

**KEYS OF THE KINGDOM
THE KEY OF SUFFERING
PART 1**

Keys. Ordinary objects. You probably have several on a key ring in your purse or pocket. We don't think about them very much, we just use them – to get into our car, into our home. Keys unlock things. God has been speaking to this ministry about keys for some time now. In 2003, Chuck Pierce said God was giving keys into our hands. In 2004, it was about doors – “Go through the door in 2004.” At the U.S. National Conference in 2004, we heard a message from Dutch Sheets related to Isaiah 22:22.

At the end of his message, Dutch took a large key and began to pace back and forth across the platform, declaring: *Take the key! Take the key! Take the key! I release the Isaiah 22:22 anointing of government [to you, Aglow]! You'll take the key [of kingdom authority] and open doors that cannot be closed and close doors that no one can open!*

In an act of prophetic significance, he handed the key to Jane and she received it for the ministry, proclaiming: *This is the key of heaven. It is to unlock revelation and truth and courage and strength and power and passion for this hour! We say to you, Aglow, It is a new hour, it is a new day!*

It was a powerful moment when everyone felt the shift into the new place that occurred during those moments.

Then, again at the 2005 Worldwide Conference, we heard about keys. In her keynote address, Jane spoke to us about one of the keys of the kingdom: the key of suffering. We'll come back to that.

KEYS IN SCRIPTURE

The Bible has much to say about keys. They are often used symbolically to represent authority or power. The one who holds the keys has the power to open and to shut, to allow access or deny access. When you purchase a new home, once the paperwork has been finalized, you are given the keys. You now are the only one who has the authority to unlock the door to your home. You have free access and can come and go as you please. You also determine those to whom you will open your door, or keep it closed.

When a Jewish man in biblical times had succeeded in becoming a “doctor of the law,” he was given a key. It was not just any key, but the key to the closet in the temple where the sacred books were kept. This signified that he was being given authority to teach and explain the Scriptures – to unlock, or open, the Scriptures to the people. This is the background that Jesus spoke into when He accused the scribes and Pharisees of taking away the “key of knowledge” from those who were trying to enter the kingdom (Luke 11:52, Matt 23:13).

Let's look at Isaiah 22:22:

*The key of the house of David
I will lay on his shoulder;
So he shall open, and no one shall shut;
And he shall shut, and no one shall open.*

The context of this verse is King Hezekiah promoting one of his officers, Eliakim, to the position of a high-ranking official of the court, as indicated by the giving of the “key of the house of David.” It was an office of significant trust and influence. When Eliakim was given that key, it was a sign that he had been entrusted with the chief authority of the government, not unlike the role of prime minister. He was given the authority to act in the king’s name.

Jesus quoted this verse when referring to Himself in Revelation 3:7:

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens."

By referencing the key of David, Jesus is describing His power in the kingdom of heaven and His authority to administrate the affairs of His kingdom. His authority is complete and absolute.

Hebrews 2:8

You have put all things in subjection under his feet.

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

We have been given delegated authority by our King:

Luke 10:19

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

We are to administrate His kingdom here on earth until He returns. In the language of the book of Daniel, we are to “possess” – or hold on or occupy – the kingdom until He comes again (Daniel 7:18, 22). In the process of possessing, we will experience both victories and temporary defeats. However, we are assured of the final outcome because “*a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High.*” That judgment was the completed work of the Cross!

Recently, the Lord spoke to me about the fact that He is King of the nations. We tend to more often see Him as Savior, Redeemer, Friend, the Lamb of God, even the Risen Lord. And He is all those things. But I sensed Him saying:

I am revealing myself as King of the nations in this hour, for truly I do reign over the affairs of men and kingdoms in the earth. I hold every kingdom in my hand.

And I would have you see yourselves, not only as proclaimers and witnesses of my Gospel, but as my REGENTS on the earth. For you will come up to me and receive revelation of my kingdom and bring it down to earth. You will bring it to bear on the lives of men in the earth. You will bring my kingdom to bear on the kingdoms of this world. For you are my regents and you go in the authority of my kingdom.

I thought “regents” seemed an unusual word to use. In the U.S., we are not as familiar with that word as people in Europe would be, because “regent” speaks of monarchies and such. When I looked up the word in the dictionary, I was given insight into what the Lord was wanting us to see.

The word means: *A person appointed to rule while a king is absent; acting in the place of a king or ruler.*

The Lord wants us to grasp the authority He has given to us. A regent goes in the authority of the king. Our King is, in a sense, “absent” from the earth, and He wants us to rule in His place until He returns. Of course, we don’t do this in our own strength. He has given us the Holy Spirit, both to reveal His will and to give us the ability to fulfill it. Therefore, we approach every situation with the mentality of the kingdom. We carry the government of Christ into that situation. And we go in the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor 2:1-5).

We have been given the key of spiritual authority.

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Following Peter’s revelation that Jesus was, indeed, *the Christ, the Son of the living God* (Matt 16:16), Jesus declares that upon that revelation of who He is, He will build His church, and *the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven* (vs.18,19).

When you read verse 18, how do you picture the gates of Hades? Do you think of them in terms of the ongoing attacks of the enemy against us? Do you see yourself on the defensive? In the Bible, “gates” referred to the entrance, or opening to a walled city, or a fortress. They are not offensive, but defensive. This is picturing that the door of the enemy’s kingdom WILL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE CHURCH! We are on the offensive, not the defensive! Jesus Himself took back the keys of Hades and Death from the enemy:

Revelation 1:18

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Jesus has given us the *keys of the kingdom!* Remembering that keys symbolize the authority to open, we see that in this passage in Matthew, Peter was given the keys – the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ -- and preached the kingdom first to the Jews (Acts 2:41) and then to the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-47; 11:1; 15:7). Thus, he opened the door of faith to them and unlocked access to the kingdom. We have been given keys to unlock the kingdom of Heaven to those who are still locked up in the enemy’s kingdom.

There are many keys of the kingdom we could consider. Faith is a key of the kingdom (Matt 21:20-22, Mark 11:22-24); unity is a key (Mark 3:24); childlike trust is a key (Mark 10:14-15). The qualities Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount are also keys of the kingdom. But, in Part 2, I want to come back to the one that was mentioned at the beginning of this article: the key of suffering.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT...

- Look up the above references to keys in Scripture and ask God how each applies to your personal life. Journal your answer, or, if you are in a group, share your responses.
- Can you find other “keys” in Scripture? What are they?
- How might you approach situations differently if you saw yourself as a “regent” of the kingdom of God? How would you describe a kingdom mentality?

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM THE KEY OF SUFFERING PART 2

In her keynote message at the Worldwide Conference in Nashville, Jane spoke to us about the key of suffering. Many have been in a season of suffering. We've seen disasters in the earth that have caused untold suffering for hundreds of thousands of people: Hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in Asia, earthquakes and floods in several parts of the world. Personally we experience all manner of suffering: in our physical bodies, illnesses that seem unrelenting; in our hearts, disappointment, loss, brokenness; materially, financial lack and needs. Jane stated:

There are some doors that can only be opened with the key of suffering. There are things that have been locked up until this specific time in history, and for those who are willing to embrace heartbrokenness, physical [suffering], or whatever the suffering has been...in the midst of that suffering, something has been building. I believe these are keys that unlock the future plans of God. Plans and purposes that can only come with the key of suffering. In Isaiah 46:10 it states:

*Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'*

"Things that are not yet done" refers to unfolding revelation as we move towards the fullness of time.

Part of that unfolding revelation is the role that the key of suffering plays in bringing forth the kingdom. Jesus, our example, spoke to His disciples of his own suffering. In Luke 24:44-46, He states:

*These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. 45 And **He opened their understanding**, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and **thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day...**"*

He opened their understanding so that they would comprehend that it was necessary for Him to suffer. Prior to His resurrection, the disciples could not fully grasp the teachings concerning His crucifixion. Peter even rebuked Him when Jesus began to show His disciples that He would suffer, die, and be raised on the third day (Matt 16:23). But once He arose, He was able to interpret those teachings for them in the light of their fulfillment.

PURCHASED THROUGH SUFFERING

Jesus' suffering purchased something for us.

In Luke 4, we read that Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. For forty days He endured suffering. Each time the devil came to Him, he tempted Him to prove Himself: "If you are who you say you are, then command the stones to become bread... worship me... throw Yourself down from the temple..." But Jesus did not succumb to the instant gratification He could have had by proving He was, indeed, the Son of God. Rather, He suffered, knowing that His suffering

was producing something far greater. He was determined to accomplish complete victory and to buy back the authority that was lost in the Fall.

When we are led of the Holy Spirit into the wilderness of suffering, we too are buying back authority: authority to act as His “regents” in the earth. *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.* We are bringing forth His kingdom and His purposes when we embrace the suffering. By “embracing the suffering” we are not referring to an unhealthy, unbalanced mentality toward suffering. Rather, we trusting that God is at work in the situation and we participating with Him in the process of bringing His purpose forth.

His suffering bought back for us the dominion and power that He had purposed from the beginning when He told Adam and Eve to *Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion...* (Gen 1:28).

Power was released in the earth through what Jesus suffered. And so it is with us. Jane stated:

... when we embrace the suffering, a power is released in the earth... God has put in our hands an ancient key, the key of suffering, that is going into an ancient lock to unfold the ancient purposes of God, as established from the beginning of time. Things that have not yet been revealed; things that have not yet come to pass; things that He is unfolding as we move towards our destiny...

Our willingness to stand in the face of suffering, to endure with faith, is buying authority in the spiritual realm. As we persevere, waiting and believing for the things God has promised us, we are growing stronger and as Jane said, *There are unshakable truths planted in our hearts that only come out of hardship.* Embracing the key of suffering moves us that much closer to God’s purpose and destiny for our lives. We cannot get there any other way.

STRENGTHENED THROUGH SUFFERING

1 Peter 5:10 encourages us:

*But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, **perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.***

Look at what God accomplishes in us through suffering:

- **Perfect:** Greek, *katartizoo*: *to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be*
The word also means to prepare and to restore. Suffering is a key that can unlock the future God has for us. He uses it to shape us into what He sees we will need to be in order to fulfill His plan.
- **Establish:** *sterizo*: *to set fast, to turn resolutely in a certain direction, or to confirm; to make stable, place firmly, fix*
It is the same word used in Luke 9:51 when Jesus “steadfastly set” His face to go to Jerusalem and fulfill His purpose through the Cross. Through suffering, our faith is tested as is our commitment to believe His promises, plans and purposes for our life. Unlike temptation from the enemy designed to weaken our faith, God’s testing validates and establishes our faith.
- **Strengthen:** *sthenoo*: *to strengthen, (figuratively) confirm (in spiritual knowledge and power)*
There is spiritual power, knowledge, discernment, and understanding that only comes through suffering. We come to know the character of God in ways we would not understand if we had not

endured hardship. Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered (Heb 5:8). How much truer that is for us.

- **Settle:** *themelioo: to lay a basis for, (literally) erect, to lay a foundation*
This word is translated “grounded” in Eph 3:17 where it speaks that Christ *may dwell in your hearts through faith...being rooted and **grounded** in love...to know the love of Christ...*
It is in the midst of suffering that our trust in God and His love for us is most severely tested. Yet, if we endure, the foundation on which we stand is immovable and unshakable. To know – by experience (*ginosko*) – the love of Christ is the basis for our confidence in Him.

To paraphrase 1 Peter 5:10, when we experience suffering, we are being prepared for our future, resolutely committed to God’s purposes, strengthened in our relationship and understanding of God, and laying a firm foundation from which we will not be moved!

GLORY FROM SUFFERING

Paul, as one who was deeply acquainted with suffering, tells us:

Romans 8:17-18

17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

One of the “ancient doors” that the key of suffering unlocks is a revelation of God’s glory – to us and in us. To us, in that we see God in a deeper, more intimate way that we did before we went through the trial. We come to know His comfort, His strength, His care for us in a way that only suffering can unlock. Job said,

*I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But NOW [after going through suffering] my eyes see You. (Job 42:5)*

On the other side of the trial, Job saw God’s glory.

His glory will be revealed in us. Have you ever known someone who has endured much suffering? There is a light that seems to radiate through them. There is a solid assurance within that comes through their life with strength and authority that is tempered by humility. It is the glory of the Lord revealed in that person. Suffering unlocks the glory within you that God placed there from the time you were being formed in your mother’s womb.

We can gain a proper perspective on our suffering if we take Paul’s advice in verse 18. The word “consider” means to calculate, compute, evaluate, or weigh. Paul is saying that if you place the suffering on one scale and the glory on the other, the glory side far outweighs the suffering. It is a weight that is exceedingly great and eternal:

2 Cor 4:17-18

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things

which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

TRAVAIL THROUGH SUFFERING

Think about a loved one who is not walking with the Lord. No doubt you have labored in prayer for that one's salvation. There is suffering in watching someone you love make wrong choices and it breaks your heart. The tears and the prayers soften your heart towards the Lord so you can sense His heart for your loved one. So you intercede and travail and carry a burden for that person in your heart. It's not easy, it hurts, and it involves suffering. Still, you carry it in your spirit like a woman carrying a child in her womb. Just as a birth in the natural realm is not without pain, so it is with a spiritual birthing.

God has a burden in His heart for His loved ones – the people of Israel. He longs for the day when they are birthed into His kingdom.

Listen to what He says about the Jewish people:

Deuteronomy 7:6-7

6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples..."

Isaiah 49:14-16

*14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me."
15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.
16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;
Your walls are continually before Me.*

Ps 103:13-14

*13 The LORD is like a father to his children,
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.
14 For he understands how weak we are;
he knows we are only dust. NLT*

Jesus grieved over Jerusalem.

Matt 23:37

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

The tenderness of God's heart toward Israel is expressed all through Scripture. His covenant with them is an everlasting one and is not nullified because they have rejected Jesus. He is still longing for them to enter into relationship with Him. And He is looking for those who are willing to carry the burden of His heart in prayer and intercession.

In her conference message, Jane shared from Jeremiah 9:1 that the "weeping prophet" travailed and suffered over the condition of his own people. They had turned from God. The cry of Jeremiah's heart was also the cry of God's heart:

Jeremiah 8:21-22

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt.

I am mourning;

Astonishment has taken hold of me.

22 Is there no balm in Gilead,

Is there no physician there?

Why then is there no recovery

For the health of the daughter of my people?

Paul too, carried the burden of God's heart for his people:

Romans 9:2-4

2 My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief 3 for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed — cut off from Christ! — if that would save them. 4 They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's special children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave his law to them...NLT

In 2001, God spoke sovereignly and prophetically to the ministry of Aglow by imparting the burden of His heart to our leader, Jane. This call, this burden, has not come without suffering. But there are prophetic purposes – "ancient doors" – that God wants to unlock concerning His people and His land. He has entrusted us with a key of authority: to stand in the gap, to proclaim His purposes, to weep for His people, and to carry the burden of His heart for those who are the apple of His eye. Will we embrace the key of suffering and cry out for the veil to be lifted?

We, as Gentiles, have been grafted into the kingdom because of the turning away of the Jewish people. We have been the recipients of great mercy as a result. It is our responsibility to now turn towards our Jewish brothers and sisters, can carry them in the womb of our spirit, pray and birth them back into the kingdom that we may become the "one new man" Paul spoke of in Ephesians 2:14-18. The body of Messiah will never be complete until we see the return of the Jewish people and they are grafted in again (Romans 11:23).

Jane has said that we will never become corporately what we have not experienced personally. The suffering we endure in the circumstances of our personal lives tenderizes our hearts towards the Lord. Our personal suffering prepares us to embrace the corporate call on the ministry of Aglow so that we can fulfill God's purpose and destiny for us.

God has given us many examples in Scripture of how to endure suffering: Joseph, Abraham and Sarah, King David, Hannah, Esther, Ruth, and of course, His own Son. How did they find grace to endure and come through victorious? They looked beyond the immediate circumstances and saw the hand of God at work on a greater agenda. From Abraham and Sarah's suffering would come

the nation of Israel (Gen 12:2-3); Joseph's suffering resulted in many lives being saved (Gen 45:8-9); Esther's suffering was the salvation of her people (Est 9:1); Jesus' suffering bought our righteousness (2 Cor 5:21).

Jesus trusted His Father, confident of His Father's love and sure of the larger purpose at work in the midst of His suffering (see 1 Peter 2:23). Help us, Lord, to see Your hand in all the circumstances of our lives.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT...

- What are the "ancient doors" that God wants to unlock in your personal life?
- Have you received the key of suffering to open the dark places so His light can come in? Take time to pray and release resentment or bitterness concerning any situation that is causing you to suffer.
- What might be the "greater agenda" God is working in the midst of your suffering?