

THE KEY IN MY HAND

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Published in 2022
Victoria, BC



GARETH EVANS MINISTRIES

Chapter Synopses

Chapter One:

Priorities

Jesus and His disciples celebrate the Passover in the Upper Room. It is the night before He is to die and He has some priorities He wishes to share with these men whom He loves. He makes many wonderful promises to them, but He also asks three things of them. He demonstrates and asks for servanthood. He commands them to love one another. He tells them to be obedient to His word.

Chapter Two:

A Covenant People

Following His teaching them, Jesus institutes the Agape Feast or communion. He presents this as a covenant act and no one present asks Him to explain for they all understand. I tell the story of Dr. Livingstone, that great pioneer missionary to Africa, and how he came to understand the covenant aspect of the communion bread and wine. Like the disciples, as we take the bread, we are declaring ourselves to be the 'Body' of Christ. As we drink the wine, we are expressing our agreement to the terms of the covenant - that we serve one another, love one another and obey His Word. Having taught His disciples the priority of relationships, Jesus prays the great High Priestly prayer, "that they may all be one..."

Chapter Three:

The Body of Christ

The apostle Paul now takes up the theme of the Lord's Upper Room prayer. He shows that the relationship called for in one-to-the-other serving and loving is best demonstrated in the example of a living body. He sees the church as "the Body of Christ", instituted by God. We examine the three major contexts of this teaching found in Ephesians 4, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. and note that they are also the contexts where the 'gifts of the Spirit' are emphasized. I now present three pieces of evidence for the Spirit-filled life as found in the first of these contexts. They are a worshipping attitude, a thankful attitude and a servant attitude. (Eph. 5: 18-21).

Chapter Four:

The Tragic Truth

Having urged his readers to be *filled with the Spirit* and expressing one evidence of being so filled as *being subject to one another in the fear of Christ*, Paul gives examples of how this should be in our relationships. He writes of the Christian marriage, relationship with our children, and the workplace. The truth is, however, that in so many cases, there is little evidence of a Spirit-filled witness in these places. Missionaries leave the field because of poor inter-personal relationships, pastors leave churches hurting and disillusioned, and churches split, often over minor issues, while the world looks on, listening to the gunshots as believers assassinate one another! - and Satan gloats!

Chapter Five:

The Devices of Satan

Jesus conquered Satan and his demonic forces through the cross. They now only have power as we give it to them, allowing them to work in all areas of our lives, our attitudes, emotions and thoughts. Paul; declares that *we are not ignorant of his devices*, but, sadly, that is just not true for many believers today. Jesus warned us to be on our guard and Paul encourages us not to *give the devil an opportunity*. We must be careful not to allow any bitterness to rise up in us for it will surely destroy our relationships. Satan is likened to a roaring lion, whose only power is in frightening his intended prey to inertia. He is also likened to an archer, shooting his fiery darts. We need to know the truths of God's Word as an antidote to the lies of the 'roaring lion' and as a shield to the fiery darts. There follows a brief list of Scripture references declaring who we are "in Christ".

Chapter Six:

The Wounded Soul

When we were converted, we became a *new creation*. Evidently, this must refer to our spirits which were once dead to God, for our bodies still continue to die. What about our souls and the souls of all who have not experienced the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit? They also bear wounds that need to be healed. I consider *bruises* of the soul, giving an illustration from a personal counselling experience. (In all stories recorded, I have changed the names of people and locations involved). Then follow other wounds I liken to *stab wounds, grazes and fractures*.

David, the Psalmist carried wounds resulting from his adultery and murder. However, he could declare that the Lord *restores my soul*. He still wants to bring healing to our soul-wounds. The chapter ends with a personal story of how I came to understand something of the wounds I

was carrying and how Satan was able to manipulate me to defeat when I was involved in a major work among the Native Peoples of Western Canada.

Chapter Seven:

Our Response

God's priority is relationships. Hence the priority of Satan is to mar relationships. He is not omniscient nor omnipresent so his tactics must be of a 'hit and miss' nature. From our conception, he has been trying to destroy all who may develop to become antagonists against him. The 'hits' he achieves are seen in the high number of people classified as coming from dysfunctional families. Counsellors, both Christian and secular, spend many hours trying to teach people how to deal with their dysfunction, their wounds. They are brought to a place of 'maintenance'. Seldom, do we see them brought to a place of healing, the healing that Jesus purchased for them in the atonement. God has committed to us a ministry of *reconciliation* that requires the healing work of forgiveness. I close the chapter by considering the 'offended sheep' of Matthew 18:12f. So often we are glad to see a sheep leave the local church when they are offended, instead of reaching out to understand him and seeking to bring reconciliation.

Chapter Eight:

Unneeded Baggage

Much of our wounding is due to our taking on ourselves the burden of offences. Offences will come but how we respond to them is our responsibility. Even in great testing, we can choose not to be offended. There is a difference between sin and offence. e.g.; I may be offended because of personality differences or false expectations. I take five Biblical examples of people who took offence. The result each time was that they lost something; their fruit, their confidence, their testimony, their communion and the supernatural work of the Lord in their lives.

Chapter Nine:

The Rock of Offense

Jesus even allowed offence to come to those He loved! I take examples from the life of John the Baptist, while in prison, and from the death of Lazarus, when, I suggest, Mary's offence caused the Lord to weep. He allows offences to come in order to teach us something about ourselves. When we are offended we need to own the offence, examine it, discard it and forget it!

We also need to be careful not to cause offence!

Chapter Ten: The Key to Release

This is the main thesis of the book. I base my thoughts on three related portions of Scripture. We have been given the *key to the kingdom of heaven*. With it, we can open an avenue by which the Lord will minister to those with whom we have a grievance, with the potential fruit of reconciliation. When others sin against us, they produce wounds that bind us. They have also sinned against the Lord. By our decision to forgive and to seek their release from God's judgement for that sin, we open the avenue for the Lord to minister to them. I suggest the prayer of Stephen as he was 'sinned against' by Saul, as a model for us. I wonder if Saul would have ever become Paul the apostle, if Stephen had not prayed, "*Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge!*" As we release others, we are ourselves released. To such who seek such release, the Lord has promised to *be there, in their midst*. (the context of Matthew 18:18f).

Chapter Eleven:

Heaven is Opened

I tell the true stories of three people I have counselled according to the principles of chapter ten. Their names and the locations have been changed but the stories are essentially true. Each time these stories have been told in public, there have been people coming forward identifying themselves with the examples. One of those cited has elicited the retort from several acquaintances that *this is the greatest miracle I have ever witnessed*.

Chapter Twelve:

Jesus the Healer

This is a short chapter outlining the process I follow when counselling those with deep wounds. I recognize generational sins where dysfunctional parents pass on their dysfunction to their children. Other wounds come from many different causes. My counselling may take several sessions where we seek to understand patterns of behaviour, symptomatic of the wounds. When the counselee has recognized the hurts, the wounds, the patterns, they are encouraged to express their feelings by writing them out in the form of a letter. When this is a comprehensive expression of all their feelings, they are challenged to exercise the *key* that the Lord has given each of us. They must come to the place of forgiveness and release.

Chapter Thirteen:

Walk Out Your Healing

Knowing that many will identify themselves in the examples given, there needs to be some guidance concerning their counsel. This chapter outlines a self-help course, depending on

the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Preferably, it should be worked through with another mature Believer.