

Pastor Steve:

Man, this is a, it's a good place to be on a Sunday morning. That worship was awesome. Thank you guys. I don't know if you can hear it, but this week I hit puberty. It happens. So we're all super happy. My voice is a little scratchy. I apologize. I'm sure you'll bear with me; also I'm just a little off this morning. I know you're probably not supposed to talk about this thing, but, Kellye and I had, oh, I mean a fight. Let's call it what it was. We had a fight this morning. I don't know how many of you guys, what's the laundry situation in your house? Do you share the laundry, the work? Or does one person do it? How many share the laundry and how many do it? Just one person's in charge and the rest of you don't do laundry? All right. All right, well, we switch, we take turns and we had a dispute. We didn't know whose turn it was. All the bathroom stuff needed to be washed. And so we were arguing about, it's your turn to do it. It's my turn to do, It's your turn to do it. And then finally I just threw in the towel.

Now speaking of that, something that started as a joke is happening. A couple of weeks ago I said well, if you guys really hate my jokes as much as you pretend to, here, put your money where your mouth is and we're, you know, we have \$12,000 left to raise for the elevator and we'll be done with it and we'll be able to pay it off and have it built. And I said, If you guys raised that \$12,000 and knocked by the end of October, I won't tell any jokes for six months. And you laughed and you chuckled and whatever. Well one, I didn't realize October was a five-Sunday month and in the first two weeks of October, more than \$3,000 has come in for the lift.

So you guys might be serious, I'm not sure. Um, but the deal stands six months with no jokes. If we can figure that out. In the meantime, I am super excited about the sermon series we started last week. That was way too many s's in a row. We started a sermon series last week about the kingdom of God. And we did two things last week to set the stage for this series, and the first one was that I tried to demonstrate to you that the kingdom of God is the central teaching of the New Testament. This is what Jesus talked about more than anything else, the kingdom of God. And we looked at verse after verse about this. The kingdom of God is the central teaching. And if we're gonna understand Jesus, what he meant, what he was trying to do, he said the purpose of his coming was to preach the kingdom of God.

If we're gonna understand Jesus in what he was doing, we're gonna have to understand the kingdom of God. And then we looked into what the kingdom of God means because it's a concept that we hear, but we don't really put a lot of content to it. Maybe we think it means heaven. Maybe we think it means the gospel, the good news. Maybe we think it means the church. Maybe we think it has something to do with how we feel. But what is the kingdom of God? We got into that just at the end last week and it was a lot of information that was packed in. So I want to start where we ended last week by going over those definitions again. I told you last week that this is gonna require a little work for you, especially in these first couple weeks as a listener.

It's gonna require a little bit of work for you because we've got some pretty dense stuff that we need to go over. So if you're ready, say ready. Ready. If you're not ready, get out cuz here we go. What is the kingdom of God? The Kingdom of God is really, there's two words in the New Testament that are used for kingdom. One is basilia and one is an aramaic word Malkuth. And both of them mean not a place, right? We think of a kingdom and we probably automatically think geographical borders in a country, right? But that's not what it means. It means more the active reigning of a king more than a place or some sort of, uh, theory of being in charge. It's the active reigning of someone. The kingdom is where the king actually exercises his or her authority. So when we're talking about the kingdom of God, we're focusing on the exercising of authority.

We're not talking about geography. God's kingdom is not a land, but it's where God reigns, where his power and his authority is shown in actually reigning. And we looked at three definitions for this, um, from kind of the most complicated to the easiest. And I wanna review those for you again. First one's a

little wordy, but I read it in a book and it looks smart. The second two are me kind of trying to put that in terms that I could understand. The kingdom of God is the sovereign rule of God. God being in charge, being shown, being manifested, being embodied in the person, in the work of Jesus Christ and in the coming of Jesus Christ that creates a people over whom God reigns. Any kingdom needs subjects. When Christ comes, that creates a populous, a group of people and those are the people he reigns over and it results in a realm or in the rightness of his reign being realized.

People realize, oh, God is in charge. I see it. I know it. It's obvious. That's the kingdom. Another way of saying it is that the kingdom of God is a gift of God whereby he establishes a people of God who live according to the light of God. I was pretty proud of that. That seems, that seems a little, little better. God is doing something. It's God establishes us, but it's his gift that does it. And then living by his light, us recognizing his rule, his reigning and living according to that or basically maybe even a little more concisely, the kingdom of God is where Jesus is, where Jesus is reigning and where Jesus's reign is recognized.

So a kingdom is the range of someone's effective will; what you have control over, not just theoretically, but what you actually are in control over. The range of your effective will that is your kingdom. Whenever we genuinely have say over. The kingdom of God is the place that he genuinely has say over, not just in theory, of course God is in charge of everything, but he isn't actively using his authority everywhere. So let's start with that. Where is Jesus? Where is the kingdom of God? What is the time and the place of the kingdom of God? When we're talking about the kingdom of God, when are we talking about if we're talking about the kingdom of God? Where, if it's not a land, where is the kingdom of God? So given the definition that the kingdom of God is about where God is actively reigning, he's actively exercising the authority that he has and people are responding to and recognizing his reign.

Given that definition, let me ask you a question. Do we live right now in the kingdom of God? How many are yes? And how many wanna be right? No. Ephesians two says this, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live and followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the Spirit who is now at work in the children of disobedience because people have turned aside from the worship of God". Yes, God is in control and anytime God wants to, God can seize the reins. But God is not in this world at this time actively pulling those reins. Satan, the forces of evil, are actually reigning. And again, I can't emphasize enough the difference between someone who reigns, someone who has the title and the authority, but someone who is actually reigning, the person who's supposed to be the boss and the person who's actually doing all the stuff and making all the decisions. Because the world has turned aside from God and is failing to recognize his rule, we are estranged from God and the power lies in the Evil One. First John 5:19 says, we know that we are children of God, we are children of God and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. Satan, evil, the forces of evil, however you wanna characterize it, is reigning in this world right now. Since the general tenor of this age is one of rebellion to the authority of God, God reigns, but he's not reigning. This is the difference between having authority and exercising authority. The law has authority. But look around what happens downtown on Michigan Avenue on Friday and Saturday nights in Chicago. And you would never guess that the law is in control, right? The law is the authority. It reigns, but it's not actively reigning. Other forces are taking control. Yes, God of course could have his way and he will. For now, we can say God has authority in this world, but he isn't exercising it.

The whole world isn't recognizing God's authority. And if to have a kingdom, you need a king that is exercising his or her will and that people recognize this is not a kingdom of God. That's a little hard to understand. And so, and a lot of you disagree with me, but does that make sense? What's reigning in this world right now is not the active will of God, what God wants, but it's actually the active will of evil. This is what scripture said, and yet it is true as we saw last week, that Jesus brought the kingdom of God

near. Jesus, brought near the active reigning of God in which people will recognize and respond to God's reigning. The kingdom is where Jesus is. Jesus needs to be there for his kingdom to be fully operational. In any sphere of life that we live in now, sphere of science, a sphere of art, family, commerce, business, whatever it is, whenever one of those spheres comes increasingly under the influence of God, then we can say that God is demonstrating his reigning is authority.

His kingdom leading in that, and parts of the world will slowly start to come under God's control and authority more and more, even while other parts might come less and less. So there's always going to be this up and down. There's gonna be places where God's influence is greater and places where it's not. Eventually the kingdom of God is gonna be reordered. It's gonna reorder the world in the person in the work of Jesus Christ is going to be recognized as legitimate reigning authority of the world. That was a lot, right? It's gonna get worse when and where is the kingdom of God? When and where is the kingdom of God? There is a kingdom of God. Scripture is clear about that. It's the most important concept in the New Testament. Where is it? When is it? Is it a time? Is it a place? Is there gonna be? Is God gonna come? Is Jesus gonna come and set up a literal throne and sit on it and be a king? Is it a political kingdom? Is it a fear physical kingdom? Is it a spiritual kingdom? Is it in our hearts? Is it now? Is it later? To understand this, we have to talk about eschatology, say eschatology. Anybody know what it means?

The study of the end eschatology is the study of the end. It's the study of death, of judgment, of the destiny of our souls, of the end of time. This is what eschatology means. So when we're talking about the kingdom of God, are we talking about something es ideological, something that's gonna happen at the end? Or are we talking about something non-eschatological? You wish I went back to the jokes now, right? That's not at the end. Eschatology means the end, the kingdom of God's gonna come at the end. If it's non-eschatology, then that means the kingdom of God is not related to the end. It's now. So the non eschatology is that the kingdom of God exists in the heart of people. Now, not in some future reign of any kind.

Non-eschatological view means that the kingdom of God is in our hearts and the kingdom is not a place, but it's a state of being and it's happening now. Does that sound right to you? Good. Don't be shy. Put up your hands. You've been wrong already once today. It's all right. I'm not saying you're wrong. No one over here disagrees. All right. There's a lot of reason to think that. When Jesus was asked by some Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he talked about the kingdom of God a lot. And so people asked him questions about the kingdom of God and they asked him when it would come, the Pharisees, the religious rulers, the people of the day, the people that Jesus fought with all the time. When is the kingdom of God gonna come?

And Jesus said to them, The kingdom of God is not something that you're gonna just be able to put a finger on and look at it and say, it's here. It's there because the kingdom of God is. And this is where we have to take a little time: "within you." Now, the word within you there, the word that's translated within you, the Greek word that's translated within you is a word that can either mean "within" or "among". So is Jesus saying the kingdom of God is within you, hinting that it's individual in each of the people that he's talking to, or is the kingdom of God among you? Here I am, the kingdom of God in your midst because it's a difference between where the kingdom of God is located, right? If the kingdom of God is within you, it's in your heart and it's in your heart, it's in your heart.

But if the kingdom of God is among you, it's Jesus referring to himself says, You're looking for the kingdom of God. Here I am. So where is the kingdom of God? Who was Jesus talking to when he gave this, when he said this? The Pharisees. It's hard for me to imagine Jesus saying to a bunch of Pharisees that the kingdom of God is within them. Here they are rejecting the messenger of God. Here they are rejecting the message of God. Here they are, as Jesus said over and over again, oppressing the earnest, diligent seeking people who just happen to be poor, don't happen to have the means that they do, who

have been caught in the lifestyle of sin and brokenness. The Pharisees oppressed those people. The Pharisees instilled rules and obligations and burdens on those people. The Pharisees failed to forgive and show kindness to those people. Are we really supposed to believe that Jesus is saying the kingdom of God is in your heart, Pharisee? I don't think so.

The coming of the kingdom of God is about God righting a cosmic wrong and thinking that the kingdom of God is just in our hearts, whether it's worthy people or not, reduces the kingdom of God to a sentimental feeling. That's much more, that's subjective. And the kingdom of God is more than that. God is through Jesus writing wrongs, reorganizing the entire created order. It's God asserting his rightful place as the sovereign of the world. God reigns. But as far as earth knew, not too many people knew it. But then Jesus came and Jesus brought the kingdom and he says, This is the first move in God demonstrating that this is where I am going to reign. I am going to actively reign on this place, and to simply reduce the kingdom of God to how we feel fails to understand the breath and the scope and the bigness and the importance of the kingdom of God.

It goes far beyond any of our individual lives. The kingdom of God is coming powerfully to speak for itself. A boss who has let some of the employees think they're in charge has come back and he is going to set the operation right? This is way more than being about what one individual employee may feel. Now, our personal salvation is one small part of that, but the kingdom of God does not equal you and I getting saved. It's so much bigger than that. We've defined the kingdom of God in a way that is centered on and focuses on God and when and how he reigns. And we don't wanna trade that view of the kingdom of God for the view, that the kingdom of God is whatever we might individually feel in our hearts is Jesus in our hearts, When I was raised, when I went through AWANA programs, Jesus is in your hearts.

You ever tell that to a five year old and see the confusion that washes over their face? How is Jesus in our hearts? Do you now we don't really think, do we that somehow a little stick figure, Jesus is in our cardiac system, right? We don't. I need a nod or something here, right? Geez, there's not a little, little tiny tent with a little tiny pillow that Jesus sleeps in right in your left ventricle. Jesus is not in our hearts. He is in our hearts metaphorically, right? We enter the kingdom and it becomes part of us in the way that when we're born into a culture, we become part of that cultural identity. And that comes to define us in many ways. When you're in a relationship with a significant other there, you feel they're in your hearts, but they're not really there. It's a metaphor for saying the values, the judgments, those are important to me. I am taking those on. So Jesus isn't in our hearts. He doesn't sit on a little throne somewhere in your heart. What it means is we have recognized the values of the kingdom of God and want our hearts, want our inner being to be slowly transformed so that this is now I am now the kingdom of God. What's the kingdom of God? The place where God effectually instates His uh uh, He effectually operates his will. We want that to be true about us, and it's gonna be a process. And the more we are under the reigning of God, the more our hearts are being, our inner life encapsulates the kingdom of God. So there is something within us and a connection to the kingdom of God. And there's the fact that the scripture seems to talk about the kingdom of God as a thing in the future.

This is dense, I know, and I appreciate you staying with me. What we're asking is what and where is the kingdom of God? Is it something that's happening now in us? Is it something that's happening now in the world? Is it something that we're waiting for? We need to know what it is because Jesus talked about it all the time. It was the most important thing He talked about. Well, for people with a non-eschatological view, now is the kingdom of God. And it's in my heart for people with an eschatological view. It will happen when Christ returns and sets up a literal kingdom on earth right now, would you say if you were forced to answer, is Christ literally reigning in this world?

And yet scripture seems, and I emphasize seems because now we're going to go to the book of Revelation, which I have taught. I have preached through the book of Revelation in this church, and which I hardly confess to you, I really don't know what's going on. But it says this, I saw an angel coming down out of heaven. Now this is talking about the end times. This is talking about eschatology. I saw an angel coming down out of heaven and he had the key to the abyss and he was holding in his hand a great chain. And he sees the dragon, the serpent, the devil or Satan then found them for a thousand years, forces of evil are subdued cast into prison controlled, and he threw them in the abyss and locked it, and he sealed it over to keep them from deceiving anyone.

The activity, the evil activity in the world will cease. No one in the nations will be deceived until this thousand years was ended. And after that, these people in the pit are gonna be freed for a short time. And I saw the thrones on which were seated. Those who had been given the authority to judge, they said they had not worshiped the beast or its images. They had not received the mark and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. So this thousand year reign of Christ that is predicted to come at the end times is called the millennium. The millennium is a thousand years of peace that Christians like to fight about, right? What is it? Some people think it's a literal thousand years. Some people, it's people think it's just figurative for a long period of time. Sorry. But millennium means a period of peace and prosperity in relation to the work, the coming, the return, the reigning of Christ.

So let me try to say this a couple ways so that we'll, it will stick. So there's terms that are someone, if someone believes in something that's called pre-millennialism, those of us who were got became Christians in the seventies and the eighties were having flashbacks because this was the big, this is one of the big arguments. Pre-millennial means that Christ comes back before the period of peace, right? Pre-millennial, the period of peace. So pre-millennial means Christ comes back before the time of post-millennial means that millennial peaceful period will happen and then Christ will return. So it depends. Is Christ going to usher in this period of the active kingdom of God? Or is the acting kingdom of God already happening? And when we get it set up right, and when we as human beings do enough and are good enough and come enough under the control of God, then Jesus will come back.

That's the difference. Then there's amillennialism, which means there is no earthly reign of Jesus. They don't believe that Jesus coming back is an entirely spiritual thing. Jesus came the first time, He brought the kingdom of God into our hearts. It's a spiritual thing, and that's where the kingdom of God is. All right, so far so good. You ready to move on from all that? Well, we can't yet. Future eschatology. The kingdom is coming after the period of peace. Realized eschatology, the kingdom has been realized. Here it is. This is the kingdom of God. Those are two different views. Here's the third one here is, I dare say the right one. Anyway, it's the one I'm gonna preach. Inaugurated, eschatology. The kingdom of God has begun, but it is not been fully completed yet. This is what we live in and this is, this does matter.

I know this has been 10 minutes of what seems like theory, but this stuff matters. According to the view of inaugurated eschatology, first God establishes a rule in the hearts and minds of those who recognize his authority and respond to it. That happened because Jesus came to earth and brought that knowledge and that opportunity, the kingdom of God was among us. And then later there will be a kingdom of God that comes on a geographic, on a physical scale. So in Jesus' time, the kingdom of God was at hand, but it wasn't fulfilled. It was present, but on the way; it was already, but not yet. When Jesus says the kingdom of God is among you, it means that we have become aware of the presence of the kingdom of God. Oh yeah, God does reign and it's God's intention to be reigning in the future.

And Jesus comes to hint at that. He's the firstfruit of that. The kingdom has come in that the powers of the future kingdom have been already introduced into history. When Jesus came and he said, The kingdom of God is among you, The kingdom of God is reigning. This is the start of it, and it is going to get bigger from here. How many of you have ever driven across the Mississippi River or actually been on a

boat on the Mississippi River? There's places where it's, you know, huge, it's white. The Mississippi River starts at a place up in Minnesota that you could walk across in half a dozen steps. But by the time it gets to where it's going, it's huge. The kingdom of God is like that. Here's this little beginning, this little trickle that comes with the coming of Jesus Christ. And yet something great is going to happen from it. And since Jesus was already among the people introducing the kingdom of God, this is why this becomes more important for us. Jesus is going to be the basis.

Our judgment of Jesus is going to be the basis of Jesus's judgment of us, our judgment of Jesus now is going to determine his judgment of us. Then the kingdom of God involves a judgment. We talked about that last week. It's one of the less friendly consequences of the kingdom coming. We looked at verse after verse where some people are going to be invited into the kingdom and some people are gonna be excluded from the kingdom, right? We had Nice Jesus and Bummer Jesus, Nice Jesus. It's all love and kindness. Everybody gets balloons and a puppy. We all love nice Jesus. Except that so much of Jesus's preaching was Bummer, Jesus. There's going to be judgment. There's going to be a separation. There are some people who are gonna fall short of this blissful eternity that the kingdom of God promises. And so the kingdom of God involves a judgment, and the judgment is about Jesus.

And so what we believe about Jesus now, the judgment we make about Jesus now is gonna determine the judgment Jesus makes of us then. So this is of critical importance to us. We're gonna talk about this. We're gonna dedicate a whole sermon to this process next time. But God's people don't need to wait until the full manifestation of the future kingdom to know what it means to be in the kingdom. God's power can be a vital reality in your life when you allow yourself to be under the control of God, when you allow him to reign in your heart, what does it mean? I'm gonna say it enough times you'll be sick of it. I don't know if I've gotten there yet. To reign means to exert active control, to not just have authority, but to actually exercise that authority and have the people who are subjects to that authority respond to it.

If we are gonna, if our hearts are gonna be the place of the kingdom of God, God has to rule, He has to exercise authority in our lives and we have to respond to it. That's the kingdom of God in us. One day, God is going to do that worldwide, but the little trickle that God chose to introduce the kingdom of God into the world with is Jesus Christ coming on earth. So I wanna try to give you a picture, and this is, um, like weird looking I guess, But here's what's happening. The kingdom of God comes from above and it comes down to earth. Those dots are the earth, right? But it doesn't really come to one place. I'm not, I'm not saying that Jesus is only in like Australia is out, right? They don't even get the kingdom of God. I'm not saying that. I'm saying that Jesus is coming in the kingdom of God.

God didn't pour a bucket of water over the whole kingdom of God, so they would immediately recognize it. It's like a little pin prick that penetrates the world. It happened in one place at one time with a small group of people. 2000 years ago in the Middle East. Jesus came and brought the kingdom of God. And it doesn't mean that the kingdom of God is in those particular locations. What I'm trying to communicate is that the kingdom of God is starting to sprout up a little bit more in the hearts of believers, in the communities of believers that recognize the rule of God and respond to it. Now, eventually it's blue dots everywhere, but we don't live in that time now. So Jesus came, introduced the kingdom of God and then Jesus, Oh, so Jesus dropped his clicker and left Earth right? He dropped his mic, boom, and then he left, right?

So the kingdom of God, like that vehicle, that vessel, Jesus, that actually brought the kingdom of God, Jesus has now retreated to wherever it is in heaven Jesus is now, but the effects of the kingdom, the announcement of his rule, the flag that he planted is still here. So Jesus is not on earth physically right now. Jesus is not on earth. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father in heaven. But the kingdom of God that he introduced remains in the hearts and in the communities of people who recognize his authority.

How are we doing on time? I can't. Is it really? Wow. And this is with a sore throat. Can you imagine if I felt good?

Let's do this. Let's go for another five minutes. Excuse me. The way that Jesus taught, I mean this is, these are spiritual elevated concepts that Jesus is trying to teach to human people. So in order to do that, what was, Let me ask you, what was the, the primary preaching vehicle that Jesus used to explain the kingdom of God? Do you know, parable stories? Parables, right. Jesus used a lot of parables to talk about the kingdom of God. A parable. A parable. The word parable comes from two words. It comes from the word throw and the word beside. So a parable is a story that Jesus throw throws aside next to one thing. To explain another thing. A parable is a, is a story trying to explain something that is set beside something else. So Jesus used parables as an example. He wanted to teach a doctrine, a principle, a precept, but he knew it was gonna be hard.

And so instead of just preaching the precepts, he tell told stories, right? When we get later into the New Testament books of Paul and Peter, what we have there is didactic propositional teaching a B believe C facts logic. That's propositional teaching. Jesus told stories and he told stories about the kingdom of God. And one of the things that he wanted to impress about the kingdom of God and the people who were listening to him was that the kingdom of God was gonna start like this small pin prick, but it was going to eventually have worldwide universal effect. And so in Matthew 13, he told a couple of parables, The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. How is the kingdom of heaven? Like a mustard seed? This is a, you know, a mustard. This is a seed that someone plants in his field. And even though it's a small seed, here's how it's like, here's how the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, even though it's small, when it's planted, it grows and becomes the largest of the garden plants.

It becomes so big that living beings can perch in its branches, starts small, but it becomes big. He told another parable, The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into 60 pounds of flour until it worked all the way through the dough. A little bit of what do these two parables have in common? Well, a couple of things. One is they're both about the kingdom of God. They're both about, it's starting small, but eventually influencing the whole thing. You don't need a lot of yeast to leaven a bunch of bread. Just a little bit will do it. It will bake through. The kingdom of God is going to bake through.

The first impression of what the kingdom of God is gonna look like is not its end impression. It will develop over time. We're gonna talk about parables in a couple weeks, but here is if you're reading parables, and I encourage you in the next couple weeks when you're doing your devotions, read some parables, and in the parables, here's the equation you're looking at. Just as, So also when you're looking at a parable and you're looking to try to determine what does this parable mean? What does Jesus trying to teach? Ask yourself just as, so, also, just as a mustard seed is small, but grows big, so also the kingdom of God is gonna start small, but grow big. Just as it only takes a little bit of leaven to raise a whole a loaf of bread, so also that small introduction to the kingdom of God is going to expand, right? That's what, that's one way to understand the parables.

We'll talk more about it, but let me give you a parable to close. This is the parable of the Titanic. Now the Titanic, as you know, set sail on April 12th 1912. My question, what I'm gonna ask you is, when did the Titanic sink? All right, it set sail on April 12th. On April 14th at 11:40 PM, it hit an iceberg. This is an actual picture of it. We've all seen the movie, the Titanic would float if only four of the water-tight compartments underneath got flooded. But how many were flooded? Five. And so the Titanic at 11:40 hit the iceberg, ripped a hole in the Titanic on the side that went so long that so much water got in that the Titanic was going to sink. It simply couldn't stay afloat. That happened at 11:40, did the Titanic sink at 11:40? At 12:30, people got into the lifeboats and people tried to get away at 12:30 had the Titanic sunk? At 2:20, the boat was completely underwater. And by 2 24, the boat was at the bottom of the

ocean. When did the Titanic sink? Now, given the course that the Titanic was on, given the weather, given the fact that that iceberg was there, if you had a 10,000 foot view of what was happening and you saw the Titanic leave and you saw the iceberg there, and you knew that was the course, you could say, "That boat is sunk. They don't know it yet, but they are sunk". When it hit, when the Titanic hit the iceberg, right? We've seen the movie, people were playing on deck and dancing and the band was playing and they were having dinner. The, the water tight compartments were flooded, the ship was going down. It was a mathematical certainty. And yet on deck, they had no idea the boat was sinking and they had no idea that it was sinking.

The kingdom of God operates kind of, it's the same way. It's just a little bit reverse. Once that boat struck the, the iceberg, it was going down. It just took a while for people to realize it. But it was a certainty once, just as, once that boat hit the iceberg, it was sinking. So also, once Jesus came and hit the world with the kingdom of God, the king, so also the kingdom God is going to rule. People don't recognize it right away, but it's going to happen. Do you see the parable? Do you see the spiritual truth that's being demonstrated by the story in the Titanic? The only question was how many people were gonna get off before the inevitable consequences of what had already happened took effect. In the kingdom of God, the only question is how many people are gonna get off a world that is sinking and jump on to the lifeboat that is faith in Jesus Christ, in the coming kingdom of God.

The first blow was struck by Jesus when he came to earth, and it is so determinative that just as the water was certain to overwhelm the ship, so also the kingdom of God will take over. It doesn't look like it now, St you know, But if you were standing on the floor, the boat of the Titanic, the deck of the Titanic at 12:15, you were saying everything's fine. And at 2:20, the girl you just met is pushing you, pushing off the door so she can float, and you Leo, sink to the bottom of the ocean, <laugh>.

But it had already happened. It was a done deal. We look at the world and we say the kingdom of God is at hand. It has been introduced. There is an inevitable series of events, but it's going to end up with God actively ruling the world, actively reigning his reign to be recognized by everybody. How fully influenced of that are we gonna be? How are we gonna believe that? There were people on the Titanic who were told this ship is gonna sink. And what did they say? God himself could not sink this ship. So confident in their human achievement. And there are those of us living in this world who just can't believe that God reigns and one day is going to be raining and he's going to make everything right. And this world is gonna sink, but we feel like we're in charge.

We feel like our human achievement, whether it's our human good works or our human philosophy or whatever, that's gonna help us float, that's gonna save us. That 's not how it works. The dynamic between the sinking of the Titanic and the reign of the kingdom of God is the same. It starts small, but it is inevitable. So to finish and to answer the questions that we started with is here and now. The kingdom of God. No, it's been inaugurated, but not fully realized is the kingdom of God in our hearts. Yeah, but it's not just there. Will there be a literal reigning of Christ at some time in the future? I think so. I think so. I think that's what scripture teaches. Is it gonna be exactly a thousand years? I don't know. I think it's gonna be a long fixed period of time.

But God is going to, this is going to come in a way that he is not only going to reign which he does now, but he's going to be reigning, actively exerting his will and people responding to it as being legitimate. How you enter the kingdom of God. Remember what we said? Your decision about Jesus now, your judgment of Jesus now determines Jesus's judgment of you then. So how do you enter the kingdom of God? How are we supposed to live while we're waiting for the kingdom of God to take its final shape? You need to know this. Your life depends on it. We don't have time to get to it today. Would you pray with me?



God, I wanna offer thanks and ask for forgiveness. I wanna offer thanks that you have, uh, th this, um, teaching this important doctrine or concept is part of what you've given us in scripture. And I wanna ask forgiveness for being so unable to communicate it well. But God, I ask through your Holy Spirit that you would, um, work with the truth and knead it like love and into dough in our hearts and our minds, so that we understand that the coming of Jesus Christ was a game changer. It was a world reorder. It wasn't just nice teachings. It wasn't just bromides and kind thoughts to help us live nicer, kinder lives. It was really and truly the reordering of the created order, the breaking into this world, the kingdom of your world. And that is soon going to have ramifications. These ramifications and consequences are unavoidable.

These consequences are gonna include judgment and God, we need to be on the right side of this so we don't go down with the ship. So I pray in Jesus' name as we pursue this topic and we talk next time about what it means. How is it possible for us to enter the kingdom of God that you would in between now and the time that we talk about that you would work in our hearts to convince us that this is reality. We may be standing on the deck of what seems to be an unsinkable world, and we may think that we're in control. God, in order for us to understand, we need to jump. You have to convince us that we're sinking as individuals, as a world. The kingdom of God will come, your will will be done on earth just like it is in heaven.

God, in the next, in the coming days, convince us of the reality of that. So that we believe in our hearts that we want to enter the kingdom of God and that we will hear your truth. The truth of scripture that talks about how to do that. God, thanks for this teaching. Thanks for your word. Thank you for Jesus Christ who brought the kingdom of God to us. And in His name I pray, amen. Thank you for being here. Thank you for coming.