

Binding & Loosing Demonics

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Matthew 16:19

- † *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."* (NIV)
- † *"And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you lock on earth will be locked in heaven, and whatever you open on earth will be opened in heaven."* (NLT)
- † *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you imprison, God will imprison. And whatever you set free, God will set free."* (God's Word)
- † *"I will be giving you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatsoever you should be binding on the earth shall be those things having been bound in the heavens, and whatsoever you should be loosing on the earth, shall be those having been loosed in the heavens."* (Concordant Literal Version - A. E. Knock)

Matthew 18:18

- † *"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."* (NIV)
- † *"I tell you this, whatever you prohibit on earth is prohibited in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth is allowed in heaven."* (NLT)
- † *"I can guarantee this truth: Whatever you imprison, God will imprison. And whatever you set free, God will set free."* (God's Word)

I. Understanding Binding & Loosing

A. Historical Interpretations

These two seemingly enigmatic passages of God's Word have been a source of debate and dispute as to their exact meaning for centuries of the church's existence.

Some have held that the keys of binding and loosing represented the doctrinal authority of the church to decide on and enforce church discipline and instruction (Tertullian, Cyprian and Origin, early church fathers), out of which came the Roman Catholic Church.

Martin Luther believed it was connected with John 20:23 and referred to the church's authority to announce God's forgiveness or continued judgment on sins that people had or had not repented of. (Luther held all Christians had this ability, while Catholics believed the keys were only to be used by the church's leadership).

Some believed that the keys were the opportunity to bring people into the kingdom of God by announcing to them the gospel message of salvation found in the Bible.

Related to this position, still others have held that the keys of binding and loosing represented the basic truths of God's Word itself.

Finally some have held that ‘binding’ relates to Jesus’ statement in Luke 4:18 that He came to “bind up” the brokenhearted, i.e., to heal us and make us whole.

B. Contextual Exegesis (i.e., ‘to interpret or explain’)

The main problems with these various interpretations is that there is little in the context, (particularly in Jesus’ first mention of the keys in Matthew 16:18-19), to strongly support most of these conclusions, coupled with the fact that interpreters rarely if ever take into account the broad applications implicit in the word “*whatever*” (gender: neutral and plural in number, i.e., “many things”) Jesus used to indicate what can be bound. Binding and loosing clearly doesn’t refer to just one thing. However, the only time Jesus uses the words, “the keys,” (Matthew 16:19) is clearly given in the context of spiritual warfare, where He promises His church will prevail in the spiritual battle against the “gates of hell,” (kingdom of Satan). “The keys” not only fit well with “the gates (of hell)” metaphor, they also fit well with the phraseology of Matthew 12:29 in terms of using the keys to ‘unlock’ Satan’s house, tie up his power and “loose” his captives. Indeed, as you will see below, the Greek word for “bind” is most often translated as “imprison” in the New Testament, hence the irony of the prison warden (Satan) being bound/imprisoned in his own compound and his prisoners being released and set free from his bondage over them.

Also significantly, the immediate context of both passages in Matthew includes the only two references anywhere in the gospel accounts where Jesus explicitly refers to “the church” (16:18; 18:17). Therefore, Matthew strongly links the keys of binding and loosing to the church’s mission on earth. Further illuminating this, although Jesus gives the command to “bind and loose” to Peter in Matthew 16:17-19 (the “you” is singular), in Matthew 18:18, the “you” is plural, and so Jesus gives “the keys” to all His disciples. Therefore by clear implication, this call of Christ to bind and loose is given to the whole church, not just to a person or class of persons in the church such as its pastors or other leadership.

Although Matthew 18:18 concludes a brief statement dealing with church discipline (ironically, a practice the church no longer exercises) and precedes a statement on the prayer of agreement, to conclude that binding and loosing refers to the final authority of the church to define what is and is not sin is very dangerous as both contemporary and historical church life teach us. Both in practice today where we see church leadership and whole denominations approve of all kinds of sins God clearly stands against, which inevitably results in an elevation of the church’s teaching authority to and above the level of God’s own inerrant Word is repugnant both to Scripture, and God Himself. Far too easily and far too often, as church history teaches, the errant church sits in judgment of God’s inerrant Word and distorts it instead of faithfully teaching it. For those who believe in the inherent perspicuity (reformers term meaning ‘clarity’) of God’s Word, as Martin Luther has said, “A simple saint armed with God’s Word is to be believed above a pope or cardinal without it,” (or, I would add, who knowingly or unknowingly seriously distort and misuse God’s Word as Satan did with Jesus in Matthew 4). The church does not define and cannot define what constitutes and what does not constitute sin, as God has assigned that function to Himself alone, as expressed through His Word, the Bible.

I like what Rev. A.T. Robertson wrote in *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, “*The more personal we make these great words (of binding and loosing) the nearer we come to the mind of Christ. The more ecclesiastical we make them the further we drift away from Him.*”

Nevertheless, in the context of Matthew 18, declaring God’s Word of truth to those who are straying from it, as well as engaging in prayer of agreement, would, along with binding demons and loosing their captives, all fit well with a spiritual warfare model of binding and loosing, as well as conform to the breadth of “*whatever*” Jesus said can be bound.

In addition, while some have noted the similarity in form between the Matthew 16 and 18 passages with John 20:23, the passages in Matthew differ markedly from John 20 both in context and in content, so to force a parallel meaning between them I believe is to do violence to their separate meanings.

For these and other reasons, I have personally reached a conclusion markedly different from the many historically accepted interpretations described above, but nevertheless one that is becoming increasingly recognized and more effectively put into practice today than ever before.

C. To Bind — ‘Deo,’ To Loose — ‘Luo’

Now we turn to the Greek word ‘deo,’ (Strong’s #1210) translated as ‘bind, lock, imprison’ in the above passages, and which is used in a variety of ways in the New Testament. ‘Deo’ means “to bind, bind together, put in chains, tie up, fasten, i.e., deprive of freedom and liberty.” In our passages in Matthew 16 and 18, the allusion is probably to the ancient manner of binding (locking) together the twin doors of a house with a chain from which a padlock was suspended.

With this basic meaning in mind, let me make a few crucial observations...

1. First, the Greek word ‘deo’ is used of ways *not* referred to in the above passages because the following bonds are *not* to be ‘loosed, unlocked or set free.’
 - † Paul refers to the ‘bonds’ of matrimony by which husband and wife are bound to each other in life-long covenant relationship (Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:27,39). This ‘bonding’ is a positive expression of love that is not to be broken (Matthew 19:6) and therefore not to be ‘loosed, unlocked, set free.’ This bonding speaks of the closeness and intimacy that comes from being ‘bound together’ in love by which two people share their lives together.
2. Secondly, the Greek word ‘deo’ translated ‘bind, lock, imprison’ also refers to people and situations that describe a bondage that God indeed means them to be ‘loosed, unlocked or set free’ from. These include...
 - † Acts 12:6 where Peter is in prison and is described as being bound in chains. This is a bondage God means to ‘loose,’ and later does in the chapter.
 - † Romans 7:6 refers to being released from the law that had ‘bound’ us to salvation by works which God has bound and released us from into the way of salvation by grace through faith in Christ.
3. Thirdly, while the Greek word ‘deo’ is occasionally used figuratively, often as an oath or commitment (Acts 20:22, 21:11, 23:14,21), it’s most important and consistent meaning in the New Testament is to being imprisoned, being ‘bound’ or placed in bonds or chains, that is, deprived of one’s rightful liberty and freedom.

- † At least thirty two times (Matthew 14:3, 22:13, 27:2, Mark 5:4, 6:17, 15:1,7, Luke 13:16, John 18:12,24, Acts 9:2,21, 12:6, 21:11,13,33, 22:5,25,29, 24:27, 28:20, Philippians 1:7,14,16, Colossians 4:3,18, 2 Timothy 2:9, Philemon 1:13, Hebrews 10:34, 11:36, Jude 1:6, Revelation 9:14, 20:2) in the New Testament, ‘deo’ is used to describe Jesus, Paul and others who are literally or essentially ‘bound’ or imprisoned in some way, normally unjustly.
- † This, as it turns out, is of great importance to our understanding of binding and loosing, because the dominant biblical description of ‘deo’ as imprisonment is referred to in a powerful spiritual way in Luke 13:16. In this key passage for our discussion, a woman whom Satan had ‘bound’ (imprisoned) by a demonic spirit that had crippled her for 18 long years is finally ‘loosed’ (healed) by Jesus from that bondage or imprisonment. This is probably the most important verse in understanding Jesus’ words and His meaning of binding and loosing in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. *In fact, “binding” and “loosing” are the words most commonly used for tying up and imprisoning someone or freeing and releasing them from imprisonment.* Interestingly, as I was ministering to someone recently, they commented that they used to feel “so tightly bound up inside” to the anger, fear and bitterness inside their heart, until Jesus ‘loosed them’ and set them free and sent the demons packing.

Next, let’s take a look at the Greek word Jesus used that means, “to loose, allow, set free.” The Greek word for ‘loose’ (Strong’s #3089) in the text is ‘luo.’ It is defined in Thayers lexicon as “to loose anything tied or fastened; to loose one bound, to set free; to discharge from prison, to free from bondage or disease (one held by Satan) by restoration to health.”

Examples of when this word, “to loose” is used include...

- † Mark 7:35 – “At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was *loosened* and he began to speak plainly.”
- † Mark 11:2 – (Jesus) “...saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. *Untie* it and bring it here.”
- † Luke 1:64 – “Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was *loosed*, and he began to speak, praising God.”
- † Luke 13:12 – “When Jesus saw her, He called her forward and said to her, ‘Woman, you are *set free* from your infirmity.’”
- † John 11:44 – “The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, ‘Take off the grave clothes and *let him go.*’”
- † Acts 16:26 – “Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody’s chains came *loose.*”
- † Revelation 9:14 – “It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘*Release* the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.’”
- † Revelation 20:7 – “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be *released* from his prison.”

This is obviously a ‘hand to glove’ fit with its opposite ‘deo,’ meaning to imprison.

D. Meaning of 'The Keys'

In biblical usage, a key (“the keys of the Kingdom”) denotes authority to rule by “opening doors,” (Isaiah 22:22), or in this case, authority for the “kingdom of heaven” to attack “the gates of hell.” (Parenthetically Jesus is also described as having “the keys of death and hades” in Revelation 1:18 and the one “...who holds the key of David. What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open,” in Revelation 3:7).

What are these “keys of the Kingdom” Jesus refers to in Matthew 16:19 meant to open or unlock? Earlier in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus gives us a picture of a building which He is now giving His disciples the keys to in order to open up from the outside. I believe Jesus is referring to His earlier description of “the gates of hell” as “the strong man’s house” in Matthew 12:29 – i.e., the spiritual place or power where Satan keeps people bound and imprisoned in sin and death. The context here is clearly dealing with (though not exclusively) demonic infestation, to which Jesus devoted about 25% of His ministry to people. And what does Jesus say is to be done to set these captives free? He instructs us to ‘bind or tie up’ (Greek – ‘deo’) the strong man Satan (and thereby also his demons who assist him in his assault on God’s people – vs. 28) before his house (his prison) can be plundered, and thereby ‘loose, unlock, set free,’ his prisoners.

Jesus is saying that He is able to assert his authority over demonic spirits and make them obey Him because by His death and resurrection He has bound the strong man Satan. The demon’s obedience to Christ and His followers (Luke 10:17) is proof that Satan has been bound by the power of God. When Satan is bound, he and his demons are powerless and lose their ability to attack us in ways they were previously able to do, or do so far less effectively.

- † As Frank and Ida Mae Hammond write in their book, *Pigs In The Parlor*, “The power to bind and loose in regard to Satan is described as ‘the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’” The word for ‘kingdom’ is ‘basileia,’ which means ‘to rule.’ It is the promise of God’s Word that those who inherit the kingdom of God will rule with Christ (Romans 5:17, Ephesians 2:6). He has promised that we shall reign, or rule in life (Genesis 1:26, Psalm 8:5-8, Hebrews 2:6-8). How could we do this apart from being able to bind the power of the devil and to loose that which he had already made captive? It is a matter of rising up in the power of the name of Jesus and telling the devil what he has to do!
- † An addition, as Gregory Boyd writes in *God At War*, “While the exact meaning of this phrase (“bind...loose”) is disputed, it is clear that it is an essential part of the kingdom-building activity the church is to be part of. Having been given “the keys” to the kingdom, Jesus is saying, whatever the church locks up when it bashed down the gates of Hades (Matthew 16:18) will be locked up in heaven, and whatever it unlocks and sets free will be set free in heaven. Understood in the light of Jesus’ overall healing and exorcism ministry, I can only read this as referring to the church’s authority to bind up demonic forces and to set people free. According to Hiers, *In the New Testament, the terms ‘binding’ and ‘loosing’ refer to the binding of Satan or satanic beings (demons) and the loosing of such things as their former victims.*’ This teaching provides a blueprint of what the body of Christ is to be about. It is to be about what Jesus was about – aggressively breaking down Satanic/demonic fortresses wherever we find them. In people’s lives, in families, in churches and in society at large the church is to expand the rule of God on the authority of Christ by binding evil and setting people free. *When the church opts instead for*

a theology of resignation and thus attempts to accept as from God what Jesus fought as coming from Satan, the church exists in radical contradiction to its defining vocation.”

E. From *The Physical Battlefield* To *The Spiritual Battlefield*

In the Old Testament, the people of God (Israelites) fought their enemies (the Moabites, Philistines, etc.) in physical, military conflicts on the battlefield and killed, or were killed by them. Back then they knew little about the reality of Satan and never understood how he ‘warred’ against them from the heavenlies, not the physical battlefield. Described in Psalm 149:6-9, this process of ‘binding’ is an Old Testament shadow or type of a New Testament reality.

In contrast to this former way of fighting enemies, the Apostle Paul now informs us that, “We are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms,” Ephesians 6:12 (NLT). In other words, we now war against Satan’s demons who are the generals, corporals, majors and sergeants in his army which is arrayed against us. How do we fight them? Not with bows and arrows or bloody swords, but with the “keys” of binding their powers in the name (Acts 16:18) and authority (Matthew 28:18) of the Lord Jesus Christ and loosing their captives from their grip. This is one of the main ways we rule and advance God’s reign and kingdom on earth, as we take ground from the one described three times by Jesus as “the ruler of this world,” (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11).

Although the #1 rule of spiritual warfare is that we *don’t* “wrestle against flesh and blood (human beings),” it is ironically the first rule of spiritual warfare that most people break as they argue, demand and oppose (war against) their pastor, church leaders, spouses, bosses, children, etc. Those who break this rule of warfare betray the fact that their understanding (or at least their practice) of warfare is far more like the Old Testament’s experience of fighting people (now with verbal violence, etc.) than the New Testament’s emphasis on fighting Satan’s legions of demonic spirits, principalities, powers and rulers, while loving people, forgiving and honoring them in spite of their various deficiencies.

F. *The Devil In The Details*

We will now explore three important observations that are hidden in the details of these two passages in Matthew 16 and 18.

- † First we need to recognize the fact that heaven sets the standard and we on earth follow heaven’s lead. Frank and Ida Mae Hammond write, “What is the meaning of the phrase, ‘shall be bound in heaven...shall be loosed in heaven?’ The verb form is the perfect passive participle, so the reference is to things in a state of having been already forbidden (or permitted). This tells us that whatever is bound or loosed by the believer is done on the basis that it has already been done in heaven, i.e., by the Lord Himself. Satan is already bound ‘in heaven,’ by heaven’s power, so his power is broken. We are given the ‘keys of the kingdom.’ There is power to rule over the forces of darkness. We do not have to pray for it. The battle has been won in heaven, we are to bind on earth what has already been bound in heaven. Then, to what does the loosing refer? The loosing is setting the captives

free. Through deliverance ministry the captives are released from the bonds of enslavement which Satan has put them in (Luke 13:11-16).”

- † Second, what is it that has already been ‘bound, prohibited, imprisoned’ in (by) heaven? One little word Jesus used in both Matthew 16 and 18, “*whatever*,” as in “whatever you bind...” Jesus doesn’t restrict the activities of binding and loosing to a single act like forbidding sins (which is neither in the text or context), instead He broadens the potential application to “*whatever...*”, i.e., anything necessary in the spiritual war against Satan. The only limiting factor here is the fact that what is bound on earth must be bound in (by) heaven first – signifying that what is bound and loosed must be in accordance with the will of God in heaven. So we can bind any work (sin, sickness, etc.) or agent (demon) of the devil, and thereby help restrict and shut down his activities and “destroy the works of the devil,” (1 John 3:8) in people’s lives and expand and extend the effective rule of the kingdom of God in people’s lives on earth.
- † This may bring you to the crucial personal question, do you have what it takes to use the keys of the Kingdom to bind Satan and set his captives free, even if you’re not a pastor, elder or church leader? The answer is a resounding Yes! because when Jesus described who could do this, He used the pronoun ‘you’ is the singular in Matthew 16:19 to refer to Peter alone (as the rock on which Jesus would build His church), but He used the plural (“you all”) in Matthew 18:18 referring to *all* of Christ’s disciples. Importantly, this signifies that while the activities of binding and loosing can be done by a single person (Peter), it is given to and meant to be used by all of Jesus’ followers – including you!

G. ‘*Whatever*’ To Bind?

While I have described what I believe is the main thrust of the “keys of the kingdom” and what it means to “bind and loose,” I would now like to emphasize the positive function of binding here as well.

- † First, according to Liberty Savard writing in *Shattering Your Strongholds* (lightly edited), “Binding yourself to the will of God and your mind to the mind of Christ helps you achieve godliness. We can bind and loose, tearing down the strongholds that give the enemy place in us or others. To stand in the gap for others, bind them to the truth and loose wrong patterns of thinking and beliefs from them so they can receive the truth. Loose and destroy the distortions and deceptions of the enemy. Pull them out of the fire and wrap (bind) them in truth by fighting for them in the spirit world. Bind the strong man and spiritually plunder his storehouse for them, taking back what he has taken from your loved one – every good thing they once held dear or have not yet recognized as theirs. You can bind them to the things of God, stabilizing and steadying them while their minds are freed to focus on what they’re hearing from the mind of Christ as the Holy Spirit woos them, drawing them to the Father. With prayers of loosing, you can undermine the strongholds in their old nature and undercut the enemy’s deceptions, hindrances, devices and influences he is trying to bring against them. You thus give those you pray for every possible advantage and assistance so they may be able to pick up the battle for themselves and take it to full victory.”

- † Secondly, writing in *The Keys To The Kingdom*, Mary Garrison writes, “A friend had gone to her sister’s home in another state to baptize her; their brother had got born-again but refused to be baptized. On the way home she was led to bind baptism scriptures to him. When she got home, he was teaching those scriptures to anyone who would listen! According to Proverbs 3:3, 7:1-3, and Deuteronomy 11:18-22, we bound water baptism scriptures to him; to be written upon the tablets of his heart; to be worn as a necklace around his neck; we bound them upon his fingers (as rings), and as a sign upon his hand; as frontlets between his eyes, and that he should teach his children, speaking of them when he sat in his house, and when he lay down and rose up. If the Word is bound to someone before God, then it stays there nagging, tugging and speaking to that person until they (hopefully) receive the message this Word intends for them. When you give them the Word, go a step further – bind it around their neck, and then stir up the Word in them from time to time. We can bind, write, keep, put, lay, teach, speak and command you to hear and keep them. They cannot leave you until their work has been finished.”
- † Thirdly, consider the far-ranging possibilities of what to bind and what to loose. Remember, Jesus gave a broad description of the possibilities in Matthew 16 and 18 when He said, “*Whatever* you bind...” Thanks to Steve Hall (www.aboundingjoy.com) for the following possibilities.
- † To bind (tie up, imprison) could include...
 - Demons from people (“*Or how can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house*” – *Matthew 12:29*)
 - The tongues of critics, divisive people, etc. (“*Let the lying lips be dumb, which speak arrogantly against the righteous with pride and contempt*” – *Psalms 31:18*)
 - Christians, to each other in love (especially husbands to wives and parents to children), (“*That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love*” – *Colossians 2:2*)
 - Secular authorities to execute God’s judgment. (“*To execute vengeance on the nations, and punishment on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the judgment written; this is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the Lord!*” – *Psalms 149:7-9*)
 - The wounds left by tragic life experiences. (“*He heals the brokenhearted, And binds up their wounds,*” – *Psalms 147:3*... “*He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted*” – *Isaiah 61:1*)
 - Kindness and truthfulness to ourselves. (“*Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart*” – *Proverbs 3:3*)
- † To loose or release could include...
 - People from the deceptions/strongholds of demons (“*And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?*” — *Luke 13:16*... “*To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners*” — *Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18*)
 - People from the grip of disease, sickness, pain. (*Luke 13:16* above as well as, “*And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly*” – *Mark 7:35*... “*You have loosed my bonds*” – *Psalms 116:16*)

- The power of God in me to do His work. (*“Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” – Ephesians 3:20*)
- From sin. (*“For he who has died is freed from sin,” – Romans 6:7... “Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke?” – Isaiah 58:6... “To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood” – Revelation 1:5... “Saying to those who are bound, ‘Go forth’” – Isaiah 49:9*)
- The Word of God to work. (*“The word of God is not imprisoned,” – 2 Timothy 2:9... “So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth – it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in what I sent it to do” – Isaiah 55:11*)
- The Holy Spirit from my spirit into my body, soul, mind, will and emotions, and into the lives of others (in order to give wisdom, encouragement, and understanding, as well as to heal, bring conviction, deliver from demons, and grant repentance). (*“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water” – John 7:38*)
- Praise from the hearts of men. (*“And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God” – Luke 1:64*)
- Angels, to do their work of ministry, protection, and warfare. (*“So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God. And on the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter’s side and roused him, saying, ‘Get up quickly.’ And his chains fell off his hands” – Acts 12:5-7*)
- People from mourning and depression. (*“You have turned my mourning into dancing, You have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness” – Psalm 30:11*)

II. Contemporary Examples Of Binding & Loosing

While experience seems to demonstrate that binding demons and loosing their captives “doesn’t work everytime” it’s done, the same conclusion based on experience could also be reached regarding prayer, faith, sacraments and ordinances, grace, law, evangelism, healing, etc., yet no one would recommend that we discontinue those biblical principles and practices. Let us not make the same mistake in our warfare of binding and loosing against the enemy. Just because binding demons and loosing their victims is exercised weakly at times, or absent other powerful disciplines such as fasting, etc. or done in words alone without real faith in the power of God given to us, or without broad participation and agreement in the body of Christ where needed, or for any other variety of reasons, does not in and of itself invalidate it’s biblical usage. There are probably a large variety of reasons that many things Jesus’ commanded us to do don’t seem “to work” as we would expect them to, or work as effectively as when Jesus Himself did them (since we don’t share His perfection).

Below are a variety of times when binding spirits did indeed “work,” often when any number of other spiritual exercises hadn’t. I offer you a few examples of others who have done this on a larger scale, and some of my own examples of using the keys of the kingdom on a smaller, more individual scale as I’ve ministered to people. Please consider them closely.

- † Evangelist Joel Marandi of the Brethren In Christ Church in Purnea, northern India, reports, “The Safa Hor are a group within the Santal people living in Mohini village in the Araria district. They worship the Hindu god Rama, and celebrate a fire walking ceremony each year – they dig a pit, in which they lay a fire, and then walk over the burning coals – without burning their feet. I’ve been evangelizing in this village for two years, without visible result. I realized that this fire walking ritual was demonic, and the reason why I was not making progress. This year, I called some Christian colleagues to help. Together, we walked around the place where the ceremony was to be held, praying that God would break the power of all demonic idols in the village and binding the spirits. Only a few villagers showed up for the ceremony. One tried to walk on the fire, but burned his legs. I then told the people about Jesus, the true God. Following the clear demonstration of his power over their own ceremony, 25 villagers decided to follow Jesus. Isn’t God great?”
- † As someone else reported, “Prior to knowing anything about deliverance, someone told us they had a demon living in their home. They could see the demon. They did have knowledge of ‘binding,’ so they merely bound the demon in Jesus’ name. I have never heard how long a demon can stay bound, but this person said the demon was ‘frozen’ in their doorway of the kitchen for about six months. It was then the person found out they had the authority to make the demons leave using the name of Jesus, and it did – but not until it was commanded to!”
- † Writes Timothy Warner in *Spiritual Warfare*, “There is a town on the boundary between Brazil and Uruguay in which the main street is the international border. One side of the street is in Brazil and the other is in Uruguay. Ralph Mahoney of World MAP tells of a missionary who was in this town passing out tracts. On the Uruguay side of the street people were very unresponsive. They would routinely refuse the tracts or almost immediately throw them away. But then he noticed that a person who had refused a tract on the Uruguay side of the street crossed over to the Brazil side and accepted the tract and even thanked the missionary profusely for it. This aroused his curiosity, so he observed and discovered that the same pattern was followed by several more people! Peter Wagner reports that, “Later as the missionary was praying about the incident, the words of Jesus came to his mind, ‘No one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder the house’ (Mark 3:27). Could it be that the ‘strong man’ on the Brazilian side had been bound, while the ‘strong man’ on the Uruguayan side was still exercising power?”

The following are some of my own experiences with binding demons in people’s lives...

- † When we were putting a lady through Transformation Ministry, her husband who was a ‘bouncer’ on a school bus for elementary age school kids, took the binding and loosing authority we used against demons and applied it to his bus of elementary aged school

kids. He took authority over the demons and bound them, forbidding them to speak to or through the students and shut them down. The result? His bus went from a 'normal nightmare' of hyper energetic kids in 'slow-riot' mode to a bus that became as quiet as a bug! Needless to say, the driver and later others came up and asked him what had happened to his bus.

- † I agreed with a lady over the phone taking authority over the demons in her husband so that he wouldn't object to a friend of hers coming for Transformation Ministry. A few hours after she hung up with me on the phone, she was amazed to find that her husband was just fine with whatever had to happen to get her friend up here, no opposition or problems whatsoever from him!
- † Recently a friend called me, exhausted by the elderly lady she's looking after who suddenly has turned from a nice, passive, docile Christian senior citizen into a swearing, cursing, oppositional, 'run out the door naked' lady who more closely resembles a sailor! I told her we needed to take authority over the demons in her and command them to shut up and quit stirring this lady up, and restore her to her former tranquil state. We did, and I talked with my friend a few days later. As we spoke, she laughed and said the lady she's taking care of has become a dream since we took authority over her demons! Now, far from being oppositional with my friend, she now calls her "my best friend, I don't know what I'd do without her!"
- † A friend has been trying to get her dog to shut up and stop barking. He'd go on and on for hours, day or night non-stop. She's tried everything, but nothing worked. Then as we were seeking God about it, He told me, 'It's generational!' I asked her if her dog's mom or dad was a barker, and the light came on and she said, "Oh yes, his dad barked himself hoarse." So we bound the barking demon generationally, threw it out, and the barking has been cut down by at least 75% since. But that was not the end of it. A week or so later, he started barking at night and one of the neighbors was woken up by it, and in a fit of anger, opened the window and cursed the dog (which had been done before many times). The next day, she bound in prayer all curses spoken against her dog (including the previous night's one), and her dog has been largely de-barked ever since!
- † A friend emailed me complaining of his Dad's continued craziness and spouting all kinds of verbal abuse at his wife. I recommended we bind the demons of alcohol, insanity and paranoia in him as an experiment and see what would happen. My friend agreed and so we did. His dad calmed right down, no big outbursts anymore. A couple of months later I emailed my friend and suggested we stop binding the demons in his dad and see what happened, but to my surprise he didn't want me to stop until after Easter came and went because he said his dad was always the worst at holidays. So I agreed to keep binding the demons. Easter came and went without any problem or eruptions, everything was calm!
- † My daughter Megan called me needing some love and prayer one day. I was led to take authority ('bind') the demons in her boss at work as well as others there and I asked God to give her a great shift at a job she doesn't particularly like. She called later and told me that she had one of the greatest shifts at work she's ever had – she got 10 different positive comments from customers she served, she got the best place to wait on instead of

the worst place and she said her boss was kind and nice toward her instead of riding her and being grumpy! What a difference shutting the demons down in them made.

- † A friend always suffered from deep post-partum depression. She recently delivered her 4th child, but before she did, I and a couple of friends bound the demons in her and forbade them from pushing her into the post-partum depression that's always plagued her. Not only did she not go into a depression after delivering her girl (the very first time that's happened), but her 2-year-old son has not put up a fuss having a new sister (even if she's competition in the family), he's happy with her being there!
- † I bound the demons in a friend, especially demons of alcoholism and depression. After doing that for a few days, his wife called and said he's doing much better, "that clear liquid in his glass isn't vodka anymore," and he is moving well and seems happier than he had been. Twice in the next few days she mentioned how well her husband was doing, all through binding the spirits in and around him.
- † A friend told me recently about his work as a nurse with often violent, institutionalized people. He and another male nurse had to 'escort' a patient out of one building to another on campus, and my friend bound demons in the patient. The result was that the left side of the man he was holding onto was peaceful and calm, while the right side of the man who the other nurse was holding onto who hadn't bound the demons in the man was struggling and fighting him all the way. My friend said it was a sight to see!

As you can well imagine, I've become very impressed with the power of God working through binding demons and loosing people from them.

As someone has commented about such incidents, "In our experience, these violent manifestations can be partially, though not always completely, controlled through binding the demons in the Name and Authority of Jesus Christ. The degree of success in binding depends on the degree of submission of the person to the demonic."

III. Prayers For Binding & Loosing

Again, I like what Rev. A.T. Robertson wrote in *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, "The more personal we make these great words (of binding and loosing) the nearer we come to the mind of Christ. The more ecclesiastical we make them the further we drift away from Him." Amen! So I now conclude with some written prayers on binding and loosing that might be of value to you.

- † From *Shattering Your Strongholds*, by Liberty Savard (lightly edited). "In the name of Jesus Christ, I bind my body, soul and spirit to the will and purposes of God. I bind myself to the truth of God. I bind myself to an awareness of the power of the blood of Jesus working in my life every day. I bind my mind to the mind of Christ that I can have the thoughts, purposes and feelings of His heart in me. I bind my feet to the paths You have ordained for me to walk in that my steps will be strong and steady. I bind myself to the work of the cross with all of its mercy, truth, love, power, forgiveness and dying to self. In the name of Jesus Christ, I bind the strong man and I loose his hold on everything he has ever stolen from me. I rebuke his works and loose the power and effects of every deception, device and influence he wants to bring against me. Lord, I repent of having

wrong attitudes and thoughts. I renounce them now and ask Your forgiveness. I loose every old, wrong pattern of thinking, attitude, idea, desire, belief, habit and behavior that may still be working in me. I tear down, crush, smash and destroy every stronghold I have erected to protect them. I bind myself to the attitudes and patterns of Jesus Christ. I bind myself to the overcoming behavior and spiritual desires that line up with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Father, I loose any stronghold in my life protecting wrong feelings I have against anyone. Forgive me as I forgive those who have caused me pain, loss or grief. I loose any desire for retribution or redress. In the name of Jesus, I loose the power and the effects of any harsh or hard words (word curses) spoken about me, to me or by me. I loose any strongholds connected with them. I loose all generational bondages and their strongholds from myself. Thank You, Jesus, that You have promised whatsoever I bind and loose on earth will be bound and loosed in heaven. Amen.”

† And again (lightly edited), “Lord, (a friend, family member, or one of Your people, etc.), is being held hostage by the enemy. You have said that captives can be taken back from the mighty one and prey can be rescued from our enemy. You contend with those who contend against Your children. I thank You that the lesser power that is contending with these will have to bow to Your greater sovereign power within me. I bind the strong man that he will not be able to stop me from taking back everything he has stolen from these people You have laid upon my heart. Lord, I’m standing on the truth of Your Word. You said You would give me the keys to the kingdom, that whatsoever I would bind on earth would be bound in heaven and whatsoever I would loose on earth would be loosed in heaven. Right now, in the name of Jesus Christ, I bind my will to the will of God, that I will be constantly aware of His will and purposes for my life. I bind myself to the truth of God that I will not be deceived by the many subtle deceptions of the world and the devil. I bind myself to the blood of Jesus, that I will never take it for granted. I want to be constantly aware of its miracle-working power to restore and heal and keep me safe. I bind myself to the mind of Christ that I will be aware of how Jesus would have me think in every situation I come into this day. I do not want to react out of my own human, carnal thoughts when situations arise suddenly. I want to think and act as Jesus would have me act. I bind my feet to paths of righteousness that my steps will be steady and true all day long. I bind myself to the work of the cross in my life so that I will continue to die daily to my own selfish desires and motivations and be more like Him. I bind the strong man so that I may spoil his household and take back every bit of joy, peace, blessing, freedom and every material and spiritual possession that he has stolen from me. I take them back right now! I loose, crush, smash and destroy every evil device you may try to bring into my sphere of influence during this day. I repent of every wrong desire, attitude and pattern of thinking I have had. Forgive me, Lord, for holding onto wrong ideas, desires, behaviors and habits. I renounce and reject these things. In the name of Jesus Christ, I loose (destroy, crush, break, smash, etc.) every wrong attitude, pattern of thinking, belief, idea, desire, behavior and habit I have ever learned. I loose the strongholds around them that would keep me from being completely surrendered to the will of God for my life. I loose all doubt and confusion and deception from myself. I have bound myself to the mind of Christ and I loose every wrong thought and evil imagination

that will keep me from being in sweet unity with Him. I bind and loose these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who has given me the keys to do so. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the truth. I also decree dead and withered all lies and misinterpretations that have been planted within my mind and heart as Jesus cursed and withered the fig tree from its very roots. I loose myself from all negative words spoken about me, to me or by me; I break all these judgments and vows and curses in the name of Jesus. May Your complete and perfect will and purpose be done in every area of my life. I thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your loving, obedient substitution in death on the cross for me, and I praise and thank You for Your most generous, graciously shared victory!”

- † And again, “In the name of Jesus Christ, I bind _____’s body, soul and spirit to the will and purposes of God for his life. I bind him to the truth and to the blood of Jesus. I bind his mind to the mind of Christ, that the very thoughts, feelings and purposes of His heart would be within his thoughts. I bind _____’s feet to the paths of righteousness that his steps would be steady and sure. I bind him to the work of the cross with all of its mercy, grace, love, forgiveness and dying to self. I loose every old, wrong, ungodly pattern of thinking, attitude, idea, desire, belief, motivation habit and behavior from him. I tear down, crush, smash and destroy every stronghold associated with these things. I loose any stronghold in his life that has been justifying and protecting hard feelings against anyone. I loose the strongholds of unforgiveness, fear and distrust from him. I loose the power and effects of deceptions and lies from him. I loose the confusion and blindness of the god of this world from _____’s mind that has kept him from seeing the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I call forth every precious word of Scripture that has ever entered into his mind and heart that it would rise up in power within him. In the name of Jesus, I loose the power and effects of any harsh or hard words spoken to, about or by _____. I loose all generational bondages and associated strongholds from _____. I loose all effects and bondages from him that may have been caused by mistakes made by any other human being of any generation. I destroy them right here and now. They will not bind and curse _____ nor his family any more. I bind the strong man, Satan, that I may spoil his house, taking back every material and spiritual possession he has wrongfully taken from _____. I loose the enemy’s influence over every part of his body, soul and spirit. I loose, crush, smash and destroy every evil device he may try to bring into his sphere of influence during this day. I bind and loose these things in Jesus’ name. He has given me the keys and the authority to do so. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the truth that sets us free as we know and walk in it. Amen.”
- † And from a friend, “In the Name above every name, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I take authority over every spirit in and around (_____) for it is written in Luke 10:19, ‘Behold, I give you authority over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means harm you.’ I flatten your hierarchies and cut you off from every other spirit. I rebuke and bind you and forbid you to speak to (_____) in the first person as if you spoke his own thoughts. I command you to loose his mind, will, and emotions. I curse and decree dead every lie and I stir up the truth within (_____). I call you (_____) to rise up strong to hear and do the word of Truth that you be not deceived by others or yourself. In Jesus’ name on behalf of (_____) I bind all mind-blinding

spirits and all spirits of doubt and unbelief in and around (_____). I decree the lies you have planted in (_____) dead and withered. Loose (_____'s) mind, will, emotions, eyes, ears, and tongue. I claim their soul for the kingdom of God and call (_____) out of darkness and into God's light and truth. I ask the Holy Spirit to stir up the truth (_____) has received and cause it to grow and be fruitful. May the eyes of (_____'s) heart be enlightened that they may know by experience the hope of their calling in Christ Jesus. May God's witness continually come with God's love and power into contact with (_____) to plant and water the truth. I thank You, Lord Jesus, that (_____) is saved whether they know it or not yet! Amen.”

May these words bless you and help you defeat the power of the devil in your own life as well as in the lives of others Satan has bound. May Jesus' kingdom come and His will be done in your life and through your life so you may be fully released to live your destiny in Christ instead of your history in the world! To God be all the glory.

ALL His best to you, Pastor Bruce Koester

Strong In Spirit Ministries

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