

The Agenda For the King & His Citizens

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 March 2015

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Matthew chapter 16, and we'll begin reading at verse 13 and read through the end of the chapter. Matthew 16, verse 13.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do people say that the Son of Man is? They replied, Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

But what about you? he asked. Who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus replied, Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

[1:11] Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Never, Lord, he said. This shall never happen to you. And Jesus turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. Then Jesus said to his disciples, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?

Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

[2:29] I tell you the truth. Some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Amen.

Well, we're fixing our eyes upon our reigning King, the Lord Jesus Christ, because our salvation depends as much upon him being our King as it does upon him being our prophet and our priest. It's because he is King that we will arrive safely in his heavenly kingdom, though all hell and the world and even our own flesh combine against us.

It's our King who defends us and who saves us. Indeed, he saves to the uttermost all who come to God through him. Now, as we've been looking at Christ the King, we've been learning about his kingdom, his reign, his rule.

And the kingdom of God is a subject on which there is much confusion. It was greatly misunderstood when Christ was on the earth and teaching about his kingdom in the flesh.

[3:42] And there's still much confusion about it. And that's why we're spending much more time on Christ as King than we did the other two offices.

And one error today is that Christ is not yet reigning. But because the Jews rejected Christ as their King, that he's just waiting to reign until the end of the age when he will come back and then he will reign and set up his kingdom.

But we have seen in the scriptures that Christ was already a King when he died on the cross. When he taught and preached and healed, as he himself says in the Gospels.

And more recently, we've seen that 40 days after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven where he was formally enthroned by his Father's words, sit here at my right hand on the throne of God.

Sit here till I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. So contrary to some teaching, Jesus Christ is right now reigning upon the throne of God.

[5:01] The kingdom of God is not without a king. Even now he rules over all things for the good of his church, Ephesians 1 to 22. But we also noticed last week in Psalm 110 that his rule on earth right now is carried out in the midst of his enemies.

He rules in the midst of his enemies. For as he rules in the hearts of his people on earth, his people are found in enemy territory. For all the king's enemies have not yet been crushed under his feet. And what that means is that during this phase of the kingdom, the children of the king encounter great suffering, great difficulties, spiritual warfare, internal conflict, problems with other people, problems with the world, problems with their bodies, their health, their soul.

It's the time of suffering in the kingdom. It's all part and parcel of life in the kingdom of God now.

And so far from being surprising to us, this is exactly what we were told to expect.

Suffering belongs to this stage of the kingdom of Christ. It was true of the king, and it's true of his children. And it's critical for us to understand that for our own comfort, our peace, and our joy in this life.

[6:36] Some think that if Christ were really reigning right now, that the citizens of the kingdom would be exempt from suffering. Indeed, that error brought no doubt, no small doubt and discomfort to John the Baptist, you remember.

If Jesus is the king, then why am I still suffering in prison? Are you the one promised, or do we look for another? And Jesus assured him, I am indeed the Messiah king.

And the suffering of my servants does nothing to call that into question. It is rather to be expected. So open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 16.

And here we see that our Lord asked his disciples, who do the people say that the Son of Man is? And they repeat all kinds of ideas that were floating among the people.

And Jesus says now, who do you say that I am? And Peter answers for the group, you are the anointed, the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

[7:44] And Jesus pronounced him blessed for having God the Father reveal that to his heart. And then it was that Jesus began to share the burden of his heart with the twelve disciples.

He shared the upcoming agenda for the king. What's on his calendar? That he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and on the third day raised from the dead, raised to life.

And now the one who recently spoke so truthfully about the Savior speaks so wrongfully. For Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

Never, Lord. Never, Lord. This will never happen to you. What threw Peter into this temporary insanity of rebuking the one that he's just identified as God's Messiah, King, and Son?

Well, it was Jesus' words that he, the Messiah, would suffer and be killed. Killed by his enemies. You see, Peter had read his Bible.

[8:58] He knew better than that. Messiah doesn't lose. He triumphs over all his enemies. He doesn't suffer. Suffering is not on his agenda, but rather glory and honor and power belong to him.

He does not die. He lives and reigns forever and ever. This will never happen to you, Lord Jesus. Jesus. So who's right?

Jesus or Peter? Well, I'm betting on Jesus. But that's easy for us to say from our perspective living after the cross.

What caused Peter to come to this conclusion that Messiah would never suffer and die? And let's remember, Peter wasn't alone in this opinion.

The twelve held the same opinion as him. None of them had a clue what Jesus was talking about by suffering and dying.

[9:56] And the prevailing understanding of Messiah at that day was that he's coming to reign and to put down all his enemies under his feet. And they had plenty of Bible verses in support of the glory and the glorious reign of King Jesus.

Indeed, many of the Psalms spoke of it. Just listen to Psalm 72 that's pointing to this coming king that God will send. He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon through all generations. He'll be like the rain on a moaned field, like showers watering the earth. And in his days, the righteous will flourish. Prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.

He'll rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust.

All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. All nations will be blessed through him and they will call him blessed. Now that's enough to make any Israelites mouth drool.

[11:04] As they are expecting this coming king. And especially as they find themselves under the heel of Gentile nations. And their oppressive governments and bondage to them.

Such as the Assyrians, the Babylonians, Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. The glory days are coming when our king comes. And they sang these Psalms in their homes.

They sang them in the synagogue. They sang them at the feast in Jerusalem. This was part of their whole mindset of expectation. Of looking forward to the coming king.

Furthermore, nearly all the prophets foretold the glorious reign of Messiah. Indeed, these were the promises that kept hope alive in the hearts of the righteous.

The faithful. As they were undergoing the upheaval and bondage of other nations. Messiah is coming to reign in glory and he'll destroy all his and our enemies.

[12:04] Hip, hip, hooray. Long live the king. And their messianic excitement caused them to read right over all the other Bible passages.

That spoke about the suffering and death of Messiah. Hold your place here and turn over to Luke 24. It's just three days after the crucifixion and the disciples.

They've been on a roller coaster of an emotional ride over the last week. Just a week earlier, messianic excitement was at an all-time high as Jesus rode into Jerusalem with the crowd shouting and proclaiming him to be king of the Jews.

They thought that he would at once defeat the Romans and exalt the Jews. Set up his throne in Jerusalem and bring in the glorious reign of God's long-promised kingdom. And even his disciples were caught up in the hysteria.

Even though the closer they got to Jerusalem, the more that Jesus talked about his suffering and his death. Even his crucifixion that awaited him there.

[13:14] Over and over and over, he told them what was awaiting him there. But it went in one ear and right out the other. They didn't understand what he was talking about.

All they could think and talk about was who is the greatest. And who's going to have the seats of greatest honor in his kingdom? Because as we get to Jerusalem, he's going to set up his kingdom. We're just days away from it.

Who's going to be able to sit in the highest seats of honor? And seven days tick off the calendar and the messianic expectations are now at an all-time low.

All the air of excitement was gone from their balloon. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ took care of that. And so here are these two disciples of Jesus.

And they're walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, talking all about it. And their faces give away the condition of their heart. Their faces were downcast. They were sad.

[14:12] And then the risen Lord draws alongside of them. But they're kept from recognizing him. And he asks them, what are you talking about? Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem in these days that you don't understand what's happened there?

What things? Well, about Jesus of Nazareth, they tell him. Isn't it a precious moment? They're talking about Jesus, to Jesus, but they don't know it is Jesus.

What things? About Jesus of Nazareth, they said. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death.

And they crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

Notice they speak of their hope in the past tense.

We had hoped that he was the one. That he was the redeemer king who was coming to save Israel. But that hope was now dead and gone because Jesus was dead and gone.

[15:20] And everybody knows that Messiah cannot die. He must live and reign gloriously forever. And they tell him, and what's more, it's the third day.

And some of our women went to the tomb, but him they did not find. But nobody has seen him.

They saw a vision of some angels that said he was alive, but no one has seen him.

And how our Lord kept from smiling at this point and giving it away, I don't know. But he said to them, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? You've been guilty of selected reading of the scriptures.

If you'd paid attention and believed all that the prophets said, then you wouldn't, you would have known that the agenda for Messiah was to suffer first and then the glory.

[16:30] Yes, you noticed the glory passages of the Messiah, but you read right over the suffering passages about him. And I wonder, have we ever done the same?

Have we not done the same? We have a tendency as well, don't we, to see in the scriptures what we want to see? Our preconceived ideas can lead us to selective reading of the scriptures.

We can do this on a host of different topics where we only see the verses that agree with our thoughts and our desires. And we miss the whole list of other verses in the scriptures that balance out and give us the full picture of the mind of God on the matter.

Well, those verses don't fit in our box. And so we don't know what to do with them and we just read over them. Oh, I've done it. I've done it for years.

And the disciples had done it for years as well. How many only read a few favorite passages of the Bible?

[17:42] They never break out of those books of the Bible. And so they suffer from partial exposure to the mind of God rather than reading the whole counsel of God.

Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Everything profitable for us. Oh, yes. The disciples, they're guilty of selective reading.

And because of it, Peter would say, this will never happen to you, Lord. So what does Jesus do? Verse 27, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

Not only the glory passages, but also the suffering and death passages. And he had plenty of those passages as well to point to. Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken?

They had just heard those words from the cross if they were close enough to hear them. Why are you so far from saving me? So far from the words of my groaning.

[18:46] All who see me mock me. They hurl insults, shaking their heads. I'm poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My strength is dried up like a pot's herd and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.

You lay me in the dust of death. And then there's those suffering servant passages in Isaiah's prophecies. I offered my back to those who beat me. My cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. There were many who were appalled at him. His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man. And his form marred beyond human likeness.

He was despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with suffering. He was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. And the punishment that brought us peace was upon him. And by his wounds we are healed. He was oppressed and afflicted. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

[19:45] He was cut off from the land of the living. He was assigned a grave with the wicked and with the rich. In his death he poured out his life unto death. Many, many verses in the Old Testament about his suffering.

And no doubt also he opened up the verses on his resurrection and ascension and coronation in heaven and glorious reign. And while he's explaining all these scriptures about Messiah.

Their hearts are burning within them. They've got holy heartburn as someone has called it. Why? Hope is returning.

You see. Excitement is growing. As they come to see from the scripture. That Jesus' death on the cross does not disqualify him from being the Messiah.

But rather it qualifies him. That's exactly what we were told to expect that God's suffering servant would do. And how he would save his people.

[20:51] First the sufferings. Then the glory. That insight into scripture changed everything for the disciples. Turned their sadness into joy.

And excitement. And later that same evening of the resurrection. Jesus did for the rest of the twelve what he did for the two on the road to Emmaus. He appeared to them.

And verse 44 says, This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that's written about me in the law of Moses. The prophets and the Psalms.

And he opened up their minds so that they could understand the scriptures. And told them this is what is written. The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.

So the predicted agenda of Messiah in the Old Testament is that it's sufferings first. And then glory afterwards. Now turn back to our passage in Matthew chapter 16.

[21:54] Where our Lord has just said himself this very same thing. That he's headed into suffering. Yes he is the Messiah. The son of God as Peter has said.

And yes he is heading into suffering. And even death in Jerusalem. That's the agenda for the king. He has an appointment with the cross. And then Jesus gives the agenda for the king's children. And we notice how remarkably similar it is to the king's agenda.

For he says in verse 24. Then he said to his disciples. If anyone would come after me. He must deny himself and take up his cross. And follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for me will find it. So here's the king heading up to Jerusalem.

[22:50] He's got an appointment on the cross. And he says anybody who's following me. Anybody who will come after me. Is going to need his own cross. Too.

Not to beautify his neck with. For a cross at that point in history. Was not a piece of jewelry that represented Christianity. It meant one thing. It was the instrument of torture and death.

That the Romans used. The cross was an instrument of death. And Jesus says. Men if you're going to follow me. You're going to need your own cross. To die upon. And so the Christian life begins with a death.

Come and die. As Jesus called to discipleship. You're going to need a cross to die. It begins with death. Death to self. Death to the old man. Death to the old master.

Death to the world. And it's followed by a series of death. That the Christian dies daily. And for many it meant physical death.

[23:52] Indeed. All these listening to him. Except for Judas who killed himself. And John who was. Exiled to the island of Patmos. All of them met with a martyr's death.

It was. Death to follow Jesus. Jesus. So the master's agenda is suffering. And then glory. And for the children of the king.

It's suffering. In this phase. Of the kingdom. So let no one expect. That belonging to the kingdom of God. Exempts you from suffering. And from the cross. The agenda for the king.

Is the same agenda for his citizens. Suffering is now glory. To follow. And so in his kingdom manifesto. Of the sermon on the mount.

Jesus says. Blessed are those who are persecuted. Because of righteousness. For theirs is the kingdom. Of heaven. It's one of the marks. Of those who.

[24:51] Are kingdom kids. Kingdom children. They belong to the kingdom of righteousness. And in this world. They're persecuted. Because of righteousness. They're insulted.

And they're slandered. Because of me. The king says. It all comes with the territory. In this stage. Of my kingdom. You're not yet. In the new heavens. In the new earth. The home of righteousness. In the new earth. So. Dear Christian. Remember who you are following. The crucified one. And remember where you are following him.

In the world. That crucified him. So don't expect. Different treatment. From the same world. Isn't that what Jesus said? If the world.

Hates you. Keep in mind. It hated me first. If you belong to the world. It would love you as its own. As it is. You do not belong to the world. But I have chosen you. Out of the world. That's why the world hates you.

[25:48] The servant is not greater. Than his master. If they have persecuted me. They will persecute you. You see. This stage of the kingdom. Christ reigns.

In his people's hearts. In the midst. Of his enemies. And so suffering. Is on the agenda. For the children.

For the children. Of the kingdom. Now eventually. Peter. Comes to understand. These two phases. Of the kingdom. He quit reading over. The suffering.

Death passages. And he came to realize. That. Yes. Messiah must suffer. And die. And he came to see. That the same is true. Of his followers. There is suffering.

Before there is. Glory. And that those. Two aspects. Of the kingdom. Follow from. The two. Comings of the king. That from the. First coming.

[26 : 45] Of the king. Until his second coming. Is the. Period of his kingdom. Where there is suffering. And it's only. At his return. That the full glory.

Of his kingdom. Will be experienced. So you go to. First Peter. And you see. The very first chapter. He says. Speaking to his fellow.

Citizens of the kingdom. In this you greatly rejoice. Though now for a little while. You. Have had to suffer grief. In all kinds of trials. Right now.

It's grief. Suffering. All kinds of trials. These have come. So that your faith. Of greater worth than gold. Which perishes. Even though refined by fire. May be proved genuine.

And may result in praise. Glory. And honor. When Jesus Christ. Is revealed. Suffering. Grief. Now.

[27 : 40] Must be that way. Praise. Honor. And glory. When Jesus. Is revealed. And then he says. In verses 10 and 11. As he's talking about.

The prophets. The Old Testament prophets. And the spirit of Christ. Which was in them. Predicted. The sufferings. Of Christ. And the glories. That would follow.

Follow. You see. Peter got it. Didn't he? The sufferings. Of Christ. And. The glories. That would follow. And so.

Because Christ. Now reigns. In the midst. Of his enemies. Suffering. Is the present reality. For children. Of the king. Glory. Awaits us. At his return. So what? What's the application.

Then of this principle. That I've. Wanted to. Hammer home. To you this morning. Well. A right. Understanding. Of these two stages. Of the kingdom.

[28 : 37] Will do this for us. Number one. It will prepare us. For suffering. Now. In the kingdom. Of God. First Peter. Chapter four. You know. That that letter.

First Peter. Is all about suffering. Isn't it? And. And. And. Peter. recognizes that. Agenda. In his. King. And he says. It's. It goes for us. Who are following.

In his footsteps. And. He comes to chapter. Four. And he says. In verses. Twelve. And thirteen. Dear friends. Do not be. Do not be surprised. You see.

If we understand. The two phases. Of the kingdom. We will not. Be surprised. At the painful. Trial. You are suffering. As though something. Strange. Were happening to you.

No. Rejoice. That you. Participate. In the sufferings. Of Christ. So that you may be. Overjoyed. When his glory. Is revealed. There are sufferings. That you will endure.

[29 : 30] In this life. Simply because. You're a Christian. And. You follow the rules. Of the king. And you love the king. And you. You love his word. And you love his day. And you love his people.

And you love his worship. And you love his laws. And you love his gospel. And. And you live in a world. That hates all those things. And so. Don't be surprised.

And treat suffering. As something strange. Rather expect it. Expect it.

Suffering is now. Glory. To come. So if you're a Christian. And you're suffering. Many things.

Temptations. And persecutions. And difficulties. It doesn't mean. You're not in the kingdom.

It doesn't mean. That Jesus is not now reigning. It just means. We're still in the suffering. Phase of the kingdom. We're not yet. In phase two. And the glory is to come.

[30 : 27] We've got to wait. For our best things. And so. Have you come to grips. With the agenda. Of the kingdom. In this present age. The king sets the agenda. For all of his citizens.

Sufferings now. Glories later. The cross now. The crown. Later. For if we suffer with him. We will also reign with him.

And we are co-heirs with Christ. If indeed. We share in his suffering. In order that we may also share in his glory. Yet how hard it is.

For this. Ease seeking flesh. To be reconciled. To this agenda. Of Christ's kingdom. Weakness. Hardship. Suffering.

Trials. Persecution. Insults. Warfare. Sickness. Death. These things don't sit well with us. We would rather have glory now. And suffering never.

[31 : 24] The crown now. And the cross. Never. But this cannot be. It's not God's way. With his kingdom people. Indeed. It's not his way. With his king.

His son. King. As one Puritan. Used to say. And our brother Dennis Hoskins. Loved to quote it. God had one son.

Without sin. But no son. Without suffering. Even his own son. And so Hebrews 5.8 says. Although he was a son.

He learned obedience. From what he suffered. And Hebrews 2.10 says. It was fitting. That God should make the author. Of our salvation. Perfect. Through suffering. So when you think. You've had more than your share. Of suffering. And hardship. Remember the lot. Of the king of glory. He who deserves. The praises of angels. Receives the mocking.

[32 : 20] Taunts of men. And the rightful heir. To the crown of David. And the crown of glory. And the crown of glory. And instead of the crown of glory. Was lifted up on a crown.

A cross of shame. So let us. The citizens of God's kingdom. Be satisfied. To walk in the footsteps. Of our king. Let it be your comfort.

That your king. Has been this way before you. Indeed it is his way. Of preparing you. For glory. It's always been.

That the way of the cross. Leads home. And only then. Will we trade in our cross. For a glorious crown. A crown won. For us.

At the cross. Of our dying king. So a right understanding. Of these two stages. Of the kingdom of God. God will prepare us.

[33 : 17] Right now. For suffering. In the kingdom. Secondly. It will keep us. From expecting now. What Christ has reserved. For his second coming. It will keep us.

From expecting now. What he's reserved. For his second coming. The health. Wealth. And prosperity teaching. Is an error. Concerning the kingdom of God.

It's a failure. To distinguish. Between phase one. And phase two. Of the kingdom. It's demanding now. What has only been promised. To us later.

So yes. The Bible promises. Health. Wealth. And prosperity. For those who are in the kingdom of God. Our king. Our king has purchased. All those blessings. For us.

For us. At the renewal. Of all things. When Jesus returns. And puts all his enemies. Under his feet. Then Satan. And sin. And the world. And disease.

[34 : 12] And suffering. And death. And the curse. Will be gone forever. And so. In keeping with his promise. We are looking forward. To a new heaven. And a new earth. The home of righteousness.

And then. And there. It will be. Pure. Health. Wealth. And prosperity. Like we've never known. Before. Unparalleled.

Health. Uninterrupted. Unending. Health. And wealth. And prosperity. In every way. But not yet. You see. There's the error.

Not yet. You see. When Jesus came to the earth. And he healed everyone. That. Those healing miracles. Was not setting. The new norm.

For the kingdom of God. As if from here on out. There's. Healing. For every sickness. And disease. No.

[35 : 10] His healings. Were a foretaste. Of the blessings. To come. When he returns. And sets up. His kingdom. In its final form. Only then. Will there be no more death.

Mourning. Crying. Or pain. Or the diseases. That cause those things. So you see. Rightly understanding. The two stages. Of the kingdom of God. Will keep us from modern.

The modern false teaching. About healing. That it's always God's will. For us to be healed. That we have. Kingdom authority. And power. Over all sickness.

And disease. If only we'll claim it. By faith. It's an over realized. Eschatology. It's expecting now. What will only. Be experienced.

At the return. Of our king. And in the end. It's a cruel doctrine. Because it raises. The expectations. Of believers. Above what is warranted. Only to have them.

[36 : 03] Dashed. With the realities. Of their ongoing sickness. And disease. And death. And thinking. All the while. That it must be my fault. For not having.

Strong enough faith. To name it. And to claim it. Well that doesn't hold up. To the scriptures. And their portrayal. Of the kingdom. In its present form.

There's the apostle Paul. And he says. To keep me from becoming conceited. There was given. To me. A thorn in my flesh. A messenger of Satan. To buffet me. And most commentators think.

A thorn in the flesh. It was some physical affliction. And three times. I pleaded with the Lord. To take it away from me. But he said. No. No.

My grace is sufficient. For you. For my power. Is made perfect. In weakness. You see. God's will. Was to leave. The affliction. In Paul's side.

[37:01] And to do him good. By it. To keep him. Low. Because of his many revelations. That he'd received from God. And to bring Christ's glory.

By showing his power. Through Paul's weakness. There was no name it. And claim it. With the apostle. And then there's Trophimus.

A valued fellow servant. Of Paul. And he was sidelined. From his normal gospel labors. Because of sickness. And Paul doesn't just say.

It's just a matter of. Having enough faith. To claim the kingdom power. Over disease. No. He writes. In 2nd Timothy 4. 20. I left Trophimus. Sick. At my leaders.

I left him sick. There. And then there's Timothy. Paul's son in the faith. Valued co-worker. I have no one else like him. Who takes a genuine interest. In your welfare.

[37:58] And yet. When afflicted. With stomach problems. And chronic poor health. Paul does not tell him. Just to pray. And claim the healing. That Jesus won at the cross. But tries to help him cope with it.

Knowing that it's not always God's will. To heal us in this phase of the kingdom. So use a little wine. For the stomach's sake. And for your frequent illnesses. 1st Timothy 5.

23. These are just. Several examples. That point out. That the kingdom of God. Has not yet reached. Its finalized. Perfected. Stage. When there will be no more sickness.

And no more health. Yes. Christ by his wounds. Has healed even that for us. And will experience that aspect. When he returns. But this is the kingdom.

In its already. But not yet. Phase. Already. The kingdom is established. But it is not yet perfected. Perfected. Everything is not yet.

[38:53] As it will be. When our king comes. And all his enemies. Are under his feet. I know the same thing. Could be applied. To all teaching. About sinless perfection. That in this life.

We can arrive. To a certain level. Of sanctification. Where we no longer sin. Yes. The blood of Jesus. Has power. And will never lose. Its power.

Until all the ransomed. Church of God. Are saved to sin no more. But that's not here. That's when our king returns. And we see him face to face. And we're made like him.

You see how an understanding. Of the kingdom of God. Coming in two stages. At the two comings. Of Christ the king. Will save us. From false expectations. Concerning health.

And wealth. And prosperity. And perfection. And then thirdly. It will keep us. Expecting victory. Out of weakness. And suffering.

[39:47] If we understand. The kingdom. As Jesus taught it. Will keep. It will keep us. Expecting victory.

Out of weakness. And out of suffering. We go to. The king. And what do we see there? Calvary looked like.

Nothing but defeat. When in fact. It was the greatest victory. Any king gave to his people. He won for us. At Calvary.

Everlasting salvation. From hell to heaven. He disarmed Satan. He plundered his kingdom.

Through his weakness. And his death. That's the way of the kingdom.

In this phase. Our king. Conquered. By dying. And his followers. Triumph. By dying. Many deaths.

[40:44] Calvin reminds us. That Jesus is building. His kingdom. In a way that illustrates. That death is the way to life. And the cross. Is the way to victory.

That was not only true of him. It's true of his kingdom. Of his people. Strength through weakness. Victory through suffering. Life through death.

Indeed. His present reign on earth. Is so hidden. People can't see him. So. So hidden. Is our king's reign now. That some people.

Actually conclude. That he's not reigning. Yet. Oh. But though he hides himself. So wondrously. He's on the field. When he's most invisible. And when he seems to be losing.

He's really winning. Then learn to scorn. The praise of men. And learn to lose with God. For Jesus won the world. Through shame. And beckons thee.

[41:39] His road. Grab your cross. And follow me. Frederick Faber's words. So don't lose sight of your reigning king.

That's the final application here. Fix your eyes on Jesus. You say. Well how do you do that? How do you see Jesus as reigning? Where is he today? Remember.

Having endured the cross. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. And how do you see him there? By faith. Faith. Faith. In God's word.

Enables you. To penetrate the clouds. When he ascended. They could see him no more. Because he went up. And a cloud received him. But what does faith do? Faith in the word of God. Let's you penetrate that cloud.

And let's you see behind the scenes. What's. Really happening. It seems like chaos. It seems like evil is winning. But by faith in God's word.

[42 : 38] We see that our king is seated. On the throne. He is now ruling. In the hearts of his people. In the midst of his enemies. He's coming back. And all of his enemies.

Will be crushed. Beneath his feet. You see. Seeing him now crowned. With glory and honor. Makes all the difference. In how we endure suffering.

In this present part of the kingdom. We endure knowing. It's no strange thing happening to us. We endure suffering. Knowing that though evil seems off so strong.

Our Lord is reigning. Yet. It's the devil's propaganda. To make us doubt the present reign of our Lord Jesus. The devil is out to steal our comfort.

And our joy. And our peace. And so he would have us forget. He would have us just look at what we see. Oh pitiful view. When we're just looking with our own eyes.

[43 : 36] Isn't it? When with the eyes of faith. We behold him seated upon the father's throne. Ruling over all things for our good. Extending his scepter and his kingdom.

Through Zion. His church. Then our hearts thrill. Even in the midst of suffering. Whatever is happening to me.

Or around me. It's all under the reign. Of my king. The Lord reigns. As our brother Jeff Thomas reminds us.

That's the shortest bridge. From despair to hope. Some of you despairing. With suffering. And troubles. And persecutions.

All kinds of afflictions. That come upon us. In this phase of the kingdom. The shortest bridge. From despair to hope. Is to lift your eyes up.

[44 : 35] And see Jesus. Seated upon the throne. Reigning for you. And because he reigns. He will rescue me.

From every evil attack. And will bring me safely. To his heavenly kingdom. Rejoice. The Lord. His king. We sing it. Number 226.

Let's pray. Our father. We thank you. For sending your son. To be our king and savior. We thank you. That he has been. In this same world. Where we live.

And he has experienced. Its hatred. And he has experienced. Suffering. And everything. That we ourselves. Are going through. And yet he has triumphed.

Over it all. And that for us. In not only suffering. From men. But suffering your own wrath. That we deserve. We thank you. For our savior. And what he has accomplished.

[45 : 31] In his weakness. And in his death. Upon Calvary. Thank you. For raising him. From the dead. And seating him. At your own right hand. Thank you. That even here and now.

In the midst of our sufferings. We have reason to rejoice. Because Christ. Our Christ. Our king. Is now reigning.

And he has said that. He will not let anything happen to us. But what will work. For our ultimate good. And for that glory. That he is preparing. So then lift up our eyes.

And help us to see him. And help us to fix our eyes. On that blessed hope. The glorious appearing. Of our great God and savior. And until then. Teach us what it is.

To be rejoicing. Even in suffering. For Jesus prays. Amen. Amen. Amen.