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@THEAIMSTUFF



ADVENTURES IN MINISTRY
www.adventuresinministry.com



THEAIMSTUFF@GMAIL.COM



KINGDOM: Not of this World is a 3 week teaching series by Phil Baus, youth minister for the Scenic Hills Church of Christ in Pensacola, FL.

The King

“Every Kingdom has a King.”

Allow me to state the obvious, but **to have a kingdom one must have a king**. Looking at all of our different areas of culture or “kingdoms” I think its clear that society loves making people king. Think about it...

- “The King of Rock and Roll”- Elvis Presley
- “The King of Pop”- Michael Jackson
- NBA- LeBron “King” James
- Professional Wrestling- Jerry “The King” Lawler (my personal fav.)
- You probably have a favorite “king” of your own...

I think that it’s natural for us to look for a king. Unfortunately the people we choose to be king or to lead don’t always rule or lead us in the right way. **If we go way back to the book of Genesis I think its pretty clear that God was king**. That worked pretty well for a while but eventually the children of Israel wanted what everybody else had... an earthly king. So they commanded Samuel:

“Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” -1 Samuel 8:5

This was not what God wanted. Samuel even told them that an earthly king was a bad idea but the children of Israel didn’t listen. (v. 10-21) So God decided to give the children of Israel what they wanted:

And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.”
-1 Samuel 8: 22

God decided that although He was the king of Israel, He was going to allow His people to have an earthly king in order to teach them a lesson. I hated when my parents tried to teach me a lesson, especially when they were going to let me learn that lesson the hard way. In a sense that’s what God was doing. He was teaching the children of Israel a lesson the hard way. This lesson involved several wicked kings that would rule Israel such as Jeroboam, Ahab, & Manasseh. Its pretty easy now to look back at the history of Israel and see God was right. God was and will always be a better king than any earthly ruler.

Now there was one king who walked the earth who was worthy of such a title, although he was quoted saying that His kingdom was “not of this world.” (John 18:36) He was better known as the “King of the Jews,” and His name was Jesus Christ. The kingdom He referred to in this conversation with Pilate is the same kingdom that we will be looking at with this series.

It's important that we as the church keep Jesus in His rightful position: King of His Kingdom. Like we saw in the Old Testament, the children of Israel tried to put others on the throne and that ultimately failed. I think sometimes this is something that we try to do today. Is it possible that we too sometimes try to replace God as king? For the remainder of our time, let's take a deeper look at why God the Father and His son Jesus Christ belong on the throne, as King.

God is the Creator

The very fact that God spoke the world into existence (Gen. 1:1) is reason enough for Him to be King. Let's take it a step further. Jesus belongs on the throne because He created His Kingdom/church. Look at Jesus' words in Matthew:

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. -Matthew 16:18

He said, "I will build." Jesus leaves no room for doubt. It is Him who built His Kingdom. Not only is He the founder of the universe, Christ established a body to restore fellowship with a people who had separated themselves with sin.

God is All Powerful

The U.S. government is divided into three branches: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. In a kingdom the king possesses all three of these individual powers. When Isaiah describes God he uses each of these characteristics:

For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us. - Isaiah 33:22

He calls Him, "judge, lawgiver, and the one who saves." If you think about it those three titles really work hand in hand. God made or LEGISLATED the law (which we will talk about next week), He EXECUTES His plan to save us from our sins, and we can be confident in that salvation because He is our JUDGE.

God is Eternal

The final reason God belongs on the throne is that He will exist forever. Traditionally the only time a king leaves his position in the kingdom is if he dies or is overthrown. After the king is gone there is often conflict over the next person to take the throne. That's the beauty of God being king! God will never die and will never be overthrown! His kingdom will never have a successor. Paul references this truth in his first letter to Timothy:

To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. -1 Timothy 1:17

Wrap Up

In every kingdom there has to be a king! Although man at times in history had different ideas, God is king and will always be. In 1 Thessalonians 2 Paul calls us to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you us into His own kingdom! (v.12) It's incredible to think that God, the worthy and eternal king has offered us a personal invitation to be a part of His own kingdom. What a king! What an opportunity!

The Law

“Every Kingdom has a Law.”

One of the primary jobs of a King or Ruler is simply put to tell you what to do. That sounds kind of harsh but initially its true; this is done by establishing laws. This doesn't mean the laws are bad or evil, but rather helpful or in place to protect us.

Unfortunately in the United States there are some pretty dumb laws, for example:

- In Florida, “pregnant pigs are not to be confined in cages”
- It's illegal to sell your children.
- You are not allowed to break more than three dishes per day, or chip the edges of more than four cups or saucers.
- Women may be fined for falling asleep under a hair dryer.
- A special law prohibits unmarried women from parachuting on Sunday.
- If an elephant is left tied to a parking meter the parking fee has to be paid just as it would for a vehicle.
- Penalty for horse theft is death by hanging.
- Men may not be seen publically in any kind of strapless gown.

Obviously these some of these laws are pretty silly. Some even were made for one specific instance in mind. God's law is far from that. **God's law was designed to communicate him as king and to guide us to a relationship with him.**

It's like God wrote us a letter telling who he is (the king) and how we can be citizens of his kingdom. That's God's law! Unfortunately there are so many who claim to be citizens of God's kingdom but do not his laws. Today we are going to inspect something that Paul wrote to Timothy in Second Timothy regarding God's law.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. -2 Timothy 3:16-17

Paul begins his remarks with specifying that he is talking about all scripture. God's law consists of two different laws: The Old and the New. Paul says that all scripture is profitable understanding that we were bound to the New Law and that the Old Law still had value for our learning.

Paul also says that scripture or the law was breathed from God. Is there a more intimate image of proximity than breath? Scripture is tied so closely to God that Paul describes it

as coming from the very mouth of God. What a powerful thought that God could use many different men to deliver a message so person and intimate?

Profitable for Teaching- “Defining”

Paul is assuring Timothy that as he becomes a teacher of the Gospel that it is of the utmost importance to use God’s law. It’s profitable because it defines and gives instructions. God’s law defines what it means to be a disciple of Christ as well as the instructions to become one. As Timothy became a gospel teacher Paul encouraged him to use God’s definition and God’s instructions when it comes to teaching about God’s kingdom.

It has become far too popular to define God’s kingdom with something other than God’s law. Does that even make sense? Imagine if you invented a game and when others began to play they made up their own rules. The game has ceased to be YOUR game because they no longer are playing by YOUR rules. When we teach about GOD’S kingdom we need to be sure to use GOD’S Law!

Profitable for Reproof and Correction- “Changing”

The words reproof and corrections indicate a change. When Paul uses this language he is reaffirming the fact that God’s law has to change your life. Often times when we begin class I ask my youth kids “are you ready to be changed?” I do that because when we look at God’s word it has the ability to change us. Paul says it’s most profitable when we use it in a way that it causes us to change.

Too many times we read God’s law and come to the conclusion of “ man, what an awesome story,” or “what an awesome teaching or principle?” God’s law is more than a collection of stories and teachings but rather a manual of a better way to live. It has to become an agent for change in our hearts and in our actions.

Profitable for Training in Righteousness- “Acting”

Training for righteousness seems a lot like the first profitable use for God’s law: teaching. I believe that as we train in righteousness we are actually putting what has been defined and changed into action. Once we define what it means to be a disciple or a citizen of God’s Kingdom we must begin to practice the actions of a disciple. I think that we often times take the easy way out by labeling the lack of sin righteousness. Righteousness is active. We must use God’s law to try and fill our lives with actions of righteousness. The Bible has plenty of examples and direct commands of righteous things that we can do.

This does not mean that by practicing or training in righteousness that we by any means earning our keep in God’s kingdom but rather reacting to a priceless gift from the King. God allows us to be his people in his righteous kingdom therefore we out to try to live righteously.

Wrap Up

I love the way Paul concludes his statements: that the man of God may be complete. What he's saying here is that until you are engaged and obedient with God's law you're incomplete. You cannot fully be what a citizen of God's kingdom is unless you follow God's law. The world loves to play "God's game" without "God's rules." It's really easy to fall into that mind set because man's law for God's kingdom requires less of you than God's. Man's law may require a day or two a week. It may require you to give up a few minor things. That's what makes it so different from God's Law. **God's law requires you to give up everything. But in giving up everything in my kingdom, God gives you everything in his kingdom.**

*The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;*

the testimony of the Lord is sure,

making wise the simple;

Psalm 19:7

The Vision

“Every Kingdom has a Vision.”

Kingdoms or nations are almost always born out of a dream or a vision. The United States was born from a dream of freedom from an oppressive foreign ruler. The founding fathers had a vision of freedom for its people and so they took appropriate measures to achieve the vision. They created protection for the vision with the constitution so that every step of the way the vision and dream of the United States was protected. It's because of this great vision that their such pride when it comes to our nation. People give their lives to protect the ideals and dreams of this great country. We have holidays to celebrate our victories and vision for freedom.

It is with all this in mind that we must begin to think about the vision for the God's kingdom. We know who the king is. We have discussed how he communicates how he wants us to live but what is vision for God's kingdom? Jesus gives tremendous instructions at the end of Matthew's Gospel.

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

-Matthew 28:18-20

I don't know if you can find a better overview of God's vision for his kingdom then this. **Jesus has now conquered death and now he leaves the people of his kingdom commissioned for it great vision.**

Remember I'm King

Jesus begins with a reminder in verse 18. I'm king. All authority both here and in heaven is mine. This speaks volumes because recently they saw him killed and raised from the dead. We seem to appreciate authority more when someone can do something that we cannot. It's almost as though Jesus is saying: “now that you can see what I can do... follow me.”

This serves as a great reminder that **the vision for Gods kingdom always begins and ends with Jesus**. Before you get to “what” or the “how” Christ is telling his follower, the citizens of his kingdom “its all about me.” What would our youth group look like if we all about Jesus? What would we look like if everyday started and ended with Jesus? Like we learned in the first lesson we cannot have a kingdom with out a king and the vision of the kingdom must begin and be completed with the king.

Conquer

He continues to say I want you to go into the entire world and make disciples. I want you to spread my kingdom everywhere you go. **This vision of God's kingdom has always been about expanding its boarders.** Historically conquering is something that is forced and oppressive but the conquering that Jesus is sharing is one of love and compassion.

Jesus says I want you to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. What he is saying here is that I want you conquer by creating life long commitment to the king. Baptism connects an alien of the kingdom to the king. It washes away their sin, the things that have alienated them from the kingdom. The vision of the kingdom specifies how it wants citizen to be added.

Teaching them to observe all I commanded you... Jesus finally says when you conquer I don't just want you to add them by cleansing their life and making a commitment, I want you to teach them my laws. What good is adding them to the kingdom if they don't know the law? God's kingdom must be full of people who are invested in keeping Gods commands. As citizens of God's kingdom God expects for us to spend the rest of our lives teaching and learn how to live based on His law.

A Vision of Connectedness

My favorite part of the vision God gives his disciples in Mathew 28 is this: I will always be with you. Yes, it's a vision that begins and ends with God. Yes, it's a vision that is about conquering and expanding the boarders of the kingdom. But, the best part of the vision is that God desire to be with the people of His kingdom. **God's vision from the very beginning was for us to be together.** Our sin separated us.

We have a kingdom whose king wants nothing more than to be with His people. Jesus promises that as citizen of his kingdom that he would never leave us. When the enemy attacks and invades, he is with us. When parts of the kingdom secede and fall away, he is always with us. God's kingdom's vision if you were to boil it down to one thing it's about God being connected to his people and never letting them go.

Wrap Up

We know the king. We know his law. We see the vision. The question to ask is this: are you a part of it? Is God your king? Do you follow his law? Have you been added and cleansed through baptism? Do you live every day trying to follow his law? Maybe those are tough questions. It may be that you don't know if you can answer them yes. Answer this: **do you want to be with God?**

I'll never know why God will want to be with me. With all the sin and the rebellion in my life, I will never understand why God wants me but he does. My encouragement is to start there. God wants to be with you. Look at what that caused him to do. That caused him to send his only son to die for us, to prepare a way. So that we could be together... Let your desire to be with God be your fuel. Let you desire to be with God cause you to study his word. Let your desire to be with God cause you to want your sins washed way. Let you desire to be with God cause you to conquer. **God wanted you be with you so bad that nothing could stop him. What is stopping you?**

I love those who love me,

and those who seek me diligently find me

Proverbs 8:17

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35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;

we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: 35-39