

# Holy Trinity Church

Easter 1 - Sunday Bible College - April 8, 2018

## APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

### I. Definitions

#### A. The Anglican Way

1. Holy Scripture
2. The Church Fathers

#### B. What is Apostolic Succession?

1. The Church's authority and ministry is guaranteed by an unbroken line of ordination reaching back to the Apostle's and ultimately Jesus Christ
2. The big question this doctrine answers is "says who?"
3. Is \_\_\_\_\_ doctrine *apostolic*? Comprehends Biblical and normative criteria

### II. The Biblical Foundation

#### A. St. John 20:19-23

1. The Johannine Pentecost - The first ordination service.
2. Jesus Christ breathed on them and said:
  - a) "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"
    - (1) The mission of the Church
    - (2) Commissioning of the Apostolate
  - b) "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"
    - (1) The gift necessary to execute the office
    - (2) Divine origin: Procession of the Spirit from the Father and through the Son!
      - (a) The right of God to order his Church
      - (b) Similar to the Levitical order of the Old Covenant
    - (3) Commission in front of others
    - (4) It's relation to Pentecost
  - c) "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."
    - (1) The ministry of reconciliation (BCP 260)
    - (2) Authority given to the Church
      - (a) Commonly called the "keys"
      - (b) St. Matthew 16:13-20; 18:18-20
3. Apostles were to be the stewards of this gift until Jesus Christ comes again

#### B. St. Matthew 28:16-20

1. "All authority..." plenary authority given to the Apostles

- a) Not an authority for licence
  - b) An authority to accomplish the mission of establishing the Kingdom of God throughout the world
2. "Go therefore..."
- a) The Great Commission is the result of the special training that Christ gave to the Apostle's during his earthly ministry
  - b) They were trained by Christ, gifted with the Holy Ghost, and commissioned for to a task
- C. St. Paul's Authority
- 1. St. Timothy - Bishop in Ephesus - 1 Timothy 5:17-22
    - a) Instructing St. Timothy on how to organize and govern the Church
    - b) First permanent apostolic representative (i.e., Bishop!)
    - c) "Do not lay hands hastily" - he ordains
    - d) "Rebuke" - he rules
    - e) "I charge you" - he receives his authority from the Apostle (see also 2 Tim. 1:6)
  - 2. St. Titus - Bishop in Crete - Titus 1:5-9; 2:15
    - a) "ordain elders in every city" - he ordains
    - b) "shouldest set in order the things that are wanting" - he rules
    - c) "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" - he teaches
    - d) "speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" - he represents Apostolic authority

### III. The Patristic Foundation

- A. St. Polycarp - Bishop of Smyrna
  - 1. Not in Holy Writ, but around the same time
  - 2. Commissioned by St. John
  - 3. Testified to by his protege St. Irenaeus - "...not only been instructed by Apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but had also been established by Apostles in Asia as bishop in the Church at Smyrna"
    - a) Use of the word "Bishop"
    - b) Apostolic pattern
- B. Ignatius - Bishop of Antioch (d. 98-117 A.D.)
  - 1. Martyr
  - 2. Wrote seven letters with several mentioning the authority of bishops as distinct from that of elders (i.e., priests) and deacons
  - 3. "...do nothing without the bishop, but be subject also to the council of presbyters as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, our hope...Furthermore, it is necessary that those who are deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ please everyone in every respect" - *Letter to the Trallians*

4. The three-fold ministry is present even before the Apostles die!
5. Pattern is always that true bishops were those who were ordained by the Apostles to execute their office.

IV. What does this mean for you?

- A. Anglican Province of America has apostolic succession!
  1. Our jurisdiction takes this very seriously (they conditionally ordained me a deacon!)
  2. Necessary, but not a sufficient condition for a good priest
- B. Guarantee of the ministry of the Church:
  1. Sacraments are valid! ~(A layman can Baptize!)
  2. Absolution occurs!
  3. Blessings are possible!
  4. Prayers are heard!
  5. Preaching is orderly!
- C. Your priests are dedicated to that Old Time religion
  1. Preach and proclaim only that which was given to the Church by Jesus Christ
  2. St. Jude 3 - "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
  3. Safety of the Ark of the Church - why go anywhere else?