

Where Boundaries Matter

Matt 16:18-19

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And 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.

I. Introduction

1. About this time a week ago, Sunday, March 7 at 9:25am, an Indiana State Trooper was called to assist Rockville City Police in the pursuit of a vehicle. The officer observed the vehicle coming at him at a high rate of speed, so the officer activated his emergency lights and siren and attempted to make a traffic stop.

2. As the pursuit continued westbound on US 36 toward Montezuma, Indiana, the officer's radar showed the vehicle was traveling 105 MPH in a 30 MPH zone. Another officer in the vehicle's path deployed stop sticks but the suspect made an evasive driving maneuver and was able to avoid the sticks and continued westbound on US 36. But then for an unknown reason, the suspect's vehicle came to an abrupt stop in the westbound lane and State Police officers were able to take the suspect into custody without incident.
3. The driver showed signs of impairment but reported to the officers that he came to a stop because he knew he was approaching the Illinois state line which he didn't want to cross because it would get him into more trouble.
4. The suspect recognized the importance of boundaries. He knew from his history of

crossing boundaries already that he would get himself into greater trouble if he crossed the next boundary. At the time he was unaware that he was about 8 miles from that boundary, but just having knowledge that he was approaching the boundary was all it took to cause him to stop.

5. I want to speak to you in what is at least a 2-part message: Where Boundaries Matter.

II. God is boundless

1. Let us look at how boundaries became important in an encounter between warring kings Ahab of Israel and Benhadad of Syria.

2. The kings of Syria had recently taken away some of the lands of Israel and were on a pursuit to take more.

3. The land in question had been apportioned to Israel's tribes by Joshua years before, so what had rightfully belonged to Israel, Syria had taken away.

4. And so it came to pass that Benhadad, king of Syria wanted to take even more of the land from Israel, but were surprised by the strength of Israel's young soldiers who stopped their pursuit on a battle field in the hills.

5. **[map Samaria to Ramoth]**

6. I want to point out that the enemy king of Syria had misjudged the power of the God of Israel.

7. His military advisors told the king that the reason Israel had beat them in battle was because the battle had taken place in the hill country and that Israel's God was merely a god of the hills.

*1 Kings 20:23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, **Their gods are gods of the hills**; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*

8. The enemy of Israel thought Israel's God could only bring victory within certain boundaries, plus he compared the size of his army against Israel's army and saw nothing but victory:
1 Kings 20:27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.
9. Large vs. small, big vs. little? What are the odds.
10. Plus Syria thought that Israel's God was limited by boundaries—he's only the God of the mountain top not the God of the valleys.
11. But God sent a prophet to the King of Israel with this word:
1 Kings 20:28 And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the

hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

12. But what the enemy did not realize was that people in the valley can put their trust in God too. Just because you are not on a mountain top doesn't mean that God is not there for you.
13. That is a tactic that the adversary would like to convince you of, that God cannot help those in the valley.
14. Just forget about going to God. Just forget about getting into the church. You're outside the graces of God where you are. You've walked away and you're down and out, and there's no help and no hope for you.
15. But the message I believe God is wanting to pass to you today is that the God on the mountain, is still God in the valley.

16. Sis. Warner and I used to sing a song about this:
- Verse 1:** Life is easy, when you're up on the mountain
And you've got peace of mind, like you've never known
But things change, when you're down in the valley
Don't lose faith, for you're never alone
- Chorus:** For the God on the mountain, is the God in the valley
When things go wrong, He'll make them right
And the God of the good times
Is still God in the bad times
The God of the day is still God in the night
17. It came to pass on the battlefield in the valley that day, that the God of the mountain proved He was the God of the valley and Israel's small army destroyed the army of Syria.

- III. Where boundaries matter
 - A. Legal boundaries
 - 1. But I'm preaching to you this morning about "Where Boundaries Matter." And our first point seems to contradict that, because as we have seen in this example, and many others we could provide, God is not bound in any way by human boundaries.
 - 2. However, that is not to say that on his own, **man** is not limited by boundaries. In fact, yes, there are boundaries that we are limited by.
 - 3. State law says that if we cross a county boundary or a state boundary while involved in a criminal act, the charges against us will be multiplied against us.
 - 4. It was that knowledge that led to the surrender of the speeding driver last week.
 - 5. That is When Boundaries Matter.
 - 6. If I need some firewood, I can't cut down a tree in my neighbor's yard without his

permission. There is a boundary line and when I cross it, I no longer have the rights and liberties I had inside the boundary.

7. I may know somebody who is collecting a retirement pension from Great Dane, the Ford Motor Company, or Cummins Engines, and I could complain about that because I am not, but it would be a senseless complaint.
 8. I never crossed the boundary of being an employee of Great Dane, Ford or Cummins.
 9. And what I want to talk about for a moment is the boundary to the Promised Land.
 10. God promised Abraham a land and confirmed that promise to Abraham's descendants until Moses led them to the border of that Promised Land.
 11. While God owns it all, there was still a border that His people had to cross in order to obtain the promise.
- B. Come out from the world

1. And I felt the Lord urging my heart this morning while we are speaking about how Boundaries Matter, that it is needful for us to get on the side of God's promises.
2. Are you in the church? I'm not talking about inside this building we all the church, I'm talking about being inside the relationship with Jesus Christ where He is your Father and you are His child. This message could be titled, "Come Out.":

2 Cor 6:17-7:1

*17 Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

3. In these last days, God is calling a people out of this world that He wants to enter into their lives, not as a distant relationship, not as a back-seat driver, but one of sons and daughters who follow Him closely, and who depend on Him deeply, and who trust in Him completely.
4. He is calling for someone who will live for Him fully, who will walk with Him daily, and who will obey Him passionately.
5. Is that you? Are you on the other side of the border? Are you on the outside looking in and wondering what this “church thing” is all about?
 - c. Promises to those on the inside
 1. Some would say, “I’m ok with God, but I don’t do the church thing.”
 2. Well I’m going to say with boldness that you are missing out on an entire life on the other side of the border that has rights and

liberties that are not available outside of that relationship of being in Jesus' church.

3. There are liberties, protections, and authorities that come with being in the church:

Matt 16:18-19

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And 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.

4. What Jesus is saying there is that He has certain protections He intends for those who have crossed that important border from the world into His church.
5. When we were called to **“come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the**

Lord,” that was a call to be a part of the church that Jesus came to build.

6. That is why Jesus told His disciples who were the foundation of His church, to pray, *“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”* (Matt 6:13)
7. It was to those in that same group that Jesus said:
Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
8. And when writing to the church, Paul said:
1 Cor 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.
9. And it was regarding those whom Jesus had redeemed through salvation that it was said:

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

10. All of these promises and many more are available to those in His church. Those are not man-made rules, those came from Jesus about those who are in His church.

D. How to get inside

1. And while we me like to say everybody belongs to Jesus, and in a sense, that is true because we are all His creation, but the is a whole category of promises He reserved for those whom He calls His redeemed.

2. It is those who have been born of the water and of the Spirit who will be able to cross that border into heaven.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

3. Jesus asked for a change, a conversion:
Matt 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted [turned around], and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
4. Conversion means to turn around. That is the meaning of repentance.
5. Conversion is a change that involves repentance, turning away from our sin and then walking away from our sin:
Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.
6. It is in repentance and conversion that our sins are blotted out and we are able to enter into the presence of Jesus:
Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;
7. Repentance is part of being born of the water:
Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them,

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- E. Obeying or disobeying the gospel
 - 1. What we are talking about here is obeying the gospel so we need to know how to do that.
 - 2. When we repent of our sins and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, we are taking those steps of faith that lead to obeying the gospel and getting on the right side of the boundary— inside the King’s gate, inside the kingdom, inside the church, on the inside of the house of God.
 - 3. That is where judgment begins. Are you on the inside or the outside?

1 Peter 4:17-18

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them

that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

4. The apostle was talking about boundaries. Where are we located? Specifically he asks, where will the ungodly and sinner appear in relation to the boundary?
5. 2 Thess 1:8-9 tells that the ungodly and the sinner shall appear on the wrong side of the border because they will find everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.
6. But we have a choice in the matter, about which side of the boundary we prefer to be.
7. God will not force anyone against their will to go to heaven and spend eternity with Him.
8. Those who reject Jesus out of their own determination to shun what Jesus has done for them, and choose to decline what He

offers them, will not be obliged to be with Jesus in heaven.

9. But the book of Hebrews says for those who reject the sacrifice Jesus made for their sins need to know,

Heb 10:26-27

*26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, **there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,***

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

10. It was Jesus' offer to die in our place for our sins that makes Him our advocate, and there is no other advocate, no other sacrifice for sins that Jesus.
11. So, the good news is, when we accept Jesus' offer to take our sins away, which is what the gospel message is, then it puts on the inside of the boundary of His church.
12. Obeying the gospel starts with believe the gospel, and then repenting. God is not

willing that any would perish:

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

13. God has a wonderful plan of redemption, a conversion experience, a born of water and Spirit experience, a repentance experience, and He offers it freely.

IV. Conclusion

1. Do you want to get into the boundary of His church where there is protection from what comes out of the gates of hell?
2. You may be down in the valley and think that God is only the God of the mountain. He is only the God of those super-spiritual saints.
3. But He is still God where you are and He is calling you to a higher place in Him.

4. And I would rather be inside the King's gate on any day than outside where many perish at the hands of the adversary, where there is judgment and fiery indignation.
5. That is where the ungodly and sinner appear. I don't want to be on that side of the boundary for that is most certainly a place where boundaries matter.
6. But when we experience the born again experience, that is when we are reconciled to God and all things become new in Jesus:
2 Cor 5:17-18
17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;
7. If you want to come inside the church where you are within the protection of the Church of Jesus, the journey begins with

believing the gospel of Jesus—He is the sacrifice for our sins.

8. They obeying the gospel by repenting and being baptized in Jesus' name for the remission/forgiveness of our sins.
9. And we become a new creature in Christ when we are filled with the Holy Ghost. That is also referred to as being baptized by the Holy Ghost.
10. Being born of the water and being born of the Spirit.
11. Repent together.
12. Be filled. Open your heart to worship Jesus. Open your mouth with a praise to Jesus. Give Him control from your heart to your tongue. As the Spirit fills you, your tongue will begin to speak in a heavenly language as a sign the Spirit has filled you.
13. Be on the inside, Where Boundaries Matter.