

# God is establishing his kingdom

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. For those of you who don't know me, who are just passing through, my name is Brian. I serve as the pastor of this church. This month we're actually in the middle of a short mini-series called What in the World is God Doing?

And normally we spend in this church, in the majority of our preaching, we normally spend time in just one passage. But today and for the next two weeks, we are actually going to go through lots and lots of parts of the whole Bible.

So that's slightly different from what we normally do. And today, almost all the verses I will cite will actually be on the PowerPoint. So you can look up there rather than just flip through your Bibles. So it will be on the PowerPoint. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that this morning you would help us to see what you are up to from the beginning to the end of history.

And that means that we are able to be part of your great big story. So please work in us this morning, we pray. In Jesus' name and for his glory's sake.

[ 1 : 13 ] Amen. Suppose you had a friend from Australia come and visit you. She doesn't know very much about Malaysia at all and she asks you, what's the best news you received in 2018?

And you say, it was the morning of May 10th, 2018, when I learned that Malaysia had changed governments and gave the rakyat a better future.

And she just looks at you blankly. Oh, she says politely, that's nice. But she doesn't really get why it's so significant. You see, in Australia, they change governments and prime ministers all the time. So what's the big deal? But what if you took time to set that statement within the bigger picture?

What if you told her that for 61 years, since independence, Malaysia has never changed governments and had the longest running one-party rule of any democratic country in the world? I think that's true. What if you told her about all the blatant corruption behind 1MDB, about JOLO, about Berset rallies and the uphill battles to stop the country from going downhill, about a 93-year-old man who came back from nowhere to become the prime minister of the country once again, while working alongside his former political nemesis?

[ 2 : 39 ] Certainly, that simple statement you made about Malaysia changing governments has more drama to it. It has a much greater significance.

It makes a lot more sense why it's good news to you. Well, it's like that with the Christian gospel. Let me explain. Last week, we began asking, what in the world is God doing?

And we said, he's pursuing the wayward. He's seeking out the lost. That's what brings him joy. But how do the lost get found?

Well, we say it must be when people hear the gospel, God's good news. Great. And what is this good news? Well, many of us would answer, Jesus came to die for my sins so that I can go to heaven when we die.

But wait. Is that the good news? Well, of course it is, you say. But here's the problem. Many people, even Christians, hear that message the way our Australian friend heard our statement about changing governments.

[ 4 : 02 ] Oh, that's nice, we might say. It's a true statement. But we don't really get what's so significant about it. After all, the gospel heard this way sounds like it's all about the next world and nothing to do with this world.

It's all to do with the afterlife and nothing to do with this life. Earth is just a waiting room before we enter heaven. And no one bothers with waiting rooms.

Right? And that's because many people don't know the big picture. Or to borrow the illustration from last week, many people, even Christians, are wearing glasses with the wrong degrees.

We're not seeing the gospel wrongly, but we are seeing the gospel blurrily. And if we're seeing the gospel blurrily, well, that's an issue.

Because it means we're not digging into the depths of the gospel and so we're missing out on its transforming power. It means it would be difficult for us to live out core conviction number one, to be centred on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 17 ] Because we are not clear on what we are centred on. And it means that the gospel is not heard as the answer to that question. What in the world is God doing?

So we need to place a statement such as, Jesus died for your sins, so that you can go to heaven within the bigger picture, the bigger story.

But what is this bigger story? For that answer, let's turn to Jesus himself. Let's see how Jesus himself describes his good news. Well, here's Mark 1, verse 14 to 15, which we just heard in our Bible reading today.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God has come near.

Repent and believe the good news. Or here's Matthew. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

[ 6 : 28 ] Or here's Luke. But Jesus said, I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.

It's pretty clear, isn't it? At the heart of the good news of Jesus lies this notion of the kingdom of God. Jesus himself stresses it.

But what does it actually mean? Kingdom language, of course, is quite popular in Christian circles. We pray, O Lord, for the extension of your kingdom, we might say, during the offering time.

We use it in our slogans, all for the kingdom. We might even use it to name our Christian groups Kingdom Youth, or something like that.

But we don't have a clear sense of what it means. So this morning, I want to try to de... What's the word?

[ 7 : 31 ] Make your glasses less blurry. What I'm going to do is going to try to trace this idea of the kingdom of God throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

And we're going to see that at the very heart of what God is doing in this world is establishing his kingdom through his gospel. That's what the entire Bible is all about.

Now, we can only do this in very, very broad strokes because I have less than 40 minutes. And at the end, I'll try to state some big lessons we can learn from this survey.

So that's what we're going to do. And to help us, I'm going to divide the story of the Bible into several episodes. So here's episode one. God is king.

God is king. Now, it's interesting, isn't it, that the phrase the kingdom of God is found nowhere in the Old Testament. You can try to have a search for it.

[ 8 : 35 ] You won't find it. The closest are two references to the kingdom of our Lord in 1 and 2 Chronicles. But that's it.

How could Jesus talk so much about the kingdom to Jews when it appears nowhere in their own scriptures? But you see, although the phrase doesn't appear, the idea of God as king, God on his throne, God ruling is everywhere present.

Let me just give you a sampling just from the Psalms itself. For God is the king of all the earth. Sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations.

God is seated on his holy throne. Psalm 47, verse 7 to 8. We read that this morning. The Lord reigns. He is robed in majesty. The Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength.

Indeed, the world is established firm and secure. Your throne was established long ago. You are from all eternity. Psalm 93, verse 1 and 2. My days are like the evening shadow.

[ 9 : 51 ] I wither away like grass. But you, Lord, sit and throne forever. You are renowned and yours through all generations. Psalm 102, verses 11 and 12.

The Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over all. Psalm 103, verse 19. And you can just keep going on and on multiplying those verses.

It's crystal clear. God reigns over all nations across all time. You see, the ancient world, the Old Testament world, knew all about kings.

In our country, as Elder Hong Park reminded us at the beginning, kings have limited political power. They are not visible. They don't touch on our day-to-day lives, especially for those of us in Sarawak. We don't even have sultans. But back then, the authority and power of human kings were almost absolute. More than that, kings were hugely important.

[10:57] They protected their people. They guided them. They rescued them. They had a covenantal relationship with them. They were in close proximity.

Kings were considered philosophers and wise people. And you owed him your obedience. That was how the relationship worked in the ancient world.

To say God is king, then, would have instantly meant all these things to the ancient people listening in. Authority, power, wisdom, goodness, sovereign.

And God's kingdom story is evident right from the beginning of the Bible. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

By this simple but majestic affirmation, both the king and his realm are introduced. We have the Garden of Eden. Now, when we think gardens, we are thinking about our small front yard with a few potted plants and maybe some fruits and so on.

[12:12] But in the ancient world, gardens meant something very different. Gardens are not mini landscapes where the average person like you and me go and plant some orchids.

A garden was something only a king has. These huge urban national parks. Think of one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the hanging gardens of Babylon.

I don't know if you've ever seen pictures of those. But if you have, you're getting the idea. And so it's no accident that when we're told about creation, we zoom in on the garden.

And every ancient reader of the Old Testament knew immediately that meant only one thing. God is king. Only royalty have gardens.

And as one who performs the royal act of naming things, God names the sun, the moon, and so on, he is shown as king of all creation.

[13:20] So here's the first thing to understand. When we are talking about the kingdom of God, we are talking first and foremost about God himself, who he is, the king, and what he does.

He reigns. To quote the New Testament scholar, R.T. France, the kingdom of God is not making a statement about a thing called the kingdom, but about God, that he is king.

If so, the kingdom of God cannot be reduced to a religious concept. Think of it this way. Whether you are in church, or in school, or in your workplace, or in the kopitiam somewhere, Dr.

Mahathir is your prime minister. He doesn't stop being prime minister when you move from your place of work to your home. He still exercises his prime ministerly authority over you, so to speak. In a much bigger way, God is in charge regardless of where we are. God is first and foremost about God's reign rather than about a place.

[14:45] But of course, the place where the good king rules over would be good too. Creation is perfect. That's what Genesis 1 and 2 says again and again.

In the garden, there is attractive abundance. Genesis 2 9 and 10 talks about trees that are not just fruitful, but beautiful to look at.

So here's another implication. God's kingdom is not otherworldly. The Bible depicts this created world as the theater of God's glory.

So when Jesus comes proclaiming the kingdom of God, it's very unlikely that he's talking about something completely removed from this physical material world.

When Christians talk about the kingdom, sometimes they mean a place they call heaven, by which they mean a place full of clouds and spirits without bodies.

[15:53] And then we say the gospel is about going to this place when we die. But based on what we've seen so far, it looks as if Jesus doesn't mean that.

So let's move on to episode two. And here we discover we are regions. We are regions.

Do you know what the region is? Well, right now the Sultan of Bahang is quite sick, so he cannot carry out his royal duties. As a result, his son has been appointed regent and we know from yesterday that he's going to become the next Sultan.

But as regent, it means that he's carrying out his royal duties. He acts for his father, the current Sultan. Well, God the king obviously isn't sick, but in his kindness and goodness, he endows humanity, us, with a royal status.

He makes us regents. We act for him. Look at these familiar words from Genesis 1, verse 26 to 28. Then God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

[17:29] So God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them. Male and female, he created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it.

Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Do you notice what's happening here?

God gives Adam and Eve the garden. That's for royalty, remember. And they are to act for God, ruling over it. In that sense, they are images of God.

This week, I'm not going to say much more about that because we're going to be talking about that next week. But for now, it's enough to say that means they are governing creation, on God's behalf. They are embodying God's own good care and protection of his good creation. Psalm 8 makes this explicit, talking about humankind.

[18:37] You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them, notice the royal language, with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands.

You put everything under their feet. And this helps to fill out our picture of the kingdom of God. The message of the kingdom isn't just the fact that God is king.

It's that he chooses to reign through his image bearing servant kings. He reigns through human beings. He wants to involve us.

And so the implication is, from the very beginning, the kingdom is what we were made for. And so when Jesus prays, your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven, he's really praying, God, fulfill your purposes for humanity.

Reign this way. Restore humanity to what they are meant to be. And notice, it's not about escaping earth.

[19:57] But of course, the obvious question is, where is the evidence of God's good reign today? If this is true, why is the world in such chaos?

And that's where we get to episode number three. We've committed treason. We've committed treason. The serpent emerges, and he persuades Adam and Eve to reject God's rule.

He does this by presenting God, the king, as a tyrant, someone who withholds good things from them. Again, familiar words from Genesis 3, verse 4 to 5. You will not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

But what Satan neglects to tell them is that actually they are already like God, they're his regions. And in rejecting God's rule, we've redefined our own rule.

As images of God, we would have reflected him by ruling in a good and kind and loving way. No longer.

[21:17] We now rule in the image of Satan in oppressive and tyrannical ways. But that doesn't mean God isn't king any longer.

It simply means his rule is not respected by his subjects. One missionary scholar illustrates it this way. According to international law, as I understand it, the territory east of Ethiopia, which is mainly populated by Somalis, belongs to Ethiopia.

So if we put aside the politics for a moment, that means that territory is subject to the laws of Ethiopia. Yet the people who live there feel like they don't belong to Ethiopia.

They prefer to live according to their own laws and customs. The authority of the Ethiopian government is not acknowledged. Ethiopian coins are not accepted.

The court system is powerless. Legally, the territory is ruled by Ethiopia, but in practice, it's very different.

[22:32] The people live their own way. in the same way, we no longer care for God's rule, but turn our world into our Somali region.

By right, he is the ruler, but his rule is routinely ignored. But unlike the people of this territory, our rebellion does not cancel out God's rule.

He is still king. Look at this picture, for instance, painted by the psalmist in Psalm chapter 2. Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?

Notice that's all of humanity. The kings, notice the royal language again, of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.

And how does the Lord react? The one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. He laughs because he knows he can't be pushed off the throne.

[ 23 : 42 ] But then he also has to execute justice against people who committed treason against him. We have abdicated our kingly responsibilities, and so we have to be cast out of the garden.

And as a result, we don't rule over the world any longer. We are ruled instead by our sinful desires. Think, for instance, of alcoholism.

That's an example of us being ruled by created things, enslaved to the bottle, things we should have mastery over. God. And so the world is in chaos.

We have abdicated our kingly responsibilities. Well, episode three could have been the end. But here's the key point.

God doesn't give up. So far, what have we seen about the kingdom of God? it's the reign of God exercised through his image-bearing servant king.

[ 24 : 54 ] And though his servant kings, Adam and Eve, have failed as king and queen and have had to abdicate, well, God is seeking to reestablish his kingdom, to restore his kingly rule.

that's episode four. And that's the rest of the Old Testament. God wants people to live under his kingship once again.

And here's the thing. God still wants to establish his kingdom through an image-bearing servant king. A new human king is needed to set things right in creation.

for just before Adam and Eve are cast out of the garden, God makes them a promise in Genesis 3 verse 15. Those of you who were at God's big picture last year would remember this.

God promises that from the seed of Eve, someone will crush the serpent. And let me just extremely briefly show you how the promise of God's kingdom lights up the rest of the Old Testament.

[ 26 : 02 ] From the line of Eve comes Abraham. And now look at the promise that God makes Abraham in Genesis chapter 17 verse 6.

I will make you very fruitful. That sounds like Adam, doesn't it? I will make nations of you and kings will come from you.

There you have it. And by the beginning of Exodus, Abraham's descendants do become very fruitful in number.

But they are now under the rule of an Egyptian king who oppresses them. And God now gives a glimpse of how he is going to restore his kingly rule.

He appoints Moses and then he delivers his people from Egypt. Pharaoh might be the king of Egypt, opposed to God. But God is the king of all creation, remember?

[ 27 : 06 ] And he uses his powers over all creation, commanding the frogs, the rivers, and so on, to overwhelm Pharaoh and redeem his people.

And Moses recognizes that. After the famous story in which they cross the Red Sea, the people sing a song of praise to God. And notice how the song concludes in Exodus chapter 15 verse 8.

The Lord reigns forever and ever. It ends with a declaration of God's kingship. If you were to read the whole song, the theme would become really clear.

God is king, and he will overwhelm the forces of evil to rescue his people. And then in the second half of Exodus, the king lays down the law.

We get the Ten Commandments and more. Besides, God is seeking to reestablish his kingdom. But God's reign was still being disputed.

[ 28 : 08 ] Just read Leviticus to Judges, and you'll keep hearing about how God's people rejected his rule as they turned to other gods and broke his laws. The forces of evil are not just out there, but within us.

Here's the last line of the book of Judges. In those days, Israel had no king. Everyone did as they saw fit. No king?

Not quite true. God is still Israel's king. But of course, the writer means that they are still rejecting God's reign.

And the kingdom of God, you see, is far from being established. The perfect servant king who would administer a perfect Eden is nowhere to be found. But God continues on.

He's still seeking to establish his kingdom, despite humanity's repeated rebellion. That's what he's doing. And he still wants to do it through a human servant king.

[ 29 : 14 ] And so by the time of King David, centuries later, King David comes from the line of Eve and Abraham, he repeats and expands on his promise to Abraham, telling David, when your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.

He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom, get this, forever. God is making a big promise.

The kingdom he will re-establish will never end. And so the prophets from this time on constantly look forward to holding God to this forever promise.

I'll just briefly give you a couple of examples. Look at Daniel 2, verse 44. In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people.

It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. God is holding, sorry, Daniel is holding God to his promise to establish his eternal kingdom.

[ 30 : 34 ] And not only that, Daniel knows that it will be led by one who is like a son of man. Daniel 7, verse 13 to 14. In my vision at night, I look, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.

He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. In other words, he became a king.

All nations and peoples of every language worship him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

And what will this kingdom look like? Isaiah 35 gives us a little glimpse. That's quite small, but let me just read it to you. From verse 4, say to those with fearful hearts, be strong, do not fear, your God will come.

He will come with vengeance, with divine retribution. He will come to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

[ 31 : 48 ] Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Waters will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

That's the image, the picture of the kingdom we're getting. And crucially, notice what will happen to those who become part of God's kingdom. Again, there are quite a number of passages we can refer to, but I'll just point you to verse 1, also in Isaiah 33, verse 24.

No one living in Zion will say, I am ill, and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven. Zion, in this case, represents God's kingdom.

And what Isaiah is saying is that to be part of God's kingdom, forgiveness of sin needs to happen. So that's the basic storyline of the Old Testament.

That's the bigger picture in which the gospel statement about forgiveness of sin fits in. And so when we come to episode 5, the king comes.

[ 33 : 00 ] I hope you can see now the significance of Jesus arriving and proclaiming the good news of God, saying in Mark 1, verse 15, the kingdom of God has come near.

Jesus is saying, the time has come and God is going to exercise his rule and he's going to do it through a servant king who is fully human.

That's me. And in the rest of Mark chapter 1, which we read part of, Jesus demonstrates his authority. He tells fishermen, follow me, and they instantly do.

He tells the demons, go away, and they instantly do. He tells sickness, go away, and they instantly do. And if we were to keep reading Mark's gospel, we would notice that the lame start walking, the blind start seeing, just like Isaiah 35.

You'll hear Jesus saying, do not be afraid, just like God does in Isaiah 35. Jesus is acting like a movie trailer, giving a sneak preview of his future eternal kingdom, and what it will be like, free of evil spirits and sickness, because the king is executing his rule.

[ 34 : 38 ] And most significantly of all, it will be free of sin. In Mark chapter 2, verse 1 to 12, his authority extends to forgiving sins as well.

Remember, we've committed treason against the king, that's what sin is. And God needs to deal with that. That's the only way people can become part of his kingdom.

And he's going to do it in a way that catches people by surprise, by appointing a servant king who's going to be crucified. What kind of kingdom is this?

What kind of rule is this? But the Old Testament itself isn't surprised. We won't have time to look at the relevant Bible verses now, but in Isaiah, the prophet looks ahead and sees a person called the servant, who would become the atoning sacrifice.

And the servant and the king seem to be the same person. And that's exactly what we find with Jesus. In general, kings are exalted.

[ 35 : 54 ] They are high and lifted up. When Isaiah has a vision of God in the temple, he sees God himself on the throne and he describes him this way. He is high and lifted up.

And Jesus is also described as high and lifted up. The difference is he is high and lifted up upon a cross.

That's his glory. The cross becomes the throne from which God will rule the world. And that's how the apostle Paul saw it as well.

In Colossians chapter 1 verse 13 to 14, he writes this, for he has rescued us from the dominion or kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves.

In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. When we read this verse, we often notice the redemption and the forgiveness aspects. But don't miss out the kingdom aspect of that verse.

[ 37 : 00 ] Paul is saying the gospel is all about how you are forgiven so that God reigns in all of your life through King Jesus.

You see, here's another way of expressing the gospel. Through Jesus, God's perfect servant king, God is graciously establishing his kingly rule over all of creation as he dies on the cross for our sin and is raised to life again.

That is what God is doing. As another scholar puts it, the gospel is both personal and panoramic. As he is lifted up upon the cross, God deals personally with our treason.

We must be punished, but he bears our punishment in our place. And as Jesus hangs up there on the cross, the government changes.

God's kingdom is now being established. But that's not the end. Another familiar passage, Philippians chapter 2 verse 9 to 11 says this, Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord or King to the glory of God the Father.

[ 38 : 40 ] Notice what's going on. There will come a time in the future when God's rule through Jesus will be completely acknowledged by everybody that's panoramic.

Every knee will bow at the end of time to Jesus whether voluntarily or not. And it will be just like Genesis 1 and 2 again.

God is reigning through his ultimate image bearing servant king Jesus. And through his king he promises to establish justice, goodness, attractive abundance in all its fullness.

And today in this life we are to do all we can to provide a sneak preview of the rule of God wherever we are.

Look at Revelation chapter 1 verse 5 and 6. I think this is the last verse we'll look at for today. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and notice what he's made us to be a kingdom and priest to serve his God and father to him be glory and power forever and ever.

[ 40 : 06 ] We are now called to be his kingdom servants. We are to promote God's values, his priorities of goodness and justice and so on and especially to promote the king himself Jesus in this very life in anticipation of that day when he will rule over the heavens and the earth.

We will live in a new Eden and new Jerusalem. Next week we'll think a little bit more about what it means to live in the kingdom.

But for today here is the story of the kingdom from beginning to end. So what are some lessons we can draw from this today?

Let me just draw three. Number one in our evangelism make sure that the gospel we present is not exclusively about personal forgiveness of sins.

Now that's not to say forgiveness of sin is unimportant. No forgiveness of sin is close to the heart of the gospel. It's the only way we can become part of the kingdom.

[ 41 : 21 ] But it is not the sum total of the gospel. If all we ever said to someone was God has a wonderful plan.

He sent Jesus to die for your sins so that you can go to heaven. We risk being misunderstood. Someone could just say great forgiveness is great and I can still go on living however I want and then I get to heaven.

But when we see the bigger picture that God is king that we've committed treason that God is seeking to reestablish his rule and that to accept Jesus as savior also means at the same time accepting Jesus as the king well our evangelism would look a bit different wouldn't it?

It would make much clearer to non Christians that the gospel includes a call to turn away from our old ways of living to living under the rule of God.

If you're not a Christian here today I hope that's at least a bit clearer to you now. In our evangelistic course Christianity Explored the second last session is about grace.

[ 42 : 37 ] But the very last session is called something like counting the cost. Because the cost wants to make clear that trusting Jesus includes submitting to Jesus.

It is trying to self. Sometimes we are afraid to make that clear because we are afraid that the person wouldn't accept Jesus as a result.

But what is worse is if a person thinks he can trust Jesus without at the same time saying that he is king. When we leave out that part of the message we shouldn't be surprised if a person doesn't change a single bit even after he says he believes the person has been misled.

We could have accidentally caused a person to think he's a Christian when he's not because he has not understood that to trust Jesus includes submitting to him as the king.

Number two, in our discipleship know that being part of God's kingdom means loyalty to King Jesus. There are many ways the Bible describes our relationship to God.

[ 43 : 50 ] One is the father son relationship we saw that clearly last week and another is the shepherd and his sheep again we saw that last week. One more is the analogy of marriage Christ is the groom we are the bride and there's plenty more.

Those are all in the Bible and they all capture vital aspects of our relationship to God. But one more we must put on the table is that of king and subject.

That is important for it clarifies for us that when we become a follower of Jesus he demands our allegiance in everything. He's not just our friend he's also our king.

We're under a new government. There's no room for oh God can have a piece of my life here but not a piece of my life there. Whatever Jesus teaches about money we have to listen.

Whatever Jesus teaches about family we have to listen. Whatever Jesus teaches about anything at all we have to listen. We have to be loyal to his word.

[ 44 : 55 ] And that brings me to lesson number three. Recognize that the kingdom we are part of is cross shaped and turns our values upside down.

The cross is how we become part of the kingdom and it's 100% by grace alone. That's the good news. Only Jesus enables us to say he is Lord.

We cannot on our own. But as part of his kingdom Jesus is not going to leave us alone. The fact that he's the crucified king should be a big clue that the values of his kingdom is completely upside down.

After all, who wins victory by dying? Who gets glory by being shamed on an instrument of torture? Only Jesus does. And so to become part of his kingdom means that we're going to have our lives turned upside down.

Jesus tells us to do things like don't look out for yourself first, look out for others first. He tells us things like blessed are you when people insult you, that's your reward, and so on.

[ 46 : 09 ] He asks of us all sorts of things that are completely unnatural to us, that will cost us. We have to be turned inside out. God will be faithful to the Lord and remember the promise of the gospel, the hope of that future kingdom where one day we will live in a place filled with goodness, justice, and attractive abundance.

And as we live this way, the message God rules becomes much clearer to those on the outside watching. It's clearly different from the rest of the world.

I suppose there are other lessons we could draw, but we're going to stop here. But let's ask that question again. What in the world is God doing? He's establishing his kingdom through his gospel and calling you and I to declare that Satan isn't in charge, the world isn't in charge, you and I are not in charge.

Jesus is