITY OF EVERY BELIEVER

You have incredible power and authority as a believer in Jesus Christ.

Jesus revealed this in our text of the morning--

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them!" {Matthew 18:18-20}

These words are almost frightening for it lays before us the awesome power of the believer and unbelievable force of prayer! "Prayer has already divided seas and rolled up flowing rivers, it has made flinty rocks gush into fountains, it has quenched flames of fire, it has muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, it has marshaled the stars against the wicked, it has stopped the course of the moon and arrested the sun in its race, it has burst open iron gates and recalled souls from eternity, it has conquered the strongest devils and commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and chained the raging passions of men and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea and carried another in a chariot of fire to heaven."

Dear ones--that's not a mere hyperbole--that is historical fact. Prayer is the most awesome force in the world!

...this power...force...is available to every one in this room today

...to ALL believers everywhere!

Our text of the morning gives us three illuminating insights into prayer--from the greatest authority on prayer in all the world--our Lord!

I. PRAYER IS AN AUTHORITY WHICH OPERATES IN MYSTERY

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." {18:18}

What Jesus is saying here is that it is possible for ordinary people--like you and me--to exercise extraordinary power!

Just what did He mean--most especially, what did He mean by Heaven?

...what is Heaven?

...where is Heaven?

On Friday evening I was chatting with a good friend on AOL Instant Messenger. To my surprise he asked me, "Jack, where is Heaven?" I think he was a bit taken back when I said, "I don't know!" He responded: "You're a man of God, you've got to know!" Again I answered, "Man of God? Hmmm! I don't know where Heaven is!" Then he replied, "Oh my gosh, you really don't know!" I then said, "One thing I know is this: Jesus is there...my dad is there...!"

He then proceeded to tell me some people who wouldn't be there! I concluded by telling him that I was going there and hoped he be there to? He replied affirmatively. Heaven is somewhat mysterious to us--especially in a day when on the internet we

can get three-dimensional views of places around the globe. We always think of Heaven in terms of space: earth is here...heaven is up there...and hell is down there! But Heaven is not necessarily "up there" while we are "down here!" Also, we cannot think of Heaven in terms of time.
...we think of earth as now
...heaven is later {after death}

But, what Jesus tells us here is that Heaven exists at the same time as earth...both are part of this life...the here and now! That goes beyond saying that the decisions which we make in this life determine our eternal destiny. Jesus is speaking of something other than that in this verse.
What Jesus is saying is this: Heaven is the silent, invisible, spiritual kingdom which lies all about us, encompassing us, enclosing us, embracing us, waiting for us to recognize it! Hear this: Earth, as opposite to heaven, is the world of sense--we touch and feel and see and sense through our five senses. Heaven is not merely future, Heaven is also present!
...Heaven is equally real as earth.
...and Jesus is saying: The doors between these two worlds are open!
Heaven is open to us now!
...that's the mystery of which I spoke!
...it is through PRAYER that we are in touch with God!
...through PRAYER we move the hand of God!
...God hears our PRAYER...and God responds!
We see that principle in the Book of James: "You have not because you ask not!" {4:2}
...think of this carefully: GOD IS WAITING FOR YOU TO COME INTO HIS PRESENCE
...GOD IS WAITING FOR YOU TO ASK TO BE BLESSED
...GOD IS WAITING FOR YOU TO INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS!
...GOD IS WAITING FOR YOU TO ASK WHAT HE HAS PLANNED FOR YOU!

God has granted to every one of us the authority of binding and loosing--and they won't happen until we act upon that power! For instance: God has said that we have the power to bind every form of evil in our lives. There is NOTHING that needs to have dominion over us...NOTHING. The Bible says: "Sin shall have no dominion over you for you are not under law but under grace!" {Romans 6:14}. By grace we have power to bind every evil force, every contrary authority, within us!
Listen to James: "Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you!" {4:7-8a}
We're involved in Spiritual warfare.
...the spirit of antichrist is alive and well today
...we're warring against authorities and powers in high places.

Dear ones--WE HAVE THE POWER TO BRING THEM UNDER CONTROL IN OUR OWN LIVES AS WE SUBMIT OURSELVES TO GOD AND RESIST THIS ENEMY!
...you need to be a slave to NOTHING...and NO ONE!
...you need not be bound any longer!
...you have power to be set free...NOW...today!

Also, YOU HAVE THE POWER TO LOOSE THE FLOOD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S RESOURCES IN YOUR LIFE...TODAY!
...never again do you need to be powerless!
...you can be filled with the Holy Spirit
...empowered to overcome sin

...habits
...addictions
...no matter how weak you may feel!
...all of God's riches are available to you...NOW!
...God wants to loose His power in you!
Don't miss this: You can be as victorious as you have always wanted to be spiritually!
...no matter what you have been
...no matter what you have done
God has granted us the POWER to BIND EVERY FORCE...
...EVERY evil motive
...in your life...
...and IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS!
That's what INTERCESSORY PRAYER is all about!
...that's the POWER OF PRAYER!
...that's the AUTHORITY YOU HAVE!
...OUR PRAYERS CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN OTHER'S LIVES!
That's why Paul says: "Pray for me, that the word of God may speed on and triumph as it did among you!"

CONCLUSION

I do not pretend to understand all there is about this subject of binding and loosing.
...what I do understand is that I have authority...and power
...you have authority...and power
Our authority comes through PRAYER
...PRAYER is POWERFUL
...PRAYER is our link to God
...PRAYER is the frontier between two worlds
...PRAYER changes things!
...PRAYER changes people!
...PRAYER will change you!
...PRAYER will change those for whom you're praying!
That's why James wrote: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous person has great effect!" {5:16}
WHAT DOES THIS TELL YOU?
...we need to be people of prayer
...we need to avail ourselves of our power
...we need to stop talking about praying and start praying
...we need to pray for one another

Next Sunday: Matthew 18:19-20--HOW THAT AUTHORITY IS EXPRESSED and THE AUTHORITY OF THE INTERNAL CHRIST.