

The Kingdom of God

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Date: 27 May 2018

Preacher: Stan Surbatovich

- [0 : 0 0] Pastor Heaney tonight has read a text that has the same words as the text that we'll be preaching from Matthew 24 and verse 14.
- The destruction of the temple, the destruction of Jerusalem, and that overlaid with the end and the destruction of all things.
- But in the midst of that discussion, and really showing us that this is very important in the whole history and up until the end, in verse 14 we read, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
- So as we heard the words of rescue mission, this is a rescue mission that is ongoing and that will continue until the last soul is saved, and then the end will come.
- We're going to be considering this gospel of the kingdom is to be preached. We're going to consider some basics about it, about the words that we have before us, and then we're going to go into an extended illustration that I hope will help us all.
- [1 : 4 1] We will consider that this is a living reality now, the kingdom, the gospel of the kingdom. We'll consider how it is that we can be part of this kingdom, and then we'll finish by looking at, again, the concept of preaching it and living it.
- The kingdom of God is a glorious and expansive theme, and we could have a whole series of sermons and whole books on the kingdom of God.
- We're just going to be touching on one aspect, but I hope this will excite you and encourage you, and then you can look into the kingdom of God further and enjoy the kingdom of God further yourselves and together.
- So let's start by considering these words, gospel, and shall be preached, the gospel.
- Normally, when we think of the gospel, and rightfully so, we think of Christ, incarnation, life, crucifixion, ascension, crucifixion, and a substitutionary death for us.
- [2 : 5 6] And this is all part of the gospel.
- It's all part of the gospel.
- The good news of God in Christ. It's the content of what we preach. But in order to understand that, we need to look a little broader as well.
- This is sometimes abused, this concept, but God certainly wants us to look at his kingdom and have a good understanding of his kingdom as being the gospel.
- So the gospel, in one sense, is equal to the gospel. And the kingdom is equal to the gospel. The good news of the kingdom. Now, as we start considering the kingdom, the kingdom has a realm, and it has a reign.
- [4 : 3 7] And God is the one who reigns in the kingdom. And the kingdom, the realm of the kingdom of God, on one hand, is everything. But at the same time, there's a specific way that the kingdom of God is used in scripture.
- And we're going to be considering that further this evening. And we're to be preaching the kingdom. We're to be preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

And we don't often think of that. We think about preaching Christ. But we don't often think about, well, how is it that I preach the kingdom? I mean, the kingdom's a big thing. How do I preach about the reign of God?

How do I preach the subjects of God, the realm of God's reign? Well, that's something we need to be doing. We're supposed to tell people about the king and his kingdom.

We're supposed to, in part of our preaching, to tell people what the kingdom looks like, how wonderful the kingdom is, how life is in the kingdom. We need to be preaching and showing forth that we're living in the kingdom of God and we're enjoying the kingdom of God and we want to call you into the kingdom of God.

[5 : 48] As we consider scripture, we see that this concept of the gospel being the kingdom and the kingdom is to be preached is repeated in many places.

And sometimes our translations obscure that just a little bit. So I want to go through a number of texts that show us that the gospel is the kingdom and we're to be preaching the kingdom.

Let's start with Matthew. Matthew 4 and verse 23. And I'm going to go through these somewhat quickly, but because of some of the translation issues and the version issues, I think it's good to look at these things.

Because we've considered what the noun for kingdom is, evangelion. Sometimes the verb evangelizomai, which means to bring good news, sometimes that's used in relationship to the kingdom and it doesn't always get translated as such.

So Matthew 4.23, I'm reading from the New American Standard. It says, Jesus was going through all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

[7 : 04] And there the word for proclaiming is actually preaching, kirison. So here we have the very same concept as our text, that Jesus was preaching the good news of the kingdom.

The content of what he was preaching was the kingdom of God. Matthew 9.35. Very similar. Jesus was going through all their cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

Again, very similar. The word for preaching there, for proclaiming in the New American Standard, is actually the word preaching. And I don't know what you have in your translations. Matthew 10.7.

And as you go, as he's empowering, and as you go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Our preaching is to be that the kingdom of heaven, a synonym for the kingdom of God, is here.

That's what we need to be telling people. The kingdom of God is here. Matthew 24.14, which we considered. Let's go on to Luke. Luke 4.

[8 : 18] New American Standard has, but he said to them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities. So Jesus is preaching the kingdom of God.

Here the word for preaching is not kiriso, but it's evangelizome, or evangeliseste, in the form that it's here. But here we have a verb form, and so we could very well and properly translate this, I must bring, announce the good news of the kingdom of God.

Luke 8.1. Soon afterwards, he began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching, and that word preaching there is evangelizing again.

So it would be better to say proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. Luke 9.2. And he sent them out, this is when he's sending out, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing.

And here the word is preaching. Kiriso in the Greek. Luke 9. He said to them, allow the dead to bury the dead. He said to him, allow the dead to bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.

[9 : 45] What's interesting in this verse, is he tells them to proclaim, but who's he telling? He's telling a guy that just had a bunch of excuses, why he doesn't, and can't follow Jesus in that moment. He said, first I need to bury the dead.

And he tells him, that you, you should be telling people about the kingdom of God. Now, Luke 16. The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John.

Since that time, the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. And there, it's actually, the kingdom of God has been evangelized.

Evangelism, the verb form of evangelion, or gospel. And then in Acts, 8, 12, but when they believed Philip, preaching the good news about the kingdom of God, and here we really have a, in the, a new American standard, the translators are just not consistent.

I mean, they're all good translations, but there's not consistency, because here, in that translation, we have, preaching the good news, the gospel as a noun, but it's really that verb form.

[10 : 59] So, in the original, it's evangelizing concerning the kingdom of God, bringing good news concerning the kingdom of God. Acts 20, 25, as Paul has gathered the Ephesian elders with him, for the very last time, and their pastor's conference there, if you will, and he reminds them of what was important, in his ministry, and he says, and now behold, I know that all of you among whom I was, went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face.

Acts 28, 23, when they had set a day for Paul, they came to him, at his lodgings in large numbers, and he was explaining to them, by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God.

In Acts 28, 31, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all openness, and unhindered. I went through those verses, because not all translations make it clear, but in the original, it's absolutely clear, that the gospel is the kingdom, the kingdom is the gospel, and part of the content, of what we're to be preaching, is the kingdom.

And now I want, to give you an extended illustration, and this is, we'll use a bulk of time here, how to understand this, and how we can do this. And Jesus often gave illustrations, and he often did questions, ask questions coupled with illustrations.

So I'm going to start by asking you a question, and truly think about this, for a moment. Why do people leave one country, to go to another?

[12 : 35] You know, immigration is much in the news, and immigration reform, and immigration limits, and this and that. So we're very much aware, in the United States, that people want to come into the United States, because the country they're living in, is bad.

And so, what is it that makes a country bad, and what is it that makes a country good? Why is it that some people, want to leave a bad country?

Why is it that some kingdoms, if you will, are bad, and people want to get out of them? Well, let's consider that. What makes a country, or a kingdom bad?

One that you want to move out of. Well, generally, one of the things on the top of it, this would be great for a Sunday school, or for a discussion group, and everybody could be, thinking things that they come up with, and putting it on there.

But, one of the things on the top of the list, is a bad king. A bad ruler. A bad supreme ruler. Like, Kim Jong-un, or, Hitler, or, Envir Hoxha, in Albania, 40 years ago.

[13 : 47] Bad leaders. Corrupt leaders. That want bribes, in order to do their jobs. Bad person at the top. Bad people in the middle.

And then, bad people all around you. Just bad people. Bad citizens. Bad subjects. People that don't love one another. People that hate one another. People that envy one another.

People that don't want to help one another. bad people in the middle. And then, material issues. If a country is poor, people want to move into a country that's not poor.

A bad country has a high level of unemployment. A high level of poverty. And there's hunger. People don't have food. A bad country has a poor health care system.

Where if you're sick, you can't get adequate care. Or it's difficult to get adequate care. A bad country is a country where chaos reigns.

[14 : 52] There's not a respect of laws, but there's lawlessness. And that results in chaos and disorder. Ugliness and dirtiness.

And what is beautiful fades or is vandalized. Bad laws. And the few good laws are not enforced. Crime.

Corruption. Poor educational opportunities. War. Conflict. Pollution.

We could expand. But those are things that make a country bad. One that people want to get out of. Well, what would make a good country? Well, a good country would have, instead of those bad things, it would have the opposite of that.

Plus, in addition, it would have additional positive things. And so let's consider this. What would make a good country good? A good country has a good leader.

[15 : 54] A good president. A good king. And I'll pause here and just fill this in with a little information from Montenegro. Montenegro used to be part of Yugoslavia.

And Yugoslavia used to have, during its communist days, and by the way, the communism in Yugoslavia was different from the communism in other countries. Yugoslavia democratically voted to be communist and then they democratically voted not to be communist.

And the communism there was very, very different from the communism in other countries. And one of their slogans for their new country when it became communist was the excellent society.

Savršeno drushtvo. So Yugoslavia had as its goal to be the excellent society. The perfect society. Of course, that didn't work out. But those things that we would see in an excellent society would be a good king caring for the people.

A good leader. And good leaders seeking to serve their people instead of exploiting their people. And then it would be populated by people that love each other. And that show care and concern for each other.

[17 : 05] And another slogan out of communist Yugoslavia was bratstvo i adinstvo. Brotherhood and unity. Kind of like the French brotherhood and fraternity and liberty and equality and all those things.

But it didn't work out that way. But a country where people are united and have a love for one another makes it a good country.

A lack of envy. A lack of hate. People helping one another. People not being envious of one another. Instead of unemployment, there's employment.

And an adequate amount of material goods. And a reasonable standard of living. And ample food instead of hunger. A good health care system. Instead of a poor health care system.

Instead of chaos, disorder, ugliness, and dirtiness. There's nice architecture and beauty. Instead of poor educational opportunities, there are good educational opportunities.

[18 : 10] Bad laws are removed. Good laws are enforced. And they're enforced not selectively, but the same for everybody. And so there's less crime.

Less corruption. There's less war and conflict. And this list could be expanded. And there's additional positive things.

Now, at this point, maybe some of you are thinking, well, that sounds really good. I'd like to be in a country like that. Where can we find such a country? Is there such a country?

Is there the Savrshenodrush, the excellent society? Is there something like that? Well, there is. That's the kingdom of God. And that's really how we can help people understand something about the kingdom of God.

And so consider the kingdom of God. It has none of the bad things and all of the good to the superlative degree, and it has positively much, much more.

[19 : 10] And so God himself is the king. Christ himself is the king of the kingdom. And whenever we consider the kingdom of God, and whenever we're preaching the kingdom of God, we can never separate Christ from the kingdom.

And we must always preach Christ. We cannot preach the kingdom without preaching Christ. And that's where liberals go wrong, where they have another understanding of the kingdom of God.

But the kingdom of God has the best of kings, the best of leaders. And then, as you move down, the intermediate leaders are good under-shepherds that are serving the people, and good intermediate leaders that are serving and helping the people.

And then, when you consider the people themselves, the kingdom of God is populated by saints who love and serve one another, not mean, unfriendly, unloving people, here we have true brotherhood and unity.

And Jonathan Edwards has a wonderful sermon called Heaven, A World of Love, and I highly commend it to you. And when you read the part where he's describing the relationship of believers to other believers, and how those believers who have a greater capacity and whose cup is running over even more, don't look down at the believers who are at a lesser level.

[20 : 36] And the believers who are at a lesser level don't envy the believers on a greater level, but they rejoice with them. Well, that's the kingdom of God. Heaven, a world of love.

The best of employment, serving. Instead of merely an adequate standard of living, riches. And instead of adequate food, a feast.

And we have images of feasting, communicating the kingdom of God. In Isaiah 25, the great feast of the Lord. In Revelation, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Health care, there's no need for it.

There's no sickness. The best of health care. No chaos, no disorder, no ugliness, no dirtiness. As you read the descriptions of heaven, in the book of Revelation, in the kingdom of God, beautiful architecture, glorious jewels for architecture.

It does not fade, cannot be vandalized. Instead of poor educational opportunities, we have people streaming to hear the word of God.

[21 : 52] Instead of bad laws, we have the best of laws, God's law, implanted in our heart, and we're fully able in the ultimate kingdom of God to do the will of God and the law of God.

No crime, no corruption, no war. And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not lift up sword against nation. And never again will they learn war, peace, prosperity, beauty, the restoration of all things.

Glorious imagery of the wolf and the lamb lying down together, the tree of life. And on either side of the river was the tree of life bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month.

And the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations. no more sin, no more death, no more sorrow. Glorious, powerful, eternal, positive joy.

[22 : 59] And we could go on and on. And you should. And you should consider more. What is it that makes the kingdom of God glorious and makes it such a good kingdom? This is what we're to preach, the kingdom of God.

How glorious the kingdom of God is. And I gave this extended illustration because that can help us. Anybody that you talk to will find things that they don't like in the kingdom they're in, whatever kingdom it is.

And a lot of times they're right in identifying those things, but their solutions and their answers are inadequate and incomplete. And if you talk to them about the kingdom of God not having those things, which in God's common grace they've realized are bad things, and that the kingdom of God has all goodness, that can be attractive.

And God can use that to open people's hearts because that's part of the message that God wants people to hear. And I'll just give you a little example of that that God enabled one day.

I was at a pastor's conference in Serbia. And it was being held at a hotel. And it was one of these kinds of situations that when you got up you had breakfast in the hotel restaurant and then you sat down and you didn't know the people that you were sitting down with and you'd introduce yourself.

[24 : 16] You know, I'm Stanisza from Nikshitsha. You know, what church are you from? Oh, we're from Belgrade and so forth. And so I sat down one day, but what was happening and I didn't know it is that there were several other conferences going on at the same time.

And so I sat down at a table and I said, hi, I'm Stan Stanisza, you know, pastor from Nikshitsha. What church are you from? And they looked at me kind of funny. Church?

We're not from a church. We're having a conference for the Yugoslav left, an ultra left-wing party. And yeah, you know, we don't have anything to do with the church.

And, you know, at that point I could have, oh, that's terrible. Left-wing politics is terrible, you know, but that's not what I did. And God gave me grace and I said, oh, really? That's very interesting.

I know you're concerned about a lot of social issues. What do you find to be the most important social issues today? And they said, well, corruption in the government we think is a very important social issue.

[25 : 19] And unemployment is a very important social issue. And then I was able to say, you know, you're right. Those are very important issues. And corruption, you think corruption is a bad thing.

Oh, it's terrible. And then, how are you doing with your program to eliminate corruption? corruption? Not very well. Well, in the Bible, we're told how corruption will ultimately end.

And to use their own words, the excellent society and true brotherhood and unity will be established. And I was able, really, to enter into a conversation with them and they were intrigued and they wanted to hear more.

The kingdom of God. Well, I noted about the ultimate kingdom of God. We're not there yet. But let's consider the kingdom of God now.

And as we consider the kingdom of God, there's a phrase that's used to describe it and that's already but not yet. The fullness of the kingdom is not yet here but the kingdom of God is already here.

[26 : 31] in part, the kingdom of God is already among us in Christ. And so, as we consider preaching the kingdom of God, let's consider that though there's an ultimate fulfillment, right now, the kingdom of God is present among us.

And so, Jesus, from Luke 16, which I quoted earlier, the law and the prophets were proclaimed until John since then, which means now, and continuing to our day today, since that time, the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached and everyone is pressing into it.

And Jonathan Edwards has a wonderful sermon on that, pressing into the kingdom. But the kingdom is now present and people are forcing their way into it. People are entering now.

In Luke 11, 20, Jesus, when he heals and casts out a demon, he says, but if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you now.

In Luke 17, being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, lo, here it is, or there, for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you now.

[28 : 00] I'm in your midst. I'm the kingdom. The kingdom is in me. Well, today, how is the kingdom present?

Is there somewhere where we can see God's reign? Is there somewhere where we can see God's realm? can we see God's people somewhere here on earth?

Is there a community where these things are taking place? Is there a colony of the kingdom on this world? And the answer is yes.

The church is the colony that is present in this world of the kingdom of God. The church is not perfect. There are wheat, and there are tares, and the church is growing until that day when it is fully perfected and presented without spot or blemish, as it says in Ephesians 5.

But now the church is God's representative of God's kingdom in a substantial way. And we can see that as we consider those qualities again in that extended illustration.

[29 : 18] Who's the leader of the church? Christ. Christ is the leader of the church, of the kingdom. And who are the intermediate leaders, if you will?

Under shepherds who love and care and serve God's people. And saints are the people of the kingdom who love one another, who serve one another, who help one another, who are not envious of one another, but are affirming of one another.

Instead of bad people, mean and unfriendly and unloving people, we have one another. And Jesus said, by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

And so we have true fellowship. Employment. Material aspects. Well, in Acts 2 and in Acts 4, we are told that the believers were sharing with one another.

And in James 5, or in James, we read, you know, not James 5, but in James, we read, you know, if you see someone hungry and you say, be full and well fed, you know, what good is that?

[30 : 38] It's assumed that the believers are going to be helping one another materially. And even today I've heard about you all helping one another with finding jobs.

And I know that you've helped one another when people have been in need. And we have the Lord's table as a foretaste of the ultimate feast of God.

When Jesus gave us communion in the Lord's table, he says, I won't drink of this cup again until I drink it with you in the kingdom. health care.

Well, God can sovereignly heal and sometimes he heals. But it's interesting that we see a concern for health in the church in this way.

In Matthew 25, in the great separating of believers and unbelievers, Jesus says, I was sick and you visited me. And then God's people say, when did we see you sick?

[31 : 51] And it says, the king, so we're talking about the kingdom, the king will answer and say to them, truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.

And so a care for one another in sickness is a mark of the kingdom and is present in the church. And frankly, this has a lot to help us with the understanding of a theology of praying for the sick.

They're not commended here that they prayed and the sick were healed. That's not the case. But they're commended because they had a care for the sick and visited the sick. And so in the church, in that colony of the kingdom of God, we do have a caring for one another's health and a ministering to one another in sickness.

We have decency and order. We have the educational opportunity that is ultimately fulfilled in the kingdom and it's being fulfilled now.

And many peoples will come and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us concerning his ways and that we may walk in his paths for the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

[33 : 13] And I know that there's an ultimate fulfillment, but that's being fulfilled right now, right in this minute, as we have people from every nation and tribe coming and hearing the word of God all over the world.

Instead of lawlessness, we do have God's law implanted in our heart. And we have a growing ability to obey it. We have a definitive sanctification where there's a definite change in our lives, and then we have a growing and progressive sanctification where we're fulfilling God's laws more and more.

In the church, swords have been hammered into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. We are not at war with one another, though on an earthly level we come from all different sides of all different countries and conflicts and political situations, but in the church we have a true peace.

And I know that there's a fuller fulfillment, but this is being fulfilled right now among us. We do have a peace and a prosperity. In God's word, the kingdom is described as glorious, and then the church is described as glorious.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, Psalm 145, and talk of your power to make known to the sons of men your mighty acts and the glory of the majesty of your kingdom.

[34 : 38] So this preaching the kingdom of God is clearly present in the Old Testament, and so there is a glory in God's kingdom, and then we read, to him be the glory in the church, and in 2nd Corinthians it says, as for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you, as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

And in Ephesians 5, we read about Christ's sacrificial work for the church, that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

joy. And we have more. We have an abounding positive joy. The church is a colony of the kingdom of God now, and as such, one of the purposes of the church is as that colony to be a witness and to be engaged in transformation.

nation. We read, you are the light of the world, a city set on a hill. And that word city is also used for city-state or kingdom.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand. And it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a manner that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

[36 : 17] We could go on, and you should. This is an introduction, but the church is a colony of the kingdom of God now. We need to be careful about this.

We need to not confuse those elements of the kingdom that are fulfilled in the future with those that are fulfilled now, such as complete physical healing, complete sinless perfection, glorification.

But as we keep those things separate, the already and the not yet, it gives us a great help on understanding the kingdom now. So there you have an extended illustration about the kingdom of God and it being present now.

And as we consider preaching the kingdom of God, we must always preach how it is that people can become part of that kingdom. And so, just as Christ is inseparable from his kingdom, the cross is inseparable from the kingdom.

And we read in Revelation, for instance, 1.6, to him who loves us and released us from our sins by his blood, and there's the work of the cross, and made us to be a kingdom of priests.

[37 : 33] So, it is by the blood of Christ, by his work on the cross, that we're brought in to the kingdom. For he rescued us from the domain of darkness, that bad kingdom, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

What's amazing about God's kingdom is the king lays down his life for his subjects. And it is through Christ's death on the cross, paying for our sin, removing our disqualification, and giving us his righteousness, the righteousness through which we can enter into the kingdom of God, that we recognize God's provision.

To enter the kingdom of God, very clearly, one must be born again. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see what?

The kingdom of God, Jesus says to Nicodemus, and he repeats it. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, regeneration, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

This is the good news that we're to preach, the kingdom, but then how it is that we enter the kingdom, by being born again, on the basis of Christ's work on the cross, by the regeneration and activity of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father.

[39 : 01] This is the gospel, and this provision is an essential part of the kingdom. And now, I want to wrap up by considering that preaching and living.

So, that's what we need to be telling people about. Not only that, but that's what we need to be telling people about, that the kingdom of God is here. God And, you know, Spurgeon said that anything new in theology is wrong or false.

And another way to put that is if you hear somebody in a pulpit say, I've come to bring you something you've never heard of before, and this has been revealed to me, and I'm giving you new understanding, that's false, and you should run.

But, frankly, I think we often have missed this part of the community aspect, and in preaching the kingdom, we're in essence saying, this is the kingdom of God, come and join us, come to Christ, but come to join us together in this.

The king is here, come to him, the kingdom is here, come in. And so, we're called to announce and call people to the kingdom. And we should be proclaiming all these things that we've considered, how glorious the king is, how glorious the citizens of the kingdom are, how glorious are the leaders in the kingdom of God, how there's a care and a love for everybody.

[40 : 30] This is what we're to preach, that there's true love, there's not envy, there's people that will hug you and receive you. Now, as I was studying for this and preparing to preach it, and then preaching it, I did have some pangs of guilt, in one sense.

And I had to ask myself, you know, is there a little bit of a disconnect? Is that really what we see around us? Is that really what we experience all the time in the church? Well, we should be experiencing it, and we do experience it, but sometimes, sometimes we're not living the kingdom.

kingdom. And so, as we consider this, not only are we to preach the kingdom, but this is a call to live the kingdom, to live that excellent society based on what God has done upon us.

And we're told to walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom.

And so, we're called to preach the kingdom, but we're called to live the kingdom so that we are attractive to the unbeliever as God would open their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

[41 : 55] And you know, in Acts chapter 2 and 4, when it describes the kingdom life of the believers, it says even the unbelievers were seeing that and finding it attractive. And so, God calls us, to live this kingdom.

And who is supposed to be doing this preaching? And who is supposed to be doing this living out of the kingdom? Well, on one hand, some are specifically called and gifted as preachers.

And as we do exegetical preaching, we need to show how that connects with the kingdom. And the kingdom needs to be present in our preaching. And of course, Christ is always with the kingdom, so Christ always needs to be present in our preaching.

But, we are all priests. And priests are to proclaim God on an everyday basis and in whatever situation we find ourselves in.

God's So, 1 Peter 2. 9 says, speaking to all believers, but you are a chosen race, and then it says a priesthood. And do you remember what kind of a priesthood?

[43 : 06] You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you, every believer, may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, and that parallels the language, called you into his kingdom from the earlier verse.

Revelation 1, 6, he has made us to be a kingdom priests to his God. So, we're all to speak of the kingdom, and we're all to live out the kingdom, and through that, God will be glorified, number one, we will enjoy what Christ has provided for us, number two, and number three, people will see that, and God will use that to call people into his kingdom.

Amen. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you that though we were once darkness, we are now light in the Lord. We thank you that you have transplanted us into this new kingdom, the kingdom of your dear son.

We heard of his suffering and agony for us this morning. What a king we have, that he would take the curse that we deserve, and would give to us the blessings that he deserves.

And may that glorious king shape our lives, that we too would be seen with the same kind of love of him who was rich and yet for our sakes became poor, that we might become rich in him.

[44 : 57] We want to thank you for including us in your kingdom, Lord Jesus. We want to be better representatives of it here on earth. earth. We have heard tonight how the kingdoms of this world present wonderful backdrops for this kingdom of Christ, in that they lack what we have in Christ.

And so, help us then to be proclaiming with our words and also with our life together as a church, this kingdom that has come in Christ, and that is coming.

We thank you that it will one day come in its fullness. Use us to point men and women, boys and girls to that kingdom. Go with our brother and sister, bless their remaining time here, and then prepare the way for them to return to their work and cause the kingdom of Christ to grow in that church to the glory and praise of Christ.

We pray in his name. Amen.