

I. I got it right. I got it right. Hey, I just got a note that Comcast is dropping frames in the live stream this morning, so I'm going to say whatever I want to say and hope that the drops get the places where I've said something offensive or not quite right. Is that cool with you guys?

Are you up for anything this morning? Yeah, sure. That's not a glowing endorsement? Hey, glad to have you guys this morning. Whoo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo.

We had an election on Tuesday. Yes, it is over. I know that some of you are, like, cheering. None of you are, like, oh, fearing. I don't know about you, but I'm just glad to finally not have any more requests for money on my text messaging besides me.

It's like, whew. That is great. That is great. For Christians, election season is always a weird thing because, one, we care deeply about our country, and I don't care which side of the fence politically you are on. We care deeply about this place that we call home.

But on the other hand, we recognize that it's a temporary home. This is not really our forever place. Our country is just one small, small, small part of the big overarching story that God is telling. And so we find ourselves living in this sort of this weird tension. It puts me in mind of the history of the Israelites.

Some of you may be familiar with this part of Jewish history, and it's found in the Old Testament book of, like, Daniel and Ezra and even Nehemiah, even the book of Lamentations. When was the last time any of you turned to lamentations and read lamentations? Last week. You're a Lamerter, though, so that makes sense. Lamentations.

This part of Jewish history talks about when the Jews were overrun, conquered by a foreign country, and they were taken into exile. They were taken into exile to a place far, far, far, far from home, to a place called Babylon. And of course, this would be devastating. But the prophets gave them some very important words from God. And the prophet Jeremiah said this specifically.

He says, listen, your exile is not forever. You will go home again at some point in time. But God says, I'm the one who decides that, not you. And so between now and the time I decide to take you home, there's some things I want you to do instead of whining about what isn't. You settle in.

You build homes, you raise some families, you plant some gardens. You pray and work for the place that God has put you to be better now. Again, you may be cheering this election, but in four years time, you may be on the opposite side of the fence. The fact is, this world and

this life, this election, they're all temporary things. God has a forever plan for us that is much better. So today, instead of looking over our shoulder at the past, we're going to set our eyes specifically on a prayer that Jesus prayed that speaks to the same things that Jeremiah told the Israelites.

Ways that we can live for God in a world that is not. So, if you've got your Bibles, go ahead and turn to Matthew. Matthew is the very first book in the New Testament. So if you open your Bibles midway, move towards the right and you will find Matthew eventually. It's usually got some red letters, that's how I always tell people to look for it.

But yeah, if you're finding yourself near Zachariah or Malachi, you're really, really close. If you've got to Mark Luke or John, you've gone too far. Find Matthew. We're going to be in Matthew, chapter six. I'm going to pray as you can continue to watch and pray as you flip pages in your Bibles.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are a firm foundation in a very oftentimes chaotic and unsettled place. We live in a country that oftentimes feels overwhelmed by political divisions. And for those of us who really just desire to live at peace, it can be discouraging when we see, when we see the world divided over attempts just to control and have power and wrestle authority, when we see kingdoms develop that are different than your kingdom. So this morning, as we open your word, remind us again that while we live in this world, we are citizens of a better kingdom. And help us lift our attention at least for a few moments from sort of the chaos and the divisions of politics and focus on the eternal kingdom of, of God where you rule and you reign forever and ever.

Amen. And everyone said amen. Amen. So we just finished up a series on the Beatitudes where we looked at how Jesus introduces this idea of kingdom.

He talks about, if you remember, the kind of people that are going to feel at home in this kingdom. He calls them blessed people. It was those who were hungry for God and hungry for the true things of God.

It talked about. He talked about people who are filled with mercy and kindness, with humility. These are the people that are going to be blessed. He talks about those who see wrong in the world and mourn over it, who are truly saddened by things that aren't right. He says, those people are blessed.

Those people will fit into the kingdom. He talks to those who are faced with opposition and who correctly engage with the opposition. So when we are faced with people who disagree with us, we don't call them deplorables and we don't describe them as floating piles of trash.

Those are two things we don't do with people that we disagree with. What did Jesus tell us to do with those we disagree with?

We love. We love them. He warns us that the world would not necessarily appreciate these kind of people. So as Alan talked about last week, we can expect persecution if we live in the way that Jesus says is the truly blessed way. But persecution is worth it because to theirs belong the kingdom.

There's that word again, the kingdom of heaven. Kingdom is a very nebulous term. It's sort of like when people say, I'm from the Midwest. Well, what does that even mean? Sometimes I'm from the Midwest, but from someone from, I don't know, Arizona.

I'm from the East. So what is the Midwest? It can get very confusing. But the kingdom, like the Midwest, is a concept. But the kingdom is a concept that really, really matters to Jesus.

He wants us to be in it. He wants us to experience it. And so today we're going to keep diving deep and deeper into this idea of the kingdom. And we're going to begin with a prayer that Jesus taught his disciples that speaks to this very issue. And you're probably familiar with it.

So why don't we do this? Why don't we read together, Say aloud together this prayer that Jesus taught his disciples from Matthew 6, and it's found in 9 through 13. So let's read together. This then is how you should pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Now that's where the most original and oldest passages end off. Your version may also include the last line.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Once again, speaking to this idea of kingdom. So you really can't miss it, can you, when you read this prayer? The kingdom is something that matters to Jesus, and he asked us to pray that his kingdom come.

I love talking about this idea of kingdom. We may have first been introduced to this idea when we were little kids and our moms or Dads read us a fairy tale where there was a princess and a knight and a king and a queen. And so we were first introduced to this idea of the fairy tale kingdom. We got into high school and we started talking about the different classifications of life. There was the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom, the mineral kingdom.

Anyone remember that from high school biology? Of course. As we look around, it's not just in fairy tales, but all over the world there are

kingdoms where kings and queens exercise varying degrees of constitutional or unconstitutional authority. And I know in my own life, I use it to describe any place where I'm sort of the head honcho. This is my kingdom.

Those places are very, very. That's a short list, by the way. My front porch, I sort of felt like that for a while, but now I look around and go, no, there's too many bikes and toys and trash. This is no longer my kingdom. When I was a teen, it was my bedroom, Remember your bedroom?

Oh, if you didn't have a sibling you shared a bedroom with, that was your place. Now, never mind that your parents came in once a week and checked the drawers under the mattress and cleaned up stuff after you. That was your kingdom. That was your world. Maybe for you today, it's your garage or your truck.

Maybe it's that chair in the corner of the living room that no one sits in. For some reason, they know it's just yours. That's your place. Places that are comforting in the middle of chaos, when the world gets chaotic, they provide us just a sense of security and peace because that is what we really crave as human beings, a sense of normalcy, a place where things are under control. Politicians know this.

That's why they get our vote by saying, this is what's broken in the world, and I know exactly how to fix it. We go, finally, someone who knows how to fix it. It's all very familiar. And the stories of this go clear back again to the Old Testament in First Samuel. So Samuel is one of those history books of the Bible that talks about the different ways God has worked and moved in the lives of his people since the beginning.

And in 1st Samuel 8, it begins this way. The Israelites want a king. Now, up until this point in time, the Israelites have been getting along just fine without a king. They've been led by spiritual leaders, and Samuel is one of those spiritual leaders. And under Samuel's authority, under Samuel's leadership, they've experienced a time of prosperity and peace.

They've driven back the Philistines. They're Living in a. In a really good place. But the Israelites notice something. They.

They notice that Samuel's getting older and his boys are not Samuel. I knew Samuel, and you are no Samuel. They know those boys aren't Samuel. They're going to be a different type of leader. They're not going to be a good leader.

And it makes them nervous. So they say, listen, Samuel, it's not you, it's us. We get it. We want a king. Other countries have kings.

We need a king. Kings are useful because they can go out and lead into battle. They help the country govern itself well, and they're the face of our country, and they stand up to the threats of other countries. And Samuel says, I mean, how can you not take it personally? And I think Samuel sort of did.

He said, listen, this is not going to go the way you think it's going to go. He says, the king is going to force you to fight his wars. The king is going to force you to work and pay taxes to him. If the king wants your property, the king's going to come in and take your property. If the king wants your sons or daughters for servants and slaves, what are you going to do?

He's the king.

1st Samuel 8, 19 tells us that the Israelites said, yeah, we'll take our chances. And so God says, listen, Samuel, it's not about you, it's about their relationship with me. Don't take it personally. Give them what they want. And so Samuel anoints Saul as the first king of Israel.

And if you know the history of kings in Israel, you will know this, that in over 400 years, years of rule by kings who were by far and large failures. There were rivalries, there were splits in the country because of idolatry. Even the halfway good kings like King David left the country in worse shape than they found it. And that's sort of just the history of kings in Israel. Now, if that sounds a little bit familiar, there's a reason.

This is how the world and the kingdoms of the world work. So Jesus says, I want you to quit pinning your hopes and dreams on earthly kings and earthly kingdoms, and instead I want you to pray God your kingdom come. In other words, Jesus says earthly kingdoms have their limitations, and in the end, they all come to an end, whether in four years or 4,000. They won't last forever. So instead, Jesus says, pray and live in such a way that God's kingdom takes priority.

How does this look in our lives? Because again, kingdom is a vague, vague word. Well, in Romans 8, it says it begins at the beginning with simply changing your allegiance. So we live in two realities. And if you're new to this concept, I'll just fill you in a little bit.

Romans says, and reminds us that we live in two different types of kingdoms. We live in the kingdom of the flesh, the realm of the flesh, Romans calls it. But we also exist in the realm or the kingdom of the spirit. Now, the realm of the flesh is sort of. Sort of that area where it's about us, what we want, what we push to get, what we fight to get, what we lean into for our own benefit.

And that's a lot of stuff out there. It's things that we can see and things that we can't see. The realm of the spirit is where we are working and pressing and leaning into things that honor and recognize Jesus as king. And there are things that are seen and there are things that are unseen in that spirit realm, but it's about Jesus, not about the desires of our own flesh. And we live sort of in this place of tension in these two coexisting realms.

And we talked about this several weeks ago, and I know Allen's going to lean into this too, but we talked about this in terms of an embassy in a foreign country. So think about this. The US has an embassy in the heart of Moscow. Did you know that? It does.

Near the very famous Red Square, right there in Russia, The US has an embassy. Now, outside the walls of the US Embassy, it is Russia, Russia language, Russia rules. Russia government. It's Russia, Russia, all the time. Inside the walls of the embassy, it is America.

There's an American flag flying. You walk in the door, there's a seal of the United States on the floor and a bronze one on the wall. The people greet you in English because this is America, and this is the dominant language of the U.S. those who work there, U.S. citizens swear allegiance to the United States, to its laws, to its government.

So while the ambassadorial staff technically live in Russia, they are first and foremost citizens of the good old US Of A. In the same way, we reside in the realm of the flesh, but our real home is not here. Our real home, our eternal citizenship, Philippians says, is in heaven. Our allegiance is first and foremost to the kingdom of God. And so to experience life in the spirit, we first of all change our allegiance.

Yes, we live here, but as Christians, our allegiance is not here. Our allegiance is over here. And how do we do that? How do we surrender and change our allegiance? Well, we give our lives to Jesus.

We surrender our Lives to Jesus. We release control of our kingdom, whether it's our. Whether it's our truck or our garage or the comfortable La Z boy in the corner, or whether it's our job, maybe it's our relationships, maybe it's our family. And we release control of that. And we say, I'm not going to try to create something on my own.

I'm going to release that, all of that to Jesus and I'm going to surrender my allegiance to him and I'm going to give it to him. That looks like saying yes to Jesus. Being baptized, becoming part of his family, begin working for his kingdom principles. That's sort of the second thing where we raise his flag over our lives. We hoist it up.

Aha. Jesus is up here. This is Jesus territory where we receive his

seal, the Holy Spirit on our lives, and it's emblazoned on our hearts. We walk under the authority and power now of God and the Holy Spirit. We start living according to his principles, according to his governance, according to his laws.

And the result of this. Romans 8 says, the mind governed by the flesh leads to death. That's the old country and the new country, the mind of the Spirit, the result of living there, what is it? Life and peace. So if you want life and peace, all the things that politicians like to offer, it's not by voting a certain way, it's by changing allegiance, rejecting the kingdom of the flesh and embracing the kingdom of the spirit.

Now that's a big one. That's a big one. And most of us have done that in this room. I would say we've changed our allegiance and now we recognize Jesus as our complete authority. But how do we live now in this world that is far from where Jesus would want us to be, the perfection that he has called us to live in and to pray for the kingdom come.

Well, I think the key is to never forget that there is another country. There is another country that we are looking forward to, that we are. We have our mind and our heart set on. Now. This future country is the.

Is the hereafter of the kingdom promise. There's a here now Kingdom promise. We live this way now, even though we're not where we are supposed to be. We're not home yet. We live here.

But the home that we have been promised is still to come. That's the hereafter promise of the kingdom. Not only will every knee bow and every tongue confess Jesus as Lord at this some point in history, but one day, every kingdom of the world will do so. As well. Revelation 11:15 says it this way.

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah. The kingdom of this world, all of it that encompasses everything, has become, has been transformed, has been changed, has been conquered and the flag planted, and it is now the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah. And he will reign not for a four year term or a two term ruler. He is an eternal ruler. He will reign forever and ever and ever.

And what does that look like?

The scripture gives us a few examples, something to point to. So 2 Corinthians says there is a physical aspect of this new kingdom. It's not just in our minds. It's not just a wish floating out there. There's a physical promise related to this, says there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth.

So it's a new, a perfect new earth, a perfect new heaven and perfect new bodies. We're promised that too. More amazing than God's original creation, I believe. A place specially prepared for us. Great music.

What's your favorite music? It's going to be better there. Amazing food we talked about this morning. Amazing food, better than anything you're going to get here. Unbelievable natural beauty.

A world unspoiled by sin and corruption. That's the physical promise. There's the relational promise too. We're going to recognize and be reunited with redeemed loved ones that have gone before us. We're going to be reconnected with them.

There's the sort of, the emotional aspect of this revelation reminds us that there will be no more tears, promises, no more suffering, no more death. All the other stuff like envy, selfishness, injustice, deceit, lying, sin, all those things will have passed away because they're part of the former things. Those things pass away. All things now become new. We're going to be doing good stuff.

Yes, we're going to sing and worship God absolutely. But our worship is not just simply limited to singing songs. Our worship will be our life. I really believe that the spiritual gifts that God entrusts to us in this realm are a foretaste of what we will be about in his future kingdom.

Work will be what it was intended to be under Adam, a delight, a joy of fulfillment instead of a curse that it became under Adam. And David talks about God's mercies being new every morning. And I just imagine that that is sort of the pattern of heaven, that every day his mercies are renewed. We have more and more reasons to give thanks. It will not be diminishing returns it will be ever increasing returns on the joy and delights of God's eternal kingdom.

New splendors being revealed every morning, new details every morning. A new song on our lips to give praise and thanks to God. And when you compare the kingdom that Jesus promises to the kingdom that Samuel warned the Israelites about, remember that warning. Here's what's going to happen. He's going to take your kids as slaves.

He's going to tax you to death. He's going to lead you into war. Romans paints a completely different picture. Instead of being made servants and subjects, we will be made children. And the scripture says, unbelievably, mind bogglingly, radically, the scripture says we will be made co heirs with Christ.

Co heirs with Christ. Romans 8, 14, 17 says it this way. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Can you say I am a child of God now? If we are children, then we are heirs.

Heirs of God and co heirs with Christ. If indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I do not even pretend to know what sharing in his glory could possibly entail. But I guarantee you it's better than any campaign promise made by either side of this political spectrum. I tell you guys, he calls us not to settle for less than what he promises us.

This world is a crazy place. And it's tempting to look for peace and stability in earthly kingdoms. That includes your house, and that includes the White House. But if we're expecting life and peace from the kings and the kingdoms of this world, then I've got some very disheartening news for you. It doesn't last.

This world and all of its kingdoms, yours mine, the United States, Russia, Wall Street, Washington, Hollywood, all of that will one day be swallowed up in God's eternal kingdom. So we need to first of all, make sure our allegiance is in the right kingdom. Our allegiance and loyalty is to the right kingdom. Don't settle for anything less than Jesus. And then don't forget the promise.

Because while we serve here in this foreign land, there is a home country that God is preparing for us. Man, I'm looking forward to it. How about you, Heavenly Father? No earthly kingdom can ever compare with the promise you make to all those who put their trust in you. That kingdom is eternal.

That kingdom is prepared and planned with us in mind. And so today I just want to pray for those who have never sworn allegiance to you, who are still trying to maintain their allegiance to this world. And all the stuff that goes into it. Lord, I do not know how you are going to swallow up the kingdoms of this world and make them your own. That is a mystery to me.

But the promise is that you will do it. Whether you do it in one full sweep in a glorious moment, or whether you do it step by step as each and every person is transformed and their lives become more and more conformed to your likeness, that is up to you. But it begins by swearing allegiance first and foremost to you, by saying, lord, I surrender control of my life and I give it to you. I want to be brought into your kingdom. So Jesus, if there's anyone here this morning that has not invited you to be king of their life today, I pray that they would pray with us.

Lord Jesus, let your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven and as you desire to be in me in Jesus name, Amen.

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