

## 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.