



## **Christian Love-Part 6**

### **Loving God's Invisible Kingdom**

#### **Pastor Mike Fabarez**

Well, I was recently driving on what is arguably the most frustrating freeway in all of Southern California. The dreaded 91.

At about four or five o'clock. On a Friday afternoon.

Eastbound.

And before I got on the 91 I remembered, hey, they're doing a lot of construction, it'll probably be bad.

And my son knew I was going out that way and he texted me, being so aware of the Southern California freeways, he says, "Hey dad, be sure to take the new express lanes, they are all finished now."

Oh, OK. Awesome. I'll see how the new construction went. They've got two of these express lanes then four or five of these other lanes and so, I say, oh that's awesome. So I decide to hop into the express lanes which cost now \$10, I think it was. \$10 on my little transponder went "beep, beep" or "ching, ching." \$10 and I said, why I'm going take this, it is going to be better and about 100 thousand other people decided to do the same thing about the time I got in there to pay my \$10. And what I expected when I got into the express lane is to get into those express lanes and have all those losers to the right of me, the common folks, just be sitting there stuck in traffic as I'm whizzing past them.

But you know what happened to me last Friday? I sat there, stuck, for eight or nine miles in a parking lot called the express lane watching all the common folks who were ten dollars richer than I was whizzing past me, cursing my son under my breath the whole way.

That little experience last Friday is a lot like the Christian life sometimes. We feel as though we've gotten into this thing that's supposed to be really a good experience called Christianity and we're there, much like the psalmist said in the Old Testament, thinking that our lives should be better and the non-Christian life, to put it in our terms, is going to be worse. And yet here is the non-Christian world whizzing by us, laughing, mocking, throwing an occasional beer can at us as they go by saying, oh you're a fool for getting in that lane.

The psalmist really dealt with that repeatedly in their songs from the heart and it's painful. Why did others seem to have such good lives? We've given up our lives to follow Yahweh or in the New Testament we are now devoted followers of Jesus Christ, bringing glory to the Father by giving our subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ and it seems like their lives are cruising along a lot better than ours.

That is a real pain and a problem and it's sobering when our expectations come crashing down. And sometimes we sit there and ask where's the payoff?

Where's the blessing, where's the good stuff, where's the ultimate advantage? I've given up my life



to follow Christ and, you know, where is the benefit?

The benefit, if you open up the Bible and look through it, you will find is contained in a very important and powerful, poignant word, it's the word "kingdom," believe it or not.

Kingdom. The kingdom in the Scripture is to be the ultimate payoff. It is the hope and anticipation of everyone who's given up their lives to follow God, to step out from the rest of the common lanes and say, I'm going to count myself with God. I'm going to be this person who trusts in Him, lives a righteous life.

And the thing that we are waiting for, the ultimate benefit, the vindication is something the Bible calls "The Kingdom." Now when we get our lives right with God and we recognize that we are now aligned with the king, we want the king to start doing things that would make wrong things turn around so that they're right, or to put in the words the Old Testament prophet, to see the crooked ways made straight and the rough places, plain, every valley lifted up, every mountain laid low, all the rough stuff is made just how it ought to be. He fixes it.

It's the hope of the Christian life, it's been the hope of every righteous person throughout the Bible. And so we say, God when are you going to do all that? And you can imagine all the Old Testament people thought, well, soon as we get the king then we'll have the kingdom.

Soon as God sends the Messiah, his Christ, this one that is in the prefigured position of David, he will sit on David's throne and then his kingdom and his reign will have no end, it will be great.

All the wrongs made right, the bad guys will be punished, the good guys vindicated. He'll bring his reward for his people and his recompense for his enemies and this whole world will be turned right side up.

That's the kingdom hope. Now, Jesus comes on the scene and certainly he's claiming to be the king. He's sure acting like the king, he is fulfilling all the promises of the Old Testament regarding his kingship. And then you have to ask the question that is a reasonable question to ask, well, if you're the king, where is the kingdom? Even etymologically, lexically, that word king-dom, it makes perfect sense as it is in the Greek language, you get the word king with this addition to the word that gives us a sense of the king is actually being kingly over some things, the king has a kingdom, he has a place, a sphere where the things are being made right when they were wrong. He's exercising his regal authority and he's turning things right side up. And they said, hey listen, if you're the king then we just expect that the kingdom is going to be here, the kingdom's coming.

Now the passage that we've reached in our verse by verse study through the Gospel of Luke is now Luke Chapter 17 verses 20 and 21, is all I have time for this morning, real briefly, to look at the introduction to the concept of the kingdom. And it comes in a response to a question by the Pharisees, who I know in the Gospels are the notorious bad guys but they ask a question which I think I want to prove to you is not a bad question, it's a good question. Basically, they're saying, well when's the kingdom? If you're the king then when's the kingdom? If you're this Mr. Good Guy, Mr. Righteous Guy then you're supposed to reign like David did, a man after God's own heart. As a matter of fact you're claiming to make yourself equal with God. Well then, I guess, you're the Son of Man that the Bible talked about. Where's all the good stuff? Where's the payoff?

If we're going to align ourselves with you, we expect the advantage. Where is the kingdom? Let's



look at these two verses together to see Jesus' response. It's a unique and surprising response. Now we won't have time to look at the whole passage and we'll get to that, Lord willing, next week but they all go together. But let's just get started today with verses 20 and 21, being asked by the Pharisees, I'll read it for you, out of the ESV, the English Standard Version. When will the kingdom of God come? The Pharisees make a reasonable request. "Hey, you're the king, where's the kingdom?"

And he answered. Here's his answer, now. "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed."

What? I mean, that's like saying, "Hey, how's that express lane coming along?" "Well, you can't really see any of the advantages of the express lane. We're not expressing our way through it. You can't observe it. You can't see it with your speedometer but you're in the right lane."

"Yeah that's the kingdom of God."

Wow. "No one will be able to say, 'Look, here it is! or 'There!' No, you're not going to be able to say... Why? Because you can't observe it.

"For behold." Wait a minute. "The kingdom of God," bottom of verse 21, "is in the midst of you." The kingdom of God is in the midst of you? Hmmm? Wow, this is cryptic.

Very cryptic. I just want to start this morning by just making an observation from verse 20. We'll break this into four parts real quickly here, but in the beginning, they ask a question "Where is the kingdom? When is the kingdom coming?" I just want to make it very clear to you, make the first observation of the morning, just by saying, hey, that is a good question. All of us should be asking that. Number one, you and I should be asking, not maybe with a chip on the shoulder that the Pharisees had, but in all sincerity everyone is saying, where's the kingdom, when's the kingdom, we are to be anticipating the coming kingdom. So number one, let's just put it that way, we need to anticipate the kingdom's arrival because they were asking a very reasonable question. If Christ is the king, then where is your kingdom? We want to see that kingdom and that's something that even Jesus himself taught us to anticipate. Matter of fact, if you're praying, as you should pray every single day, he said, listen, I want to teach you how to pray. Here's how you ought to pray. "Our Father, who art in heaven," to use the old language, "Hallowed be your name." Now here comes, first thing on the list, "Your kingdom come."

Think about that. The first thing you should be praying for, after acknowledging the greatness of God and worshipping God, is now we need your kingdom, your kingdom come. Before we ever ask for our daily bread, before we ever deal with, you know, the issue of forgiveness, before we ever start talking about, you know, I don't want to be led into temptation, guard my path and straighten out my way, the first thing ought to be "Your kingdom come." That's how the Bible says we ought to think. As a matter of fact, take your Bibles and scroll back to Chapter 1, Luke Chapter 1, call this passage up. I want you to go back to the anticipation every good and righteous person had regarding the kingdom. And it started with, really, the statement that was made by the angel to Mary when she was told she's going to have the king, the Christ.

Luke Chapter 1. Drop down to verse 30.

The angel, that's Gabriel, says to her, that's Mary, "Don't be afraid Mary. You've found favor with



God and behold you are going to conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Joshua."

Joshua is our Anglicized version of that Hebrew word, Yeshua, Aramaic word. In Greek, Jesus. That means Savior.

That means it's not real good right now, but it's going to be good, you're going to take us into the Promised Land. That's a throwback to the word of the person who followed after Moses when Moses got him out of the bad situation, then Joshua brought them into the good situation. Joshua means in Hebrew, "Yahweh saves." So Yahweh is going to save us, he's going to bring in and usher in this good time. We're going to have the kingdom established. That's even what his name means.

And he will be great. And he will be called the son of the most high. There's a throwback to the prophetic word about the coming Messiah. And the Lord God will give to him, here's a kingdom word, the throne of his father David.

"And he will," here's another kingdom word, "reign over the house of Jacob forever." So I know it's going to last forever and, oh, it's not just Jacob, it's not just Israel, it's not just the southern tribes, it's not just the northern tribes, here it says, "and of his kingdom," how broad will it be? "There'll be no end." So the king is coming. He's going to lead us into Canaan, into the Promised Land. He's going to be our savior. He's going to now bring us in and usher us in to the kingdom. He's going to sit on the "throne of his father David" and his reign is going to be forever and it's going to be as broad as the whole entire earth.

Talk about making rough places plain and crooked ways straight. He is going to usher in "The Kingdom."

Scroll down to Chapter 2 verse 25, let's meet a man named Simeon. "There was a man in Jerusalem," Luke 2:25, "whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout." Now if you wanted to do a study on the kingdom, you need to be careful. I know you're going to start with looking up in your Logos Bible software the word kingdom. That would be a good start. But there's a lot of other ways the kingdom is described and here's one of the varied ways the kingdom coming is described. Simeon was "a righteous and devote man." He was waiting, anticipating, eager to see what? "The consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him."

Why would Israel need consolation? Because these weren't the heyday, historic, fun, fabulous days of Israel. No, they needed consolation. Why? Because the heavy hand of Rome was down on Israel. They couldn't even rule themselves, they couldn't even crucify a blasphemer without Pilot having to sign off on it. They were really under the thumb of Rome. Even their taxes were collected on behalf of Rome and, not only that, when they paid their temple tax, guess where that money was going. It was to pay off the debts of the refurbishing of a temple that Herod... Right? We're not talking about Aaron's temple, we're not talking about Solomon's Temple, we're talking about Herod's Temple. I mean, this was not the heyday... They needed consolation.

He couldn't wait for the consolation of Israel. Drop down to verse 38. Here's another godly person. Her name was Anna.

In the middle of verse 38, "And coming up that very hour she," Anna, "began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were..." Well, who was her crowd here? She's preaching to the choir



in terms of her own desires, but she and those "were waiting for the," here's another way to put it, "the redemption of Jerusalem."

You buy your water bottle, you buy your can of Pepsi, and there's a little price on the side of it that says redemption value, CRV, California Redemption Value, and it'll have a price. That's the price to what? To get that back. They want that bottle back. And they're willing to pay a price to get it back. Well, why would Jerusalem need redemption? Well, because it was now under the heavy hand of Rome, they did not have freedom, they were not autonomous, they were not the kinds of people that God had said they would be, they needed to get Jerusalem back. The redemption of Jerusalem. Anna cared about it, she waited for it, she spoke of the person who would be the Joshua who would come in, the one who would lead them back and be able to recapture the city.

You can jot this one down, Chapter 23 verse 50 and 51. There was a man named Joseph of Arimathea. Remember that name? He lent Jesus a tomb for the weekend.

He was part of the Sanhedrin, the council. And it says here he was a "good and righteous man," Luke says of him. He "did not consent with the other members of the council and their action" to crucify Christ, so he was a dissenter. And what is the first description of this righteous man? "And he was looking for the kingdom of God."

If you're a righteous Jew in the first century and you read your Bible, you know what you're waiting for? The kingdom.

I want Israel free, I want Israel and Jerusalem to be autonomous, I want the king to come. We don't need any vassals, we don't need any governors, we need the king, we need the son of David to ascend the throne and to free us from all of this. And his leadership isn't just going to be for our little tight country so we can build borders around it. His reign is going to last forever and it will extend around the planet.

It'll have no end. Those were all the promises of the Old Testament. And every righteous person was waiting for it. And now he says, you know the kingdom I keep talking about, we learn this in Chapter 13, that isn't just for Israel.

Matter of fact, back all the way to Genesis 12 you could read, God had a plan that through Abraham and his descendants, it would be a blessing to the whole earth. And we learned this in Chapter 13 when the banquet in the kingdom takes place with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it says people will come from the east and the west and the north and the south and they'll all sit down and recline and feast at the table in the kingdom of God. So this coming earthly kingdom is going to include people from all over the planet and that's why Jesus can say to a Jewish band of disciples and extend it to all of us Gentiles sitting on the other side of the planet, you ought to be praying every day for his kingdom to come.

How did that go this week by the way? Are you anticipating the kingdom?

Were you really praying in your prayers, after you worshiped him, before you ever got to your list of wants from God, did you say, God I just want it?

I just want your kingdom to come. I just want the redemption of this world, not just Jerusalem and Israel, I want you to take it back. I need the Son of Man to appear. Well, you should be anticipating



the kingdom and the kingdom is going to arrive.

But according to the next phrase here, Jesus says in verse 20 Luke 17 printed on your worksheet, the kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed. So I'm praying for something no one can see? I'm praying for something that's going to be like this invisible advantage? Well, it doesn't make much sense if I'm going to reconcile this with all the promises of the Old Testament regarding the throne of David and the reign and no end and crooked ways straight. Well, if you're going to make crooked ways straight and rough places plain you know you need an element here and it's called punishment of the bad guys and you need another element and it's called the reward of the good guys. Jesus is coming back with his reward and his recompense. He's coming back to reward his saints, he's coming back to punish his enemies. And when he comes back to do that he'll make the rough places plain, he'll make the crooked ways straight and all will be returned to the equilibrium of the kingdom and God will be reigning through the mediatorial reign of Jesus Christ and all will be made right. But he's got to punish the wrongdoers and he's got to reward the good guys. So that's the whole plan. And now you're telling me, what? I'm not going to see it?

It's invisible? We must be missing something. Well, we are missing something because he turns around just a few verses later and he says this. Drop down to verse 22. "And he said the disciples," we'll get into detail on this next week, "the days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man." Well, we just read our passage and it says basically the kingdom is already here and you just can't see it. Now he's saying you going to long for one of the days of the Son of Man and you won't see it. They're going to say, look there, look here. Nah, don't go, don't follow them. Why? Because you'll see it. How do we know that? Verse 24, "For as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so the Son of Man will be," future now, "in his day."

Ooh, wait a minute. That seems pretty observable? No, it is observable.

And you'll long to have that observable then. When they say, look, it's here and look, it's there, you won't be able to see it because, you know what, it hasn't arrived yet but when it arrives it's going to be like lightning in an ancient world where there's no stadium lighting, no street lighting, no freeway lights, no headlights. Man, with lightning, everyone sees the lightning.

Now what will it have to entail? You going to have to punish the bad guys and you're going to have to reward the good guys. The problem is right now the bad guys are not punished and the good guys are not rewarded, at least not externally. We're sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic, having people mock us for choosing to follow God and their lives are cruising along just fine.

At least externally, that's how it looks. And so that makes it really hard for us.

As a matter of fact, that means if you are going align yourself with Christ in this era, in this time, in this dispensation, in the period in which we live, this epic, well, you're going to have to be willing to make some big sacrifices. Number two on your outline, let's just jot it down that way, you and I, we need to expect kingdom sacrifices. If you are going to follow Christ right now, here's the thing, the express lanes are not all that express. And the lane that you're willing to get out of to follow Christ, that's going to cruise along and make you feel like on days, like Asaph said in the Old Testament, I think I chose the wrong lane here.

And he was tempted in his heart to think it's not worth it. So you and I need to remember that, just like John the Baptist had to learn that.



Think about John the Baptist, just follow me on this for a second. Way back in Chapter 3 of Luke, he's out there preaching and his preaching is so powerful and he's such a great prophet that people came to him and said, "Are you the Christ? Are you the king?" And what did he say? "I'm not the king."

Matter of fact, the king is coming after me and the thong of his sandal, I'm not even worthy to untie it. He's so great. And when Christ comes he says, "Oh, he must increase, I must decrease. Here's the king." And his preaching in John 3 was this, when he comes, oh man, he's coming with fire. He's coming to punish the evil-doers. Oh, he's going to kindle his wrath and it's going to be like the tree and the ax and it's coming and it's going to be cutting it down and here he's going to punish the evil doers and he's going to reward the good guys and so repent and get in with the good guys. That's what he taught.

Then Christ showed up. And he said things like this in John 3. John 3:17. "I didn't come to condemn the world." What? Yes you did.

That's what all the promises the Old Testament said. Let me listen to a couple of them, here's one from Isaiah Chapter 40. "The Lord comes with his might, his arm rules; behold his reward is with him, and his recompenses before him."

And it's not something that's unobservable.

Five verses earlier in Isaiah 40, Isaiah 40 verse 5, "The glory of the Lord is going to be revealed," you know this verse, "and all flesh will see it together." Everyone is going to see it.

It's going to be like lightning in the sky. Isaiah 33. Everyone's going to see the king, he's coming in his beauty and you'll see the land that stretches afar and you are going "to muse at his terror." And you are going to ask, "where's the one who counted," who made census? "Where's the one who weighed out the tribute?" No, you need more taxes here. "Where's the one who counted the towers?"

Who is the one that was surveying our land, those occupiers? You're not going to see the "insolent people anymore." You're not going to see those "people of obscure speech, the stammering tongue, the language you couldn't understand." Even the Jewish Messiah gets crucified and above his head, here scrawled in Latin, a foreign language to the Aramaic speaking Jews. Here you've got statements about him, the king of the Jews.

You're not going to see that anymore. No, behold, you going to see Zion, now a "city with its appointed feasts!" You're going to see "Jerusalem untroubled as an untroubled habitation, immovable tents, stakes will not be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken."

Now, even if you think that the first coming of Christ provided a fulfillment to this, you have a big problem because within forty years Titus of the Roman Empire comes in and decimates and razes the temple mount, not one stone is left upon the next. You talk about chords that aren't broken. Decimated.

But the Lord will come, verse 22. He will be our judge, "he's our king, he will save us."



Though nations draw near, listen, Chapter 34 says, "the Lord is enraged against the nations," against this. "He is furious against all their hosts. He's devoted them to destruction, he's given them over to slaughter."

You talk about the heavy verses of the Old Testament, they're here.

When the Son of Man's day arrives, when the Lord appears and everyone sees it. That's exactly what he goes on to explain in the passage that we're looking at, Luke Chapter 17.

It says in verse 26, "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will be in the days of the Son of Man." What do mean, it's future? I thought you said the kingdom is now? No, the days of the Son of Man are coming. "And just like in the days of Noah." "They're eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage until Noah entered the ark." They thought he was a fool. Why are you in that lane? They're cruising past him, throwing beer cans at him saying, you're ridiculous for following God.

They were doing all that until "the flood came and destroyed them all." So the bad guys get punished. Do you think it was observable? Yeah, it was observable. People were drowning. A tactile experience of drowning in God's judgment.

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, verse 28, "they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom," just like Noah went out from that ancient world, "fire and sulfur rained down from heaven to destroy them all." So it will be, verse 30, "on the day when the Son of Man is revealed," future tense. I guess the coming of Christ and his kingdom is yet future. And it's going to involve exactly what Isaiah 40 said and that is punishing the bad guys and rewarding the good guys.

And the reason right now, it's not very fun to be in the express lane, is because all those bad guys are running amok and there's no judgment for them now because Jesus said, "I didn't come in the world to condemn the world," you know the next verse or the next phrase in verse 17 of John 3, "I came to save the world." Wait a minute. What is that all about? Are you still in Luke Chapter 20? Go up to the verse I skipped.

You were in verse 24 and in verse 26. Verse 24 was lightning is going to flash. Everyone's going to see it. So it will be on the day the Son of Man comes. Right?

So it will be for the Son of Man in his day. Then he says this. "But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."

You mean he's going to get in the express lane as the king and everyone who follows him now are going to be persecuted?

He's going to suffer? Absolutely, he's going to suffer to the point of being crucified. Then Jesus turns to his disciples to say, you're in the lane with me, if they hated me they'll hate you. If they persecuted me then they're going to persecute you.

What's with us winning and those guys losing? No, no, no. Right now, first, I'm going to have to come, as it says in verse 16 of John 3, and say God's love is now going to be demonstrated and that he gave his one and only Son to do what? To be crucified, to suffer and be rejected by this generation, the first generation, the first century generation, so whoever believes in him should not





perish but have everlasting life. Well, the Son of Man didn't come, you can put an asterisk there, at the first coming, to condemn the world.

"Well, he's never going to condemn the world." Have you read the end of the Bible? Have you read the end of the Bible? The Book of Revelation?

Wow! All that war and recompense stuff, it's back. When? When Christ comes a second time.

But between now and there as Paul said so clearly to the early churches, "Yeah, we're heading to the kingdom, you got in the right lane. But between here and the end of this express lane, through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God." So the road is rocky between here and there.

And all those people that are whizzing by you and laughing and mocking and maligning you for being a follower of Christ in this ancient book with all these ancient stuff and this invisible God you can't see, well the Bible is very clear on that. All those lanes, there's many of them, because all those roads lead to destruction and many are those who enter by it. So the Bible ends in a great war where Christ comes back with his judgment on rebellious sinners and he plucks out from that group a group between now and that coming. And he says I've extended my love to this generation and subsequent generations until I return, where they can get in the ark, they can follow Lot out of Sodom, so that when the judgment comes they're safe. That's why we use the illustration of the umbrella here. If you get under the umbrella, his wrath is coming but you can be saved. Between now and then, unfortunately, when you get into that place of safety in a relationship with the king, and you're not experiencing any of the blessings of the kingdom right now, at least not the external blessings of the kingdom, you going to get mocked and maligned, it's going to be hard. Why? Because all those people that reject the king are going to turn their sights against you. I know we've lived in a relatively calm period here in America during the last couple of hundred years, but I'm telling you, our brothers and sisters around the world, as I said in the baptismal earlier this morning, you know, they're suffering and have been all the way back to the early church. I mean for the sake of Christ they've been stepping up and standing up and when Jesus said if they hated me they'd hate you, if they persecuted me they'll persecute you, man, they knew that firsthand. And I know we've been kind of the anomaly here in our country for the last few generations but, I tell you, it's getting worse. Have you noticed?

You want to stand with Christ unequivocally committed to what he says. The exclusivity of his salvation, to his moral and ethical code that he lays out for us in the Bible, and he loves those righteous deeds that he has told us about and the world's going to say, you're crazy, as a matter of fact, they're going to persecute us. The things I'm going to preach from this platform will soon be illegal, I assure you, in time.

And we will have pay the price just like most of our spiritual relatives have around the world. Why? Because through many tribulations we enter the kingdom of God. As he says in John 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart." Where do these lanes end in the kingdom when he says enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Expect some sacrifices between here and there.

And John the Baptist knew what that was all about. As a matter fact, at some point he scratched his head, if he's the king where is the kingdom? He sent two of his messengers when he got arrested, remember that story, by Herod's family, and he asked them a question that's probably made you wonder what in the world are you talking about. You kept preaching that he was the king and he



says, through the messengers to Christ, "Hey, are you the Christ or should we look for someone else?" Think about that. You have the candidate who's going to rule the world and it looks like in all the polls he's losing. And here's his campaign manager in prison.

And he gets his head chopped off at the end of the story. And he's like, I guess you're not the candidate after all. Or are you? Should I look for someone else? And Jesus has to say, remember my credentials, look at the things that are happening, of course I'm fulfilling prophecy.

The problem is you don't understand what a lot of people don't understand and that is when it comes to the kingdom, there is a phase of the kingdom I've called the invisible kingdom that's going to precede the visible kingdom, we'll talk about that next week. And when that comes, there's vindication for all those who were willing to follow Jesus Christ in this period. What's our job? Verse 21. To do what's said to be impossible here because people are looking for external benefits and I can't give you any of those. I can only tell you if you sign up to follow Christ you'll get aligned with the king and one day the kingdom benefits will come.

So I can't say, look, here it is or there it is, verse 21 of Luke 17. I can't point to the external speed of my speedometer and say look at this, it's a great life. Come and join us. I know the heretics are saying that from their platforms around the country today. Right? Get this wonderful life, follow Christ, but they're liars. They're liars. Because if you want to be an uncompromising follower of Christ, it is not going to be your best life now, I guarantee it. I guarantee it. When it comes down to it, you've got to recognize what we're pointing people to is not the benefits of the physical kingdom now. All I can say is not, look, here it is or there it is. All I can say is look here HE is. And there HE is. Because the king is here. But it doesn't look much like a kingdom. Because not yet has he taken his great power and begun to reign as Revelation 11 says. Number three, what's our job? Well, our job is to keep collecting kingdom converts.

I want people to join the kingdom. It's just the kingdom cannot be pointed to and say, "Here it is, there it is. Look at all the great blessings of being a part of the kingdom." I know we try to put a magnifying glass on all the internal, invisible benefits and that's true but the experience of those are so minor compared to where we're headed. Where Paul can say in First Corinthians Chapter 15, if we've hoped in Christ in this life ONLY, then you ought to pity us more than all men. In other words, Christianity is not about the here and now, all the heretics notwithstanding. Christianity is about the then and there. And you are supposed to follow Christ now because he is the king and he proved to be the king.

But you're not going to see the benefits of the kingdom, not the way God has designed them and planned them, until he comes again.

And speaking of the son of David, you ought to in your own mind go back and hearken back to David's experience when he was anointed the king as a teenager and here was the flask of oil poured on his head to point out that he is God's anointed king. Think about this now.

And he leaves that little ceremony in his father's house and goes back out to watching sheep.

He not even strong enough, can't do enough pushups, to join the Israeli army. He's got to be the messenger who brings, you know, grilled cheese sandwiches to his brothers on the front. Oh, and then he does some amazing outlandish things because the Lord is with him, like killing a big giant warrior.



He gets famous, he gets conscripted into the service of the King Saul and he ends up being the jazz musician there in the palace and then his reputation starts to rise. And the king that sits on the throne that God says is no king, because the real king is sitting there playing his harp, becomes the object of his jealousy and envy. And he chases him out of the palace and out of the capital city and out of the country and he becomes the most wanted man in all of the kingdom and he ends up living on the fringes of Israeli society in places like the cave of Adullam. You remember that story in First Samuel where he's hanging out in caves? You know the caves, what caves are? They were the ancient, Near Eastern port-a-potties. That's where you went to go number two, in the caves.

He's living in the public bathrooms of the ancient world with his men. They're described as those in debt, in distress, and I love the old translations, and the malcontents all gathered around him.

In the caves of Adullam. I just want to ask the question, at that point, when you're sitting there in a stinky cave with your malcontents and it says they made David their commander. So now they're calling David, Lord. I'm just saying, who's the king sitting on the throne in the nation?

Saul. If I ask you the question, who's running in this world right now? You can give me the theological, "Oh, the Lord is sovereign." I understand that. But if you think this is the Lord taking his power and beginning to reign you need to wake up. Because here's what the Bible has to say, there's the prince of the power of the air, it's put even stronger and Second Corinthians 4:4. Satan is called the god of this world. Who's sitting on the throne?

"Well, Christ is on the throne!" You know what, it's the unobservable kingdom, you can't see that. You know what I can see? The enemy at work all throughout our culture and all around the world. It's bad and it's getting worse. But one day the god of this world will be cast out and Christ will take his power and begin to reign.

And then the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord, that's God, and of his Christ, that's the King David, the son of David, and he will reign forever and ever. My point is that if you want to join and follow Christ the sacrifices are you being in the cave of Adullam on the fringes of society. And if you think it's any different, then you're going to have to compromise the person and the message of Christ in the Bible and you'll become a heretic. You want to be faithful and orthodox and biblical, then you're going to have to be on the edges of society and you're going to have to say to the malcontents that you know, hey, if you think this world is not what it's all about, then join our band and commit yourself to Jesus Christ. Call David your commander.

And I know it won't pay off right now because it'll seem like the express lane is bumper-to-bumper traffic, but don't worry, this is the right lane. Don't curse the guy that talked you into this. Right?

This is a good lane to be in. You're going to win. You've just got to stick around. You've got to trust the fact that one day he will ascend his throne.

You know a little bit about the chronology of the Old Testament? When David was a teenager anointed with oil, he was in God's mind at that point the coronated king of Israel.

He went at least 14 or 15 years on the run as a fugitive until Saul died. Then when Saul died he ascended the throne. But if you've been reading your Daily Bible Reading, you understand he ascended the throne of a very small portion of the nation. It took him another five to seven years at



least to ascend the throne over the whole nation.

I'm talking 22 years. Think about that. I'm talking about two decades plus of time. He was the king but it didn't feel like it. No one would say that he was, at least not in the newspapers. Do the newspapers recognize that Jesus is the king, that we're living by his standards? Absolutely NOT.

But you do, I hope. And your job right now is to make more kingdom converts.

Matter of fact, there's this parable that Jesus tells us, we'll get to it, Lord willing, at the end of the Gospel of Luke. And it says he tells the parable, here's why, because there were many who thought the kingdom was to arrive immediately. So he tells them a parable.

And he says there was a king who came and he went away to receive his kingdom and before he left he gave all of his servants responsibilities. This is the parable of the Minas. And they get a responsibility and he says, engage in business until I return.

And what's the business there to engage in? Well, Jesus made it very clear when he spoke to the disciples in Acts Chapter 1, when they said, "Is now the time you are to restore the kingdom Israel?"

You died, you rose again. Maybe it's now?" He said, it's not for you to know the times of the season but here's my job for you. You're to be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. Go make kingdom converts. Your job.

It may save your business card, architect, plumber, whatever you are. Your job is to be an ambassador of Christ. You are pitching for a kingdom that is not of this world and you're pulling in malcontents that will end up saying with the Apostle Paul, the world is crucified to me and I to it. If you are comfortable in this world you don't understand Christianity. It's to be in a place where Paul said in Galatians, listen the world has nothing here, I boast of nothing in this world, my citizenship is somewhere else.

Verse 21, bottom of the verse, we'll pick up on a little bit more this next week but at least let me make one point as we run out of time here, bottom of verse 21. "For behold the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." The kingdom of God is...? You're telling me there's an unobservable kingdom within the midst of these people?

Well, it certainly isn't the observable king that is coming in the next paragraph when he arrives and everyone is punished who's rebellious and everyone is rewarded who's with him.

It's not that. It's got to be something else.

And that is, it's not the kingdom of a visible arrival of the king with his power reigning but it is the king. And just like David arrived and presented himself to 400 malcontents and said, hey, I'll be your leader.

It was making sure that those people recognize that the kingdom was the person.

You can't say, look, there it is, look, here it is, all you can say is here is the king and that's what we try to do every single day.



I just want to make sure that before you leave this building you know and relate to and are submitted to the king of the kingdom.

Number four, just briefly, you need to know the kingdom's king. And you need to know him personally because in the story about the door shutting and he tells a story about eating a meal in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he says this: there is going to be a day when the master arises and shuts the door and then everyone is going to want to be in the express lane. Hey, we want to be in there.

And he'll say, "I don't know you."

"Oh yeah, you know us, you were in our streets, you walked among us." Yeah, see, the king was among them but they did not submit to the king. They did not enter the invisible kingdom. They, instead, just said, "Well, you know, come on, let us in." He says, "Depart from me, I never knew you." "What?" You practice lawlessness.

We need to make sure that we know the king. Not just know about him. You heard testimonies this morning. It's not about knowing there is a God or believing in some kind of Scantron test. "Yeah, Jesus, I think he was the Messiah or died for sins or died for my sins." It's about us saying this is my king. I submit to him and he does not want us to continue in sin. He wants us to see sin as the problem that nails him to the cross, to repent of that and to trust him for our forgiveness. That's the gospel.

You need to make sure you know him. It changes the trajectory and the patterns of your life. You need to know the kingdom's king. And when you do, it can change everything about the struggles and the sacrifices of the kingdom like the apostle Paul, who knew Jesus, could sit in a jail cell in the dungeon of Philippi in the middle of being nursed back to health and feeling the pain and the cuts on his back from being beaten, he and Silas could sit in stocks around midnight praying and singing songs to God. They knew the king. They could endure the sacrifices of the kingdom. And what were they doing there in Philippi? They were trying to make kingdom converts. That's the point. I hope that's why you're in your family, your neighborhood and your job, to be ambassadors of the kingdom. The king is coming. The opportunities to know the kingdom's king, at least in the way that we can know him now, will be done. Oh, everyone's going to bow, everyone's going to confess but not everyone will be in the kingdom unless they embrace the king now. When I was a Bible student in Chicago, most of us were coming right out of high school. But there were some older students there and there was one on my floor. I lived on the 16th floor of our dorm and there was someone who came from Ireland and those Irish have such a cute little accent, don't they? Everything they say is kind of cute. And he had this salutation that he's known for and remembered for and I remember it to this day as though he just said it to me this morning. They made fun of me because I said "dude" all the time. I was going, Dude. I was from California. Hey, how you doing? Howdy, the guys from Texas. Well, he had this little greeting he greeted us with. His salutation, when he saw us. It wasn't, how are you, what's going on, you know, what's happening? And when he left it wasn't, see you later, goodbye, have a good day. He said something when he met you in the hallway and he said something when you were done chatting with him. He simply said to us every time we saw him, "The king is coming." If I could do accents, I'd do it in an Irish accent. And when we were done talking, he'd say "OK, the King is coming." He would come and go in our lives, whether it was a 10-minute conversation or a two-minute conversation in the hallway, reminding us at least twice, "the king is coming." I'll tell you what, it may have become rote for him, I don't know his heart but I can tell you this, he exemplified for me the conviction, as I studied this passage



afresh this week, I thought, man, we need to live right there. And if we live there, we can say, ahh, we anticipate the king is coming. I'm going to pray everyday for it. I know it'll involve some sacrifices, right now it looks like I'm in the wrong lane. I'm in the right lane. My job right now is to incur that suffering with joy because I know the king is busy about the work of making kingdom converts.

Because, one day, as Jesus continually promised, Matthew 25:31, the Son of Man will come in his glory and all the angels with him and then he will sit on his glorious throne and he will separate the nations like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. There'll be no lane switching, it won't be a double yellow line on the road. There will be a barrier, the door will be closed, there's no lane switching at that point. If you're not a Christian, it's time to become one today. If you are one, it's time to get busy about kingdom work. Let's get out there make some kingdom converts this week because we know the king is coming.

Let's pray.

God help us, as people twenty centuries removed to sit here and probably have to incur the ridicule that they were even incurring in the first century and that is, "hey, if he said he was coming back where is he? Where's the promise of his coming?" Help us to learn what we read of in Second Peter Chapter 3, that he's not slow about keeping his promises as some count slowness. But that "slowness" is nothing other than patience. And that patience translates into salvation, salvation for those who have yet to repent.

And it's so clear in that passage that every single day you postpone the arrival of the kingdom is another day that expresses your desire to see more people come to repentance. And God, if we have people here that know that they know you. If they truly are repentant of their sins and are ready to follow you in this life, then God it's our job to get out there and to see, that because the kingdom didn't arrive yesterday, it's time for us to make more kingdom converts. So God help us in this regard and please motivate us this week to pray more often as you taught us that your kingdom would come. And let it affect the way we live today.

In Jesus name, Amen.