

I want to show you some pictures this morning. These pictures are all symbols that are connected to Jesus. They remind us of something about Jesus. The first is a cross.



This reminds us of Jesus' death that He died intentionally, purposefully, on our behalf. He died to pay the price of our sins.



The second picture is this one. This symbol represents the trinity. The trinity refers to God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This reminds us that Jesus is fully God as well as fully man.



The next picture is one you may have seen last month. This is a crown of thorns. The soldiers who crucified Jesus placed on His head to mock Him as the king of the Jews.

Now I have one more to show you. This one may be one that you have not seen before



for Jesus. It is a crown. A crown is a symbol for Jesus to remind us that He IS a king. We are going to learn something about the kingdom of God this morning.

Jesus was all about this particular kingdom. There is a rumor floating around that Jesus taught about money more than any other subject. I accepted that the first few times I heard it. But the more I read the Gospels the more I doubted that statement.

Finally, I decided to test it. Back in 2010 I checked it out for myself. I read through all four of the biographies of Jesus in the Bible counting each occurrence of each subject Jesus taught on. There was one subject that Jesus taught on more than twice as much as any other subject. And it was not money. **The central subject of Jesus' teaching was the Kingdom of God.** Both Jesus and John the Baptizer announced the arrival of this kingdom.

**Matthew 3:1-2 (NIV)** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

**Matthew 4:17 (NIV)** From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

This kingdom that Jesus taught about is our subject this morning. We are reading article IX in the Baptist Faith and Message.

## IX. The Kingdom

The kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Gen. 1:1; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; Matt. 3:2; Matt. 4:8-10, 23; Matt. 12:25-28; Matt. 13:1-52; Matt. 25:31-46; Matt. 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; Mark 9:1; Luke 4:43; Luke 8:1; Luke 9:2; Luke 12:31-32; Luke 17:20-21; Luke 23:42; John 3:3; John 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; Acts 17:22-31; Rom. 5:17; Rom. 8:19; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Col. 1:13; Heb. 11:10, 16; Heb. 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 1 Peter 4:13; Rev. 1:6, 9; Rev. 5:10; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 21-22.*

I want to work our way through this, briefly, this morning.

### ***The kingdom of God includes... His general sovereignty over the universe...***

The word sovereignty means having the highest authority and power.

**(sovereignty = having the highest authority and power)**

And in the context of this article it means that God is sovereign over our planet and everything on it.

The Bible begins with God. Genesis 1:1 says...

**Genesis 1:1 (NIV)** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

God existed before there was a universe. God is the one who created our sun, the earth, the moon, all the other planets, everything and everyone. **Everything in the universe belongs to God**. God created it all so it all belongs to God.

And because it belongs to God,...

**God can do anything He wants with everything in His universe.**

He created us for His own purposes. YOU do not belong to YOU. He is the king of everything and the king over everyone.

That may sound a little scary, until you remember that God is all good and all loving. We count on this. We count on God's love for us. We depend on God's goodness. He only does what is good for us. There is no need to fear God if you are willing to submit yourself to Him. This leads us to the second part of the definition of God's kingdom.

### ***The kingdom of God includes... His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King.***

In general God is king over everyone. In particular He is king over each of us as individuals. His particular kingship means He is close up and personal to each of us. God is king over all the earth. There are billions of people on earth. It is hard to feel like God cares much about one person when there are so many people to relate to. But God is not like us. We can have a really close, personal relationship with only a handful of people. God can do so with every one of us. God can relate to each of us as individuals.

And He does. God knows everything about you. He cares about every aspect of your life. He knows you better than you know yourself. He knows your fears, your dreams, your desires, your failures, your successes, your sins, and your victories much better than you know them. Despite this, God still loves you tremendously. He has only good planned for you.

A close, loving relationship with God, in His Kingdom, is possible to those who do the last part of that definition, those "**who willfully acknowledge Him as King.**" Your participation in the Kingdom of God comes about by submitting yourself to God.

Now there is a right way to do so. The right way to submit to God is in the truth of Jesus Christ. ***Particularly the kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ.***

When you receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord, He becomes both your Lord and king. You join the kingdom of Jesus. This means Jesus' kingdom is different. Jesus' kingdom is not like earthly kingdoms.

**Jesus' kingdom is not a geographical place.**

The Queen of England is queen over the British empire, meaning all the land that Britain owns and runs. She is a queen over land, over a nation. That includes people, but is primarily a place. Jesus' kingdom is not that kind of kingdom. He said as much to the governor of Judea.

**John 18:36 (NIV)** "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews."

Jesus spoke these words to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Jesus is telling Pilate that the Roman government has no reason to fear Jesus. He is not planning a Jewish revolution against Rome. His kingdom is not a geographical place. His kingdom is not a political one. It is not a kingdom that comes about by rebellion. It is a different kind of kingdom. It does involve people, but not like Pilate was thinking.

If you are a Christian, you are in the Kingdom of God. When you first trusted Jesus for salvation, He became your Lord and your King. You may not have realized it or understood it.

And ever since that day, the Holy Spirit has been making you more a citizen of that kingdom. In regeneration, the Holy Spirit gives you a heart that is receptive to the Lordship of Jesus. You value being in His kingdom. You learn to pray, as in the model prayer, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth--even in my life--as it is in heaven." This is a prayer of a person in a kingdom. This is a prayer to your king. When you prayed that prayer and meant it, you were responding to your king.

Americans do not have a king. We have a president but he is not much like a king. He is not a sovereign ruler. He doesn't have as much power as a king does.

Most kings have a lot of power. Many years ago, the Israelites asked the prophet Samuel for a king, Samuel warned them against wanting a king, describing what a king would do.

**1 Samuel 8:11-17 (NIV)** He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves.

Samuel was trying to convince them that they really did not want a king. They heard all that and decided they wanted a king anyway.

Now, this IS the kind of king Jesus is. He has sovereign authority over the people of His kingdom. It does not matter that they are scattered all over the earth. It does not matter that His kingdom, right now, is only over individuals and not nations or places. That will change one day, but that is next week's sermon.

Jesus has absolute authority over our lives. We must acknowledge this to be true. Paul, in his letter to the church at Rome, introduces himself as a servant of Christ Jesus. James, Peter, and Jude also refer to themselves as servants or slaves of God. These all placed themselves voluntarily under the kingship rule of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As servants of Jesus, we give Him authority over us and serve Him with what we have. We do so because He is a good, loving, personal, and just king. He is the best king anyone could have.

He is also the only answer to your sin problem. He is the only source of forgiveness. He is the only path to eternal life. Eternal life is a benefit of being in His kingdom.

That means that getting into the kingdom of God is the most important thing you can do in your life and with your life. Jesus said it this way.

**Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV)** "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

**The most important thing you can do for yourself is to enter the Kingdom of God.** To do that you must receive Jesus as your Savior and turn your life over to Him as your Lord, making Him your King.