

The Kingdom of Satan

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[0 : 00] Well, we start a new series this morning, really a good follow-up to what Jeremy presented in the last three weeks, the title of which, as you can see up on the screen there, Living Distinctively as Members of the Kingdom of Christ.

And the question after that is, what is it that makes that a paradox? Paradox. Now we have to understand what this word paradox is many times as we think of a definition, trying to understand what a word means.

If you give the opposite meaning of it or some different meaning, you can gain a richer and fuller understanding of the word. And so what a paradox is not, a paradox is not two wooden structures out over a pond that you run off and jump into the water.

I got some of you on that one, didn't I? A pair of docks. Now, we're talking about a paradox, a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which, when investigated, may prove to be well-founded or true.

So a paradox shows a distinction or a difference to what is usually considered the accepted norm. It's a paradox because it stands in great contrast to the accepted norm.

[1 : 32] And thus doesn't seem to make sense, really, to those who do not believe in it, the teaching, and it might even be considered absurd. Well, in the coming weeks, we're going to be identifying what some have referred to as biblical paradoxes.

So when we begin to identify a biblical paradox related to how a person lives, a Christian lives, we're identifying an idea or thought concerning the way a Christian lives that stands in great contrast to what is accepted as the norm in society, what people are used to believing and practicing.

Biblical teaching is a paradox. It's very distinct. It's drastically different than what people follow. Some people would say that such teaching, another term they would use, would be that it's counterintuitive to what, again, is the accepted norm.

Webster's Dictionary defines that as contrary to what one would intuitively expect. Another English dictionary, Collins, contrary to an intuitive belief or to common sense expectations.

And in each of these definitions, it's expected that there is an accepted norm, and whatever goes against the accepted norm or doesn't fit intuitive belief is said to be counterintuitive.

[2 : 59] It doesn't follow what people are usually thinking and doing in the culture and society at the time. So when someone is teaching a biblical truth that stands in great contrast to what is believed by most of society to be true, it's considered counterintuitive.

It's cutting against the grain. It's not what we're used to hearing. It doesn't make sense to us. It's a paradox. It's a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition.

But when such a teaching is considered by a person who's been converted to Christ, whose mind has been renewed by the Spirit of God through the Word of God, that statement is true.

It's wise teaching. Teaching to be obeyed and really makes for a firm foundation on which a person could build their life and their eternity.

So in the Scriptures, we see a lot of paradoxes. Let me read just a few of them. We find rest under a yoke. If one loses his life, he will find it.

[4 : 14] Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. Whoever is least among you, all is the one who is great. Whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

It pleased God that through the folly of preaching the gospel, people who believe would be saved. The one who believes the gospel is set free to become a slave.

In our weakness, we become strong. In dying, one lives to bear much fruit. So over and over again, we see these paradoxes, these phrases that to the world seem absurd or don't seem to make

sense, contradictory to what they're used to thinking and living.

Well, in Matthew 5, we have a list of what could be called eight paradoxes. We call them beatitudes. And the beatitudes are paradoxes because they're very different ways of thinking and living that Jesus was teaching to the people of his day.

They stood out in very sharp contrast to what was being taught and lived among the people. And what he was teaching, being in such great contrast, was thought to be not rational.

[5 : 33] It was not the sensible way of thinking and living. Very different from what they were used to hearing. So in the coming weeks, we'll look at the beatitudes and other biblical paradoxes that make the daily life of one who is a member of the kingdom of Christ distinct.

As we live in our world and as we move through our day, whether it's in our jobs, our neighborhoods, and maybe even some of our families, where it's very different.

But the first two weeks, I want us to consider why such teachings are considered paradoxes or counterintuitive. Why is it that the biblical teaching about how one is to live is considered absurd or contrary to what is normal?

Well, there's different answers that people might give. You might say, well, just simply people have different ways of thinking. We all have different opinions as to just how we should live.

You have your truth, you have your opinion, and I have mine. We each determine what is true for ourselves and live accordingly. And when the majority of people who think the same way come together, a large group or even a country, what they believe as the majority becomes the norm.

[6 : 56] And when someone else comes with a different idea, it's considered counterintuitive. That's paradoxical. That's absurd. That's strange, what you're teaching and presenting here.

But the reason for the differences goes much deeper than just people having differing opinions. Statements like that are really just the symptoms of the greater reason for the differences.

And I think if we understand the greater reasons for the differences, then living out or living the biblical paradoxes in our daily lives, the biblical teachings of how a member of the kingdom of Christ lives, I think it's going to take on a richer and a fuller meaning as we move through our days.

And that will be good for us. It could be that those who are indeed members of the kingdom of Christ will become more focused, more appreciative, more serious even about the teaching that we receive, that is so different from what the world is following, that we will indeed hold dear to those teachings.

When sometimes today they're getting maybe pushed to the side a little bit. I don't like to stand out so much and be that distinct. Even some saying, well, if I'm too distinct, I won't be able to attract them.

[8 : 39] So make myself less distinct, maybe a little bit more like them. And maybe they'll come alongside. And so that's why I'm saying I think if we can get a richer, fuller understanding of why these biblical teachings are considered counterintuitive, they'll become much more special to us.

So why? Why is the biblical teachings considered counterintuitive or paradoxes? Well, because there are two unseen kingdoms that exist that have very different rulers that proclaim very different messages, even contradictory teachings of how people are to live in the world today.

The teachings of the kingdom of Satan certainly have become what the majority of people follow. So let's just take a brief look just at these two kingdoms, just some introductory comments about them.

This week I'll focus on the kingdom of Satan. And again, covering the kingdom of Satan in one 40-minute class won't do it. But I'm just trying to give you a broad overview of it.

Next week we'll take a look at the kingdom of God. But Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, and when he was doing that, he mentioned his kingdom. He says, pray then like this, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

[10 : 00] Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And then when he was standing before Pilate, he made reference to his kingdom as well.

He said, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.

But my kingdom is not from this world. So here Jesus is indicating that his kingdom doesn't follow the quote-unquote norm of what would normally be found in the world at that time.

If his kingdom was just another one like the others that existed at that time, then Pilate could expect that Jesus' followers would act like those of other worldly kingdoms.

They would fight to keep Jesus from being delivered over to the Jews. So there is a very real kingdom of God. People in our world today are just very sensory.

[11:02] You know, if they can't see it and touch it and feel it, the unseen isn't that real to them. And we don't want to fall into that category and slide into that and begin living just by the seeing.

Well, the kingdom of God has a seeing aspect to it, and we'll learn more of that as we're going to see the kingdom of Satan has an aspect that is visible and manifests itself certainly.

But then there is the kingdom of Satan in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus. He directs their attention to such a kingdom a couple of different times. Ephesians 2, 1 through 3, he says, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

I mean, people in the world today who are outside of Christ and the scriptures, they would have no concept of this kind of thinking. And they would probably even chuckle and laugh if we were to tell them, this is your situation, this is your condition.

That is weird and absurd teaching. We can give thanks to God that he's revealed to us that which is unseen, that we might know the truth of what is behind what we are actually hearing and seeing in our world today.

[12:45] Ephesians 6, 11 and 12, Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand firm or stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, amazing, isn't it?

Interesting how God just reveals to us that which is unseen, but is very real. Then in Colossians 1, 13, Paul makes reference to both kingdoms.

When he writes of what God the Father did on behalf of the believers in the church of Colossae, he says and writes, He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

So there we see both kingdoms there. So we have two kingdoms in conflict. Now at this point, it's important to state clearly that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are not two equal kingdoms dueling against each other.

We see this in movies that are exciting to see, and you think, oh, the kingdom of darkness is ahead now, and then the kingdom of light is, and they're just battling back and forth.

[14:09] Which one's going to win? Which one's going to win? That's not the idea here. R.C. Sproul shows the dominance of God and his kingdom over Satan in the following quote.

He says, Satan may be opposed to God, but he is by no means equal to God. Satan is a creature. God is the creator.

Satan is potent. God is omnipotent. Satan is knowledgeable and crafty. God is omniscient. Satan is localized in his presence.

God is omnipresent. Satan is finite. God is infinite. The list could go on, he says. But it is clear from Scripture that Satan is not an ultimate force in any sense.

So just to make that clear as we proceed here, that's not what I'm presenting is these two dueling, equal dueling kingdoms. But the kingdom of Satan is very real, and he is a force that needs to be reckoned with and has been reckoned with.

[15:12] So let's take a look in the time that I have left here just quickly at the rise, the rain, and the ruin of the kingdom of Satan. And in considering the rise of the kingdom of Satan, we need to understand and remember that Satan and his subjects are distortion, really, of their original creation by God.

They had a very good beginning, and that beginning was because God is the creator, God, and created them. John writes of Jesus, He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. So all things made by Jesus Christ, nothing that is in the world came of its own existence, all created and made by Jesus Christ.

And one group of subjects that would inhabit His kingdom were the angels. And they are not eternal beings, but created by God. Psalm 148, verses 2 and 5.

And in this passage, the angels are included with the rest of creation as ones that should praise God, for He is the one who created them. Praise Him, all His angels.

[16:24] Praise Him, all His hosts. Then over to verse 5. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded, and they were created. Then Colossians 1.16, For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

All things were created through Him and for Him. So it's from this created angelic realm that Satan came and rebelled against God, thus becoming the adversarial ruler of a kingdom in opposition to God.

Now these are studies that you can take months on if you have time and get yourself a good theology book and study the doctrine of Satan and angels.

So let's take a look at this ruler, Satan. The Hebrew name for Satan derives from a Hebrew verb, which means to be or act as an adversary. The most common Greek word for him is diabolos, devil, adversary, accuser.

So as his name indicates, since his rebellion, he has been an adversary to God, his creator, seeking to rule in the place of God.

[17:45] Pastor John has just been doing a tremendous job in presenting messages on the kingdom of God. And he indicates, what are the three things, some of you, I won't get his right, the three essentials for a kingdom.

Nobody can remember those right now. I've got them written down in different order. He wanted, Satan wanted to be a ruler of all. He wanted subjects to serve him. And he wanted a place for his kingdom.

He wanted to be as God, who is the ruler and has subjects and also has a place for his kingdom. We see that certainly in the Garden of Eden.

He already had the angels as his subjects, created the world, all creation, put Adam and Eve there as his subjects in the human realm and a place of his kingdom, his domain in the Garden of Eden. Satan wanted to be like God. He wanted to rule as God. He wanted to be the sovereign. And so he wanted subjects as well. Well, as an adversarial ruler, he must have subjects in his kingdom.

[18:57] And not being God himself and unable to create his subjects, he had to draw away some of God's subjects unto himself. And so we see that the first subjects from God's kingdom that he drew away were some angels that occupied the heavenly realm.

Revelation 12, verse 3. Revelation 12, verse 3. It indicates that a third of the angels created by God were drawn away from God's kingdom and followed Satan. So Satan rules over these fallen angelic beings.

And he is called the prince of demons. We see this in Luke 11, verse 15. When Jesus cast out a demon, the Pharisees nearby accused him of doing so by the power of Beelzebul, another name for Satan.

They said he cast out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons. So Satan was the one ruling over these fallen angels.

He has his subjects. Matthew 25, 41 also makes reference to Satan and his angels when Jesus made reference to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

[20:11] So those were the first subjects of his kingdom. The second group comes from those who occupied the earth. And it's here that we begin to see the distinction between what God taught and what Satan taught.

And what we're considering is where did the shift take place? In Genesis 1 and 2, we read that God created Adam and Eve and gave them instructions.

They needed to live in proper relationship with him, with each other, and the rest of creation. What existed in that garden was what normal human life was to be.

It wasn't the norm because the majority of people living there at the time, Adam and Eve, came up with these ideas on their own and lived according to their own truth.

God didn't make them and set them, you know, you've got good minds, use your minds, come up with just the way things should be. How you should relate to me, how you should relate to each other, the rest of creation, what should your purpose be?

[21:22] No, he gave them all that instruction that they needed for right relationship with him, with each other, and the rest of creation. And it was norm because it was the wisdom of God given to Adam and Eve that would give them the guidelines that they needed to accomplish their purpose in

life, to glorify God and to flourish in the world that God had made for his glory and their good.

And for a time, they did. They submitted to God and flourished in their relationship with him, with each other, and the rest of creation. And then Satan, the adversary of God, came as a crafty serpent and presented to Eve a message that was directly contrary to God's instruction to them. They already had an understanding of what was true. What was truth? We could say that that was their intuition given by God that was on their hearts, in their minds.

And now here's something that was actually counterintuitive. So at that time, it wasn't what was biblical that was counterintuitive.

The Word of God, wisdom of God in their minds, in their little culture, their little society at the time, that's what was normal for them.

[22 : 55] And they enjoyed living in the wisdom of God by the truth of God. And Satan came and brought a contrary message to them.

And it's at that moment of time that a contrary message to God's truth was introduced into the human realm. We need to understand it came from Satan.

Satan is the source of any and all counsel teaching that is contrary to God's spoken and written Word. And that's the whole focus of this lesson, understanding what we're hearing in the world today.

Let's not cut it any slack as just a mere thought and opinion and conjuring of man, sinful man, in their own thinking.

It is influenced by the great deceiver, Satan himself. That's how we need to understand it. That's how we need to recognize it. And we can trace this throughout Scripture, even its introduction, its origin there in the garden.

[24 : 05] The reign of Satan and the dominance of his teachings in the human realm began right there in the Garden of Eden. Satan came as a serpent, Genesis 3.1. The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, Did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden? The woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die. But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be open and you'll be like God knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate and she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate.

Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths and they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

[25 : 24] Just even as I was reading that, it was interesting putting myself even in today and different things you hear from different people like if we're saying something biblical, biblical truth and what their response would be.

Different comments you hear from people today about what is true, the wisdom of God. It just follows so closely to what Satan was saying here to Eve and so the deceptiveness is still being presented today to us in very similar ways.

Well at that time all people became members of the kingdom of Satan. He wanted to be like God. He wanted to be the sovereign over all. So again, he presented that as a temptation to Adam and Eve and he said to Eve, when you eat of it your eyes will be opened.

You will be like God knowing good and evil. You can be your own God. You don't have to rely on God for counsel.

You will know good and evil. You can live independently from God. Sound familiar in our world today? Instead of living distinctly different lives from Satan and his fallen angels, they allowed themselves to be conformed to the adversary's way of thinking and acting.

[26 : 58] And in doing so, they lost the joys, the blessings, and the privileges of life in the Garden of Eden. They lost sweet communion with God.

They hid from God. Adam blamed God. They were banned from the Garden. They lost their privileged position of open communion with God. They lost their open communion with each other.

They covered themselves with fig leaves. Adam blamed Eve for his sinful decision. They lost the enjoyable work in the Garden. Now there would be painful toil, struggling against thorns and thistles.

They had forsaken God, his counsel, no longer members of that kingdom of God, undefiled. The default setting now in their affections and minds have been Adam and Eve and all humans after them would no longer be toward God, his counsel, and obedience to them.

They and all people after them would live counter-intuitively from the norm that God had established and taught them.

[28 : 09] That's what's been happening in the world ever since. People living counter-intuitively to the truth. It's not us.

The believers will learn about that next week. the ones restored back, being renewed in our minds unto the true norm that was given in the beginning.

It was this new satanic message that was really counter-intuitive to the good, rational counsel that God gave them for human flourishing.

It was God's counsel that was to be the societal norm for them and everybody that was to come after them. But they turned away from their good, all-wise creator and became subjects of the kingdom of Satan.

And throughout history, there's a record of how people as individuals and larger groups as nations and countries followed this new ruler, Satan, and his counsel.

[29 : 13] Let me just briefly give some examples of that. Shortly after, there was Cain. Cain was a clear example of one who rejected God's counsel and followed in the way of the kingdom of Satan.

When God gave counsel to Cain about how to deal with his sinful anger and warned him about the outcome of following his sinful way, Cain rejected God's counsel. God came mercifully to him and helped him understand, no, this is the counsel you need.

This is the way of human flourishing. He would not have any of it. He wanted to be his own God. He wanted to be the one to be sovereign over his life as his, God's adversary wanted to be as well.

He would determine for himself how to handle his problem. And he turned away from God and refused to repent and instead killed his brother Abel. and God's judgment came upon Cain.

How about a whole civilization of people even prior to the flood? Genesis 6, 5 and 11, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.

[30 : 30] Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and the earth was filled with violence.

This was the natural outworking of following in the way of Satan's counsel. Chaos and violence.

Each person became their own sovereign to determine their own truth.

Each one would do what's right in their own eyes. And as I said, the result was chaos and violence and God's judgment came upon them.

But another time, the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11, 4, then they said, come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens and let us make a name for ourselves lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.

Here we see the counsel, the way of the adversary here in the lives of these people. They were the people, they were created to be a people to glorify their creator, to make his name great.

[31 : 39] They were to have dominion over the whole earth. They wouldn't submit to God and his instructions. They wanted to make a name for themselves.

They wanted to remain where they were. God's judgment came upon them as well so that there was no longer one common language with which they used to disobey God.

God confused their language and they were dispersed over the face of all the earth. As we travel through history, I told Carol earlier, I said, man, this would be an interesting study.

Again, one of those studies that would take ages and years to follow history. I don't know if you are history buffs. Take a look at the various timelines and follow the nations, the development of nations throughout history and see the way of the adversary, how they're manifested in those nations.

Well, yeah, various language groups gathered together as nations. Each nation was a local temporary manifestation of the kingdom of Satan.

[32 : 49] Great nations came and went and we read of many of them in the Bible. The Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites and other great empires, the Egyptian Empire, the Assyrian Empire, Babylonian Empire, Mediapersian Empire, Grecian and the Roman

Empire.

Each of these empires followed the way of God's adversary, Satan. They didn't worship the one true God. And again, if you were to study these in detail, you would be able to see the ways in which they followed the counsel of the great adversary of God.

They rejected the norm of God's good counsel for human flourishing and set themselves up as their own sovereign. Instead of worshipping the one true God, they worshipped images that resembled mortal man, birds and animals, sun and stars.

Instead of honoring God's design for marriage between a man and a woman, sexual intimacy between a husband and wife, it was distorted and both male and female temple prostitutes were used in their worship.

They exchanged natural sexual relations for those contrary to nature and God's design. Instead of preserving the lives of their children, they offered them up in sacrifice to their idols.

[34 : 09] Anything sound familiar here? How it's been just moving throughout time within the realm of this great adversary of God.

All of these outward manifestations that we're seeing find their home base. certainly in the thinking of sinful man but goes beyond that to the ruler of the prince of the power of the air, Satan.

And that's been the theme really throughout history. Of course, during that Roman Empire, the pinnacle of the rebellion came against God in the crucifixion of the Son of God on the cross.

All throughout time prior to that, God had provided prophets through the ages that spoke and wrote of the promised deliverer to come.

Always there with a message. God full of mercy and grace to those who were subjects of that domain of darkness.

[35 : 15] But Satan and his subjects would have none of it. and so when God the Father sent God the Son, they killed him.

Satan must have thought his dominion over all had finally been accomplished. He'd reached the pinnacle killing the Son of God.

I don't know how much Satan understood. Remember, he was not omniscient. He did not know all things. He was just acting on his own behalf out of his evil nature and character and moving within the minds and hearts of his subjects to get them to do his bidding.

And so it was that the Son of God was killed on the cross. They thinking all in and of themselves not understanding the great design of God and what God was accomplishing of which we will hear after this service and rejoice in that.

But all the evil that had been taking place has come up right even to the present in our own nation. Back in Ephesians 2 1-3 Paul wrote very descriptively about the condition of those who followed God's adversary.

[36 : 46] And he said and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked according to the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and we're by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

And the other descriptive phrase in 1 John 5-19 says the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. Why is it that the Christian teaching is considered the paradox?

Counterintuitive. because the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. That is the culture in which we live today and why what is originally designed by God to be the norm for counsel and wisdom for all human flourishing now has become counterintuitive.

That which is considered absurd. it doesn't fit the norm of what is accepted by the majority in our society today.

Where is it all leading? What will be the outcome for Satan's kingdom and those who are his subjects? Well at this point I could just direct you to Pastor John's message last week which was an excellent message but let me just say a couple points here.

[38 : 23] The ruin of Satan and his kingdom Satan and his subjects will be cast into the eternal lake of fire. Jesus gave warnings when he was on the earth about this in Matthew 25 41 then he will say to those on his left depart from me you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

John also gave warnings of the coming judgment in Revelation 20 then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it from his presence earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them and I saw the dead and great and small standing before the throne the books were opened that another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done and the sea gave up the dead who were in a death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them and they were judged each one of them according to what they had done then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire this is the second death the lake of fire and if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life he was thrown into the lake of fire the reality of the end of the kingdom of Satan Satan and his subjects all who are his subjects those who have gone in the past and dead those who are yet to come those in the present and those in the future who will not confess

Christ two kingdoms with very different outcomes for the subjects of both kingdoms whoever believes in the son has eternal life whoever does not obey the son shall not see life but the wrath of God remains on him today we can celebrate the only way that God has made for an individual to be transferred from this domain of darkness into the kingdom of his son Jesus Christ that's why we can rejoice today if you're here this morning as one who has understood by faith believe confess Jesus Jesus Christ as Lord you're sitting here with rejoicing in your heart that you're not part of this kingdom that I've just described but part of the kingdom of God and we can go into the morning service with a song a heart full of rejoicing as we sing of and sing pray read the scriptures hear the message of why we can have and be people of such hope let's pray father this morning we truly do give thanks that you as an all gracious and wise

God merciful God has provided us truth that we need for life in the world today for there are things unseen by us father that we never would have seen without the revelation that you provided in your word and your holy spirit to awaken us out of our deadness and to bring us life that we might see the truth and to believe it and then to walk in it oh father help us to truly be growing in our love a commitment to you the truth to walk in it in Jesus name amen thank you