

The Key of Knowledge

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**For you have taken away the key of knowledge
Luke 11:52**

Jesus lamented that the religious leaders of his day did not use a key when teaching and applying the scriptures. He said that not using this key meant that they were not entering into the kingdom of God. Worse, he said that others were hindered from finding God because of the teaching of the scriptures without using this key. What is the key? It is found at the beginning of creation...

**Then God said: "Let us make man in Our image,
according to Our likeness."**

Genesis 1:26

The key is simple. It is this: God made men and women to be like Him. To be whole and to be free. Every application of scripture that takes away from a person's wholeness is being misapplied because it has not been unlocked with this key. This key unlocks all of the Bible. Without this key the Bible becomes a book of slavery and bondage, with it the Bible becomes a book of Life. It is the foundation of all creation.

**If the foundations are destroyed what can the
righteous do?**

Psalms 11:3

In Luke 11:37 Jesus takes up an invitation to eat at a Pharisees house (the Pharisees were a group of religious leaders) and sits down. His host remarks that he didn't ceremonially wash before eating, and that's it - all hospitality is gone! For seven verses Jesus calls his hosts greedy, wicked, foolish, cursed, proud, hypocrites and like hidden graves. Another group at the house objects, so Jesus starts on them too. They are accused of loading people with false burdens which they do not carry themselves, murdering God's prophets, failing to enter the

kingdom of God and hindering others from too. In verse fifty two Jesus declares the Bible teachers cursed and exclaims at them: ***"You have taken away the key of knowledge."***

Instead of serving the main course the Pharisees and the other group, called Scribes also start shouting at him and try to catch him out so they could have him locked up or even put to death. Hardly a nice little dinner party! So what upset Jesus so much? The answer is incredibly simple but blind to many.

The answer lies in the phrase *The key of knowledge*. A key unlocks something. If something needs to be unlocked it must be hidden in some way. One clue is in the parts of the Pharisees and Lawyer's behaviour which Jesus reacted to. Jesus objected to the way they dealt with everything from an *appearance* perspective. They washed the outside but not the inside. They were meticulous about small things but neglected God's love and justice. They loved to be seen as important, but were like hidden graves - OK on the outside but rotting on the inside. In a nutshell they propagated an image of God to the ordinary people as someone who was more concerned about things being *done right* than their welfare. They removed the key of knowledge. They ignored God's real character and what everything He did was really about - helping and loving people. Hence people were distanced from God, even put off Him. The best example of this is in the gospel accounts of Jesus healing on the Sabbath.

In Luke 13:11 Jesus heals a woman who has been very ill for eighteen years and is severely bent over. The leader of the synagogue objects because Jesus is working on the Sabbath. This is in fact true, healing was considered a part of ministry in the Old and New Testaments and therefore work. Matt 10:10 even specifically defines healing as work for which one is eligible to be paid.

Therefore Jesus unequivocally broke the 5th Commandment by working on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). Right here Jesus gives us a revelation which should have been obvious but most of us miss. In Luke 13:16 he says, *should not this woman be loosed on the Sabbath?* He is making the simple point that the

most important thing is for people to be free and whole. Mark 2:27 sums it up perfectly when Jesus says: "*the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*"

If your application of one of the Ten Commandments does not result in someone being made free and whole then it's invalid. Am I saying we can break the Ten Commandments? Yes and No. If the application of any scripture does not follow its original purpose - the wholeness and well being of people - then we are missing the point completely. It's like saying, are we not supposed to keep the speed limits on the roads? Yes of course, but the emergency services break them all the time to save people. The limits are there for our safety but they can and should be broken in a realistic way to put out a fire or save someone in a road accident. Only a fool would insist that under no circumstances, including emergencies, must anyone ever break the speed limit. However in the church world this sort of madness goes on all the time.

I recently read what must be one of the dumbest articles of all time and one which perfectly sums up this flawed religious thinking. It was/is on a popular Christian website.

The author was talking about how we should never lie. He says lying is a sin and correctly articulates how the ninth commandment about 'bearing false' witness is from any perspective a lie. The example is then given where by if someone in WWII was asked if there were Jews hidden in their house by Nazi soldiers whether they should lie and say *no* to protect them or tell the truth and say *yes*. The author in an incredible monumental performance of barmyness articulates how one should always tell the truth even in such circumstances because:

"If we love God, we should obey Him (John 14:15). To love God first means to obey Him first—before looking at our neighbour. So, is the greater good trusting God when He says not to lie or trusting in our fallible, sinful minds about the uncertain future?"

Consider this carefully. In the situation of a Nazi beating on the

door, we have assumed a lie would save a life, but really we don't know. So, one would be opting to lie and disobey God without the certainty of saving a life—keeping in mind that all are ultimately condemned to die physically."

Earlier in the article the author also said:

"As fallible, sinful human beings, our imperfect thoughts may not be able to comprehend what God has in mind [referring to both this WWII scenario and any others in life in general] and we need to strive to trust God when He speaks on this subject, regardless how hard it may be. We need to place our faith fully in Christ and trust in God in all things—and not lean on our own understanding."

Sounds flawless doesn't it? What's missing? The point of everything is missing, that's what's missing. Pause for thought and try applying this approach to the woman who had been bowed over for 18 years who Jesus healed on the Sabbath in Luke 13. Without a shadow of doubt this is exactly the reasoning that the Pharisees would have used when Jesus broke the 5th commandment by working on the Sabbath and healed the bowed over woman. They would have said The Law says... and then reread the above quotes and insert into them the sick bowed over woman instead of the Nazis beating on the door, e.g. *If we love God, we should obey Him. To love God first means to obey Him first—before looking at our neighbour the bowed over woman...*

Jesus was exasperated with people who handled God's word in this manner. He asked them a question that clearly demonstrated that the purpose behind something God had commanded was greater than the technical application of it.

Ought not this woman...be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?

Luke 13:16

This inability to grasp God's good purpose for people is the hallmark of the Pharisee. God has no purpose in handing women and children over to a demonic Nazi regime to be

stripped naked and collectively herded into a gas chamber to die a horrible painful death from inhaling chlorine gas and burning their lungs out. The gift of common sense tells us that.

But you know what - without the key of knowledge you can't see the wood for the trees. You can't see God's love, you can only see the Law, to which you tack on some kind of mysterious nonsense about God having higher purposes; that being gassed is some kind of special revelation of God's love that we can all learn from.

I mean seriously, Jesus walked into that Synagogue and saw the bowed over woman and he healed her, so how can anyone who reads that about Jesus imagine him also happily saying, 'yes here are my Jewish relatives they're all going to die anyway so you may as well gas them now, it's all the same to me and by the way I foresaw it all, in fact, no, wait I even predetermined it...'

Law without love is not truth. Something that is true with love is not true without it, even though they may be the same. Truth is indelibly linked to love because God is both love and the source of all truth. God's truth is love. Everything that God has shown us to do and not do, does not exist in isolation to love.

Please note when I say truth I do not mean facts. The earth is a globe regardless of whether someone tells you that in love, fear or deceit. I am not talking about that kind of scientific truth at all. However some people think that spiritual law and principles are the same - that they exist in only one dimension anchored to nothing except their own immutability.

This is exactly what Jesus had to deal with when facing the Pharisees. To them not working on the Sabbath was an end in itself - because to them all of what God had said was an end in itself. Everything God had said was a glorious isolated unimpeachable truth simply because God had said it. In their minds God was also glorious and isolated existing in a kind of Holy vacuum. This is nonsense. God is real and normal! Of course His holiness is awesome and beyond our comprehension but His holiness is to what? Holy means *devoted to* or

separated to. So what is God Holy and separated to? Himself of course – there is nothing greater than Himself. And what is God Himself?

He who does not know God does not love, for God is Love

1 John 4:8

Simple! But way too hard for people who spend their lives in seminaries to grasp. In everything we deal with in life we have to look at the truth behind it to establish what is really right and wrong. You can do many right things that hurt people and many apparently wrong things, like lying to Nazis soldiers, driving an ambulance above the speed limit and healing on the Sabbath that actually turn out to be right things because they are acts of love.

Think about it. God the Father Himself perpetrated the greatest injustice of all time. He laid on Jesus the penalty for all the sins of the world when Jesus was the only man who had ever lived who had never sinned. But guess what? It was also the purest act of love that had ever been and will ever be and so that made it right. In fact it was so right that it provided righteousness for all of us too!

What's it all about? People. Right and wrong is what is good for us and what is wrong for us. There is nothing that is good for us that is wrong to God or bad for us that is right to God. Ahh yes but...

**“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.”**

Isaiah 55:8-9

Yes they certainly are and Jesus definitely demonstrated that when the Pharisees tried to handle the Law without the key of knowledge. God's ways are ways of love and wholeness to us. Religious ways are ways of the Law handled without love and

leading to death. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul said:

Our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6

Aha, you may say, you're off track again Shenstone because Paul was referring to the Old Testament Levitical Law as being an imperfect way to gain righteousness. No and No. First: the Old Testament Law was not imperfect and unable to bring righteousness, it did, in the life of Jesus. There was nothing flawed about the Old Testament Law, it's just that no one else kept it because they were too busy trying to keep it the wrong way, by the letter of it and not by the spirit of it. Jesus broke the letter of the Law frequently but He kept the spirit of it flawlessly.

And, no again, because if you reread the verses above you will see that Paul is not referring to the Levitical Law but rather to the new covenant. He does not say: *God who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter of the Law, but of the Spirit...* Paul only says, *we are ministers of the new covenant not of the letter but of the spirit.* The Old Testament Levitical Law is not mentioned.

Shockingly the Apostle Paul is saying that even the new covenant applied by the letter and not by the Spirit also brings death, just like the misapplication of the Old Testament Levitical Law by the Pharisees did.

In every situation we have to ask are we using the key of knowledge to unlock the challenges we face in life. Are we dealing with people in troubled or difficult situations from a "you have to keep the rules even if it kills you" approach anaesthetised with all kinds of meaningless nonsense like, "God knows best." Or are we really saying what would Jesus do? What brings wholeness and life to the individuals we are trying to help. Contrary to popular belief we are not supposed to soldier on until every last ounce of strength has gone from us

while we die keeping the rules and undermine the very reason that they are there in the first place - for us. Jesus said:

"I ask you one thing: Is it right on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"

Luke 6:9

Jesus expects you to be able to comprehend what is right and wrong by using your conscience and correctly handling His word using the key of knowledge. You are expected to grow up enough to know the difference between lying fraudulently for selfish gain and lying saying something that is not factually true to save people from being murdered.

'But this love and grace approach could be abused!' Tell me something new. Of course it can be abused. The Garden of Eden proves that. God entrusted Adam with freewill and the Earth and look what he did. It can also be abused the other way too. You can crucify the Son of God based on the letter of the Law. So what's the solution? **Grow up!**

Stop enslaving yourself to sin while calling it freedom and love. Stop pontificating around laying down the letter of the new covenant without love and leaving people bowed over in a lifetime of bondage.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

**And now abide faith, hope, love, these three;
But the greatest of these is love.**

1 Corinthian 13:11-13