

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

- FRIDAY -

Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. – Matthew 18:18.

Who are the “ye” in this text? To whom did our Lord Jesus Christ give the Office of the Keys and all the powers connected with it? Whom did Christ command to preach the Gospel, to baptize, to administer the Lord's Supper, to forgive and to retain sins? There is much dispute on these questions. We will therefore look into the Bible, and so, very simply, get the answer from the Word of God. At one time Jesus said to believing Peter: “*I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*” (Matthew 16:19.) So here the Lord gave to Peter the Office of the Keys. And now the Pope raves and asserts that the Office of the Keys belongs to him, on the further assumption that Peter was the first Pope. But the Lord gave the same office to the disciples—the “ye” in Matthew 18:18. Again, He gave this office to them when He told them: “*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*” (John 20:21, 23). Here many assert that the Office of the Keys was given to the pastors. And though pastors are the ones who are to carry out this office *publicly* (in the context of the congregation), the Office of the Keys has been given to all Christians (the Holy Christian Church). In the text at the head of our lesson the Lord says to every Christian: “*Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*” The Office of the Keys “is the peculiar church-power which Christ has given to His Church on earth,” as our Catechism says in accordance with the Word of God.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, from Thy Word I know that Thou hast made me Thy disciple and a member of Thy Church, to whom Thou hast committed the powers and duties comprised in the Office of the Keys. I beg Thee to grant me Thy Holy Spirit that I may faithfully fulfill such obligations, that Thy holy name may be praised on earth to the salvation of many. Amen.

This is the power of holy keys,
It binds and doth again release;
The Church retains them at her side,
Our mother and Christ's holy bride.

Hymn 426, 9. (ELHB)

* Scripture reading for **Friday**: 1 John 1:8-9; Psalm 51:1-4, 9-12; Psalm 32:1-2
Theme this week: Repentance