

The Kingdom Focused Church

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[0 : 00] Sorry, I forgot my Bible at home, of all things. As a pastor, you're not supposed to forget your Bible, so I'm going to be reading out of the bulletin our scripture today. But I do want to extend a thank you to Matthew and the elders of this church for having me.

It is an honor to be here this morning and to be with you. And as Matthew said, you know, I grew up, in a sense, in this church for several years during junior high.

And it was in this church that I attended my first communicants class, that I became a church member, that I took my first communion. And so it's great to be back with you guys this morning, worshipping 20-plus years later.

It is a wonderful thing. Before we dig into this psalm, let me pray for our time. Heavenly Father, we do thank you and praise you that you are the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Father, we thank you that your word stands. Even as we fail and fade away, your word stands forever. And in it we find hope, that we have life in you, that we have resurrection in your Son, and we have hope eternally.

[1 : 11] Lord, I pray that you would open our hearts and minds this morning to be able to see you clearly again, to be able to worship you in the splendor of your truth. In your name we pray. Amen. Our psalm this morning is Psalm 87, and I will be reading it to us from the ESV.

This one was born there, they say. And of Zion it shall be said, This one and that one were born in her, for the Most High himself will establish her.

The Lord records as he registers the peoples. This one is born there. Singers and dancers alike say, All my springs are in you.

Well, I love the fact that you are spending your summer in the psalms. The psalms have always been, to me, so rich and so deep.

They meet our souls in the joys and the turmoils of life. They feed us. They teach us how to praise, how to voice protest and complaint, how to plead and yearn, how to trust, give thanks, have hope, weep, and mourn.

[2 : 40] And the list goes on. The psalms wrestle through the spectrum of the human experience, focusing our hearts upon the God who upholds and governs all things and who loves his people.

Our psalm this morning is a beautiful psalm about the church. Psalm 87 reminds us of the reality of the kingdom of God. Too often, we forget who we are.

We forget that we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We are a forgetful people. I am a forgetful person. I constantly fail to recall the truth that I am a child of God, freed from condemnation, declared righteous.

I am being made holy. I own an inheritance greater than anything I can dream or imagine. Too often, we all forget that we are the sons and daughters of the king.

And we need to hear this message over and over again. We do not have to fear in this life or in the life to come. We are a people loved by God.

[3 : 45] Our identity is rooted in his grace. And when I was thinking about this psalm in the context of the kingdom, I thought of Handel's Messiah and my dad.

You see, after our time here while I was in junior high, my family moved to Village 7. And I soon found out that every Easter Sunday morning, at the end of the service, they would invite the congregation up, whoever wanted to sing, to join the choir and Handel's Hallelujah Chorus from the Messiah.

And every Easter Sunday, without fail, my dad would enthusiastically jump to his feet and run to the front to be a part of that great chorus. And as a teenager growing up, you know, I think every teenager has the same experience with their parents of just being embarrassed that they belong to

their parents.

So every year, I put my hand on my face and said, oh no, there goes dad again. Singing off key to Hallelujah Chorus in front of everybody. But the reason I thought of my dad in the context of this chorus, or in this psalm, is that as he was singing the chorus and belting it out, often with the wrong words or in the wrong tune, he would sing out, the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.

And that line has always stood out to me. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord. You see, at the heart of the gospel message, there is a kingdom.

[5 : 14] A king and his people united in joy, purpose, life, and love. The Bible opens with God creating everything, calling into existence all things, ordering, separating, bringing purpose and life.

And on the sixth day, he created humanity as the crowning jewel of his creation. He created human beings, you and me, made in his image, who were to have deep relationship with himself, who were to rule his created order.

Adam and Eve were created as king and queen, created to rule as vice regents of the universe, image bearers of the eternal God, who were to expand the order and purpose of his kingdom into all the earth and beyond.

As we know, tragically, Adam and Eve ushered a fallen kingdom of this world when they entered into sin. And before they ate of the forbidden tree, the kingdom of God was united to this world perfectly.

There was communion and fellowship, beautiful relationship between God and man, between man and the created order. Humanity walked with their Lord, unashamed with all dignity, wisdom, happiness, and peace.

[6 : 29] When Adam and Eve sinned, they tore apart that relationship. Evil, disease, and death spread to everything we see around us and everyone we know. The world was plunged into the kingdom of brokenness, futility, and death.

But yet, even at that moment of our parents' first sin, we see the grace and the plan of God. In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve were given a covering for their guilt and their shame.

They were also given a promise. It is a promise in seed form that one day God would provide from the seed of the woman a Messiah to crush and destroy the works of sin and Satan.

That one day there would be once again perfect communion, fellowship, and relationship between God and man. What man had broken, God would remake a restoration of the kingdom.

And we see throughout the Old Testament the seed takes root. We see the family of Israel chosen to proclaim the promises of God. We see King David given the promise that one day one of his sons would reign, and not for a lifetime, but for an eternity.

[7 : 40] We see, even in the exile, a remnant that remembers and hopes in the king to come. The gospel is the good news because it's the message that the world has been groaning and longing to hear all of its life.

And in Matthew 4, Jesus begins his public ministry with these words, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. All the promises, all the longings, all the anticipations found their culmination in the person and work of Christ.

What was seed in Genesis, a sapling in the people of Israel, a young tree in the kingdom of David, a stump cut off in the exile, in Christ is the promised shoot that flourishes into the tree of everlasting life.

The message of the gospel is one of kingdom. The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our God. Christ has joined what was previously separated. He left the glories of his heavenly throne to restore, renew, and bind up the brokenness of this world.

This is the good news that we celebrate this morning and every morning that Christ has purchased us by his blood and given us a place and a purpose in that kingdom. Psalm 87 is a kingdom psalm.

[9 : 00] The psalmist here foresees a day when not only Israel but all of the nations of the world will find a home in Zion. A day when the shalom of God, the universal flourishing of all things is realized in time and space history.

Through this psalm we see first of all that the kingdom focused church is a people loved by God. Look at verse 1. On the holy mountain stands the city he founded.

The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things of you are spoken, O city of God. God has chosen and established Zion.

He has chosen and established his church for himself. He has built this city on an unshakable foundation. He is the author who loves his work. This is an interesting statement.

It's a strange statement. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob. Why would God love this place, this physical place more than all the other places where his people dwell?

[10:08] What is so special and unique about the gates of Zion? Yes, Zion was a beautiful city and its gates and architecture were magnificent. But there's something deeper going on here that caused the Lord of glory to love this particular place.

In the context of the Old Testament, Zion was the city of David. Jerusalem, where God's presence dwelt in the tabernacle and later the temple. It was the place where his people could know and experience communion and relationship with him.

The worship and reconciliation of Israel took place here. It was the touch point between God and man. So you see, God loves this city because it is where he meets with his people.

For the entire time that my wife, Callie, and I were dating and engaged, we lived long distance, 1,000 miles apart from each other. And during that time, I loved the gates of the airport.

I was always excited to go to the airport. And it wasn't that the airport was amazing. I don't know any of you who actually go to the airport just to hang out or have a good time. But I loved that place because that's where I got to meet her again.

[11:20] We would have face-to-face relationship again. I loved that place because it brought us near. And God loves Zion in much the same way because it is a place he built to be with his people.

His bride that he has chosen and purified for himself. We see in the book of Hebrews that the old sacrificial system and the physical temple itself pointed to and had their fulfillment in the person of Christ.

God loved us so much that he offered up Christ, his own perfect son, his temple as our perfect sacrifice. Through the mediation of his blood, we are set free from slavery to sin and death and are made righteous before the king.

As Christians, we now have access to the throne room of grace. And it's not through the blood of lambs or bulls or our curtains that separate us. We have direct communion with God through Christ. We ourselves are the temple of God. In 1 Corinthians 3.16, Paul writes, Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you?

[12:31] God has established himself in our hearts and brought us out of the darkness into the light of his true community. God has chosen to give power to his children in the church.

It is his institution and as backward and broken as we often are in the church, he has promised to prepare his bride and purify her to present her to himself as faithful and faultless.

The church is the betrothed of God. He has chosen to spend eternity with you and me. I was in college when the reality finally struck me that God didn't just love me in this theoretical out there type of way, but he actually liked me.

I had this view in my mind that God was somehow a grandfather who kind of had to love you. You know, your grandkid, you have to be loved by your grandpa. It's his job to do that.

He sends you presents but really there's no liking in the relationship that we would long for. But one of my campus ministers in college at Colorado State told me one time, he said, Matt, you know, God chose you for himself from the foundation of the world not because he had to but because he wanted to spend eternity with you.

[13:49] He chose to sacrifice himself for you because he likes you. God delights in you. That struck me and has never left me since.

God loves his church. He delights in you, his people, and his kingdom purposes will never fail because he is faithful to his promise of love to his people.

And there is an already not yet aspect of this kingdom. Jesus has ushered in his kingdom but right now it is mostly hidden, small, like a mustard seed and can only be seen in and through his people.

We catch glimpses of the kingdom when we love each other, when we worship God and find joy and peace in him, when we serve one another. The kingdom is already, we taste of its goodness but one day Christ will return and his kingdom will arrive in full.

We can take comfort that this life is not as good as it gets and we can have assurance that whatever good we have now in part we will one day soon have in fullness of joy and perfect satisfaction.

[14:57] The realities of the kingdom of God give us hope for both now and for the future. this kingdom confronts our fear and doubt with love and peace and these are the glorious things spoken of the city of God in verse 3 the grace that we have been given.

Spurgeon said that although the glorious things were taught in the streets of Jerusalem and seen in her temple yet this is more true of the church. She is founded in grace but her pinnacles glow with glory.

Whatever glorious things the saints may say of the church in their eulogies they cannot exceed what the prophets have foretold what the angels have sung or what God himself has decreed.

Happy are the tongues which learn to occupy themselves with so excellent a subject.

Glorious things of you are spoken O city of God. As Christians we will be in the great and glorious congregation of those of whom God says I love you and you are mine.

I love seeing the receiving of new members this morning. It's such a wonderful thing hearing the vows of membership the proclamation of belonging to Christ and his church.

[16:09] And during the receiving of new members I always think about the words of Jesus in Luke 12:8 he said this to his disciples and I tell you everyone who acknowledges me before men the son of man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.

What an amazing promise. Just as we as members acknowledge our trust in Christ before these witnesses Jesus will one day acknowledge you and me before his father and the watching world.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism question 38 which since you guys are in 37 today this might be a spoiler for next week asks what benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

And the answer is this at the resurrection believers being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

See in the judgment believers will be revealed in splendor. You and I will stand before the throne of the Lord of hosts and he will openly declare us his sons and daughters to the entire assembled universe.

[17:25] He will place his joy and power upon us and we will reign with him in his kingdom forever. We are the sons and the daughters of God. Too often the cares of this world the pains of this life rob me of this joy and this hope.

Too often I fall into the traps of self-pity and self-worship. We must all cling to the love that is ours in Christ.

We are all called to remember the blessings that we have in him. Remember whose you are. Your identity is in him. Our son Mark is 20 months old and every night Callie and I sing Jesus loves me to him.

Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. We hope to instill him through many ways and part of that is through singing that he is known and loved by God.

Jesus loves you son and do you know how I know this? He has told me so in his word. The Bible is true. Jesus loves you. Because of the love of Jesus which was lost in the garden of Eden it has been found in Christ.

[18:46] the barrier between God and man introduced by the fall was shattered on the cross. We are once again enabled to worship God without a priest without a human mediator without fear of our own blood.

The kingdom focused church should never be driven by fear. The perfect love of the Father casts out that fear. We can have hope even in the midst of pain. We can trust him even when life is falling apart around us.

And we can have this hope because we know the end. Here's another spoiler alert. Christ is coming back to claim us as his bride to fully reveal his kingdom of joy to you and me.

The blood of the Lamb the perfect mediator stands triumphant for you. In our opening hymn John Newton wrote this Savior Savior if of Zion's city I through grace a member am let the world deride or pity I will glory in thy name.

Fading is the worldling's pleasure all his boasted pomp and show solid joys and lasting treasure none but Zion's children know. Is there anything more glorious than knowing the love of God?

[19:59] The kingdom focused church is a people loved by God and the kingdom focused church lives out of the reality of that grace.

The rest of Psalm 87 is a divine pronouncement where God incorporates the foreign nation into his holy city. We as the church of God are founded in grace and we are called to live lives in that grace and reach out with that grace to the nations and peoples around us.

Look at verse 4. Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon. Behold Philistia and Tyre with Cush. This one was born there they say.

This list of nations in verse 4 is not your A team. These are not even your misfits or class clowns. These were the very enemies of God.

They hated him and hated his people. Rahab in this context is another name for the nation of Egypt south of Israel who enslaved the people of God for hundreds of years.

[21 : 03] Babylon the great empire to the east were the ones to destroy Judah and carry the people into exile. Philistia the close neighbor to the west was constantly at war with Israel.

Tyre to the north was always seeking to lead the people astray into idol worship. Cush is the distant land of Ethiopia and represented all the far-flung pagan nations.

nations. And all of these nations north, south, east, and west and every far-flung land is here represented as knowing and being known by the God of Israel.

Though they were born apart God has brought them into the kingdom into his family. In Psalm 86 immediately preceding our psalm we read this prophecy in verse 9.

All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you O Lord and shall glorify your name. We see this fulfilled in the New Testament and in the book of Revelation we see the culmination of this.

[22 : 04] Even future we see the final instance of this. At the end of all things present and the beginning of all things new John saw the new Jerusalem.

Zion the city of the king. the kings of the earth you and I and the people from every tribe tongue and people will bring their glory into that city and the honor of the nations will be there in the light of Christ.

Nothing unclean will enter it and in this we see the mighty glory of God that he pursues even his enemies with love and we too along with these nations were at one time enemies of God.

We are these people I doubt many of you in here are ethnically the people of Israel. Most all of us are Gentiles who have been grafted in and given a place and identity in Zion.

Verse 5 And of Zion it shall be said this one and that one were born in her for the most high himself will establish her. The vision of Psalm 87 is achieved in the church.

[23 : 13] As Paul writes in Galatians 3 in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek.

There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to the promise.

The most high God has established us in Christ. in him we are born again from death to life. Verse 6 The Lord records as he registers the people this one was born there.

God gathers us individually from our various backgrounds and circumstances and gives us citizenship in his kingdom. He takes our brokenness and forms us into his church.

In Christ there is new birth. There is new identity and new names. We are forever recorded in the registry of God's family. Adoption has always been a part of my story.

[24 : 18] I was adopted on March 19th 1985 when I was two months old and on that day my gotcha day my parents left their house with an empty car and drove home with a fat blue eyed baby who had no idea what was happening to him.

From that moment on I was a Bostrom the son of Gary and Sarah and several years ago I called my mom because I was curious about my original birth certificate which I'd never seen.

She told me that on the day that my adoption was finalized I was given a new birth certificate a new identity my new name on it. The old certificate was destroyed and forgotten.

I was made new. I was Matthew Joseph Bostrom their son and my earthly adoption has been for me but a small taste of the joy and majesty of being a son of God.

Christ has given all of us a new identity. We are his and he has even given us a new birth certificate. Revelation 13.8 tells us that there is a book the book of life of the lamb who was slain.

[25 : 29] All those who belong to God have their names written in that book of life and our names have been written before the foundation of the world by the will of God. And if you have trusted in Christ then your name is in that book right now never to be erased.

The blood of Christ the lamb who is slain guarantees your place as a son or daughter. His blood is the ink that seals your status. We have been indelibly grafted into the family of God and share in his kingdom.

As we realized this we were able to proclaim with the singers and dancers in verse 7 all my springs are in you. As we know the realities of our adoption by God as we know our identity all our joy all our hope comes from Christ.

To the Israelites the people living in an errant environment springs and fountains were precious the source of life and joy and as Christians we know that every good and perfect gift comes from God and all our trust should be placed in him.

The Messiah has come bringing his kingdom of joy for us. So we have to ask what does this mean for us today? How do we live in light of this kingdom?

[26 : 46] It is often hard for us to find our joy in God. We are not yet in that perfected city of Zion. We are often times in a land that is hostile to God.

We have been reconciled to God but still live in a world of pain, misery, and death. We await the new heavens and the new earth where we will be fully restored but we live here and now.

But we do not wait idly as we live here. We have the promise that we are the temples, that the spirit of God is now even at work in our hearts and lives and we are tasked with bringing in the harvest.

We are called to live faithfully as stewards of what God has given to us and one day when the master returns he will reward us for that faithfulness and multiply blessings to us.

Think about all those people who are enemies of God in verse four. How in the world were they brought into the kingdom? How were they made righteous before a holy God?

[27 : 49] They were enemies. I have to think that even in the midst of Israel's slavery, exile, and failures again and again, there were faithful people reaching the lost.

Men, women, and children who shared the hope of the God of Israel with any who would listen to them. And just because we are in exile and longing for our glorious home does not mean that we do not share our hope with our captors.

We are to go forth and proclaim to the watching world, to enemies of God, the joy and life of God. In Jeremiah 29, when the people have been conquered and taken to Babylon, when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple itself torn down, when all hope seemed lost, the Lord gave these words to the people.

He says this, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their produce, take wives and have sons and daughters, take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters.

Multiply there and do not decrease, but seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

[29 : 10] Our calling is to be a light to those around us, for God has promised that he has a people from every tribe, tongue and nation. We can be bold. In Acts 15, Paul is afraid to preach to the Corinthians who opposed him, but the Lord said to him at night, Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.

God had called Paul to this place because he had people there whose names were in his book, but had yet not heard the voice of Christ.

Do not be afraid, but go on speaking. Do not be silent. Paul was called into Corinth and we are called to Colorado Springs. We are called wherever we are to be a witness to the light of God.

J. Gresham Maycham says something powerful about faithful kingdom living. He writes this, Instead of obliterating the distinction between the kingdom and the world, or on the other hand withdrawing from the world into some sort of modernized intellectual monasticism, let us go joyfully, enthusiastically to make the world the subject of God.

To the Christian, he cannot be indifferent, to any branch of earnest human endeavor. It must all be brought into some relation into the gospel. The kingdom must be advanced, not merely extensively, but also intensively.

[30 : 38] The church must seek to conquer not merely every man for Christ, but also the whole of man. The gospel is a worldview-shaping reality. The kingdom of Christ infiltrates every area of our lives and impacts everything we do.

We are called to be faithful in the small things that we have before us as well as the large. We are called to be a people focused on the grace that is ours, seeking to expand the kingdom of God wherever he has placed us.

We have been given a great commission to go boldly into this world knowing that the kingdom of God is at hand. God loves you. He loves us.

He has and will continue to be gracious to us. He has given us a name and a family and he is coming in power bringing his peace. We are about to sing the hymn, I love thy kingdom, Lord. And listen to the words of this first verse. I love thy kingdom, Lord, the house of thine abode, the church our blessed redeemer saved with his own precious blood.

[31 : 43] And I pray that those words would be true of your heart, that you would love the bride of Christ who is bought with his blood, that this church would seek to expand the kingdom of God, that you would long to see your king in his splendor.

May your joy, your hope and your delight ever be that the kingdom of God is come, that it has become the kingdom of this world, has become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever as the king of kings and the Lord of lords.

Forever and ever. Hallelujah. Let us pray. Father, we thank you that in you glorious things are spoken of us. In you there is graciousness to us, that you have condescended to us.

Lord, we were your enemies, we were far off, we were these foreign nations that you have brought.

Lord, I pray that this joy, this reality, this identity would permeate our lives, that we would be faithful.

Lord, that the light that you have given to us in Christ would shine from us, that it would exude from our pores and touch everything that we come in contact with. Lord, I pray that you would make us into kingdom individuals, but not leave us alone as individuals.

[33 : 07] I pray that we would unite in this, your church, that we would be missional as we see the world around us lost and broken. We have hope and truth and life in you.

Lord, I thank you. In your name we pray. Amen.