

The King's Last Words, Our Mission

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[0:00] Psalm 96. Psalm 96. We'll read the entire psalm. Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth.

Sing to the Lord. Praise his name. Proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations. His marvelous deeds among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols. But the Lord made the heavens.

Splendor and majesty are before him. Strength and glory are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Tremble before him all the earth.

[1:01] Say among the nations. The Lord reigns. The world is firmly established. It cannot be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice.

Let the earth be glad. Let the sea resound in all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy.

They will sing before the Lord. For he comes. He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness. And the peoples in his truth.

The Lord Jesus is a great king. And it's the highest privilege to call him mine.

To have him rule over me and to defend me. Now his coming in the Old Testament was constantly being announced to the people of Israel.

[1:59] He's coming. And then when he came. It's only in the New Testament that we come to understand that his coming would take place in actually two comings.

Indeed he came the first time to establish his kingdom in the hearts of his people. And he's coming back a second time to consummate his kingdom.

That is to complete it. To bring it to its final form. He began it and he's coming again to complete it. But what's going on in the meanwhile?

In between his two comings. It's been 2,000 years now. What is the great program of his kingdom? In this time between his two comings.

Well you see this does concern us. We live in this time frame, don't we? So what is the program that the king has during this time?

[3:06] Well let's turn to Acts chapter 1. And we'll see how our Lord Jesus sets out the program for his kingdom.

Between his two comings. And here we learn that there were 40 days between Christ's resurrection and his ascension into heaven where he was crowned by his father.

And we're told what he did during these 40 days. Notice verse 3 of Acts 1. After his suffering he showed himself to these men and he gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.

He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Now it does not say that he was with them constantly for 40 days between the resurrection and the ascension. I don't believe that's what we have here. Rather he appeared to them during that period of 40 days. He appeared to them at different times. We have some 10 appearances in the scriptures recorded for us.

[4:22] But the important thing here for us is to notice what was it that he was speaking to them about during those appearances after his resurrection.

Well we're told he was talking about the kingdom of God. The kingdom was his theme. That should not surprise us. For three and a half years the summary of Jesus' ministry.

He went around preaching what? The kingdom of God. Saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And so now after his death, burial and resurrection.

What do we find him doing with his 12 disciples? Here they're 11 now. What is he teaching them? About the kingdom. He's still at it.

And he's about to send them out to preach the same good news of the kingdom. You see there's only one gospel in the Bible and it's the gospel of the kingdom.

[5 : 25] It's the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus doesn't say, well the gospel of the kingdom was only for the Jews. And since they rejected it now, we need to find a different gospel for the Gentiles.

And when I come back, then we'll go back to preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the Jews.

When they're ready to receive me as king and let me reign for a thousand years in Jerusalem.

No, that's not what we find. He says the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in his name in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

And then the end will come. What's the message that's to be preached during this interval until the end? The gospel of the kingdom. One gospel for Jews and Gentiles alike.

The same good news for the same kingdom of God. Now verses 4 and 5 of Acts 1 tell us it's a kingdom empowered by the Holy Spirit of God.

[6 : 26] For on one of these occasions when he appeared to them, he commanded them. Verse 4, do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of my father, which you've heard me speak about.

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. And then came the last appearance of Jesus to his apostles.

I don't believe they had any idea that it was the last of his appearances. They were not expecting him to leave them. And we see that in the question that they ask him.

And we can well understand the question that they ask when we remember that for the space of 40 days, our Lord has been talking about the kingdom of God.

And about being baptized with the Holy Spirit in just a few days. The Old Testament prophets foretold the age of Messiah's glory as being days when the Holy Spirit is poured out.

[7 : 35] And Jesus says in a few days this is going to happen. You'll be baptized with the Spirit. It was a sign of the last days. So the question, verse 6 from the disciples.

When they met together, this is their last meeting with him. They asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?

Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Now there are two errors, two erroneous ideas that seem apparent in their question.

First of all, the timing of the kingdom. They think now is the time when Christ is going to reign in outward glory. You remember how surprised they were by the suffering and death of their Messiah. They could not imagine it for all the references in the Old Testament that spoke of his glory. But then after the resurrection, Jesus opened their minds and taught them from scriptures and showed them how that the Messiah must first suffer and then enter into his glory.

[8 : 51] So they think now, well, his sufferings are over. The cross and tomb are behind him. Then surely the glory days of Messiah's reign are here.

This must be it. And yes, he had told them that he had to go away and then return to them. But then had he not already gone away?

For three days he had been away. And then he had returned to them. And he's been speaking of his kingdom and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in just a few days.

So is this it? Are the glory days of the Messianic age going to happen now at this time? That's what they're thinking. Their other error had to do with the nature of the kingdom.

Not only the timing of the kingdom, but the nature of the kingdom. They still suffer from their political expectations of this kingdom. They think that the kingdom is about the exaltation of the nation of Israel.

[9 : 56] Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? It's been 600 years, Lord, that we've been without a Davidic king on the throne in Jerusalem.

Now here you are. Are you going to restore the kingdom in Israel and set up your throne in Jerusalem and rule here? They're not only wrong about the timing.

They're also wrong about the nature of the kingdom. And Jesus addresses both in his response in verses 7 and 8. First in 7, he addresses the timing of the kingdom.

He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Wrong question, men. Wrong focus. Not for you to know the times. Now, it was not the time for the glorious reign of Christ yet on the earth.

[10:58] But more importantly, he tells them the times and dates are none of their business. They have other kingdom business to tend to. And he gets right at it in verse 8.

And now he also corrects their misunderstanding about the nature of the kingdom. They think it's just for the nation of Israel. Notice his correction. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea.

And they would have been happy for him to stop right then. Because that was their sense of the kingdom. It's for Israel. It's ours. It's for the Jews. But of course, Jesus didn't stop there.

You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria. And to the ends of the earth. The kingdom is not something exclusive to the nation of Israel, as you're thinking.

It's rather for all the nations, for the ends of the earth. They still think the kingdom has to do with the overthrow of the Romans and Israel being restored to political greatness.

[12:07] But Jesus says, no, the way the kingdom advances is by the Holy Spirit-empowered witness of redeemed sinners. That's the business you are to tend to.

Tell people about Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, and what he's accomplished by it. John Calvin says he cures their morbid curiosity by recalling them to their present duty.

It's not for you to know the time. This is what's for you. To know that this gospel is to transcend Israel and is to go to the nations and gather the ends of the earth into my kingdom.

And as soon as he said that, he started floating away. Verse 9. He was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight. He's gone.

I don't believe they were expecting that. I believe they're totally surprised by that. And that would explain their paralyzed gawking upwards into the sky.

[13:15] As verse 10 tells us that they were looking up intently into the sky. And not only while he was going, but even after the cloud received him, they're still looking as it were shaking their heads and saying, What has just happened?

He's gone. He's left us. And two men suddenly appear in white robes and say, Men of Galilee, why do you stand there looking into the sky?

This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way you've seen him go into heaven. Don't just stand there gawking. Do something. Do what he told you to do.

Do. Anybody ever tell you to get with the program? I think that's what he's saying. These angels.

Get with the program. What is the program for the king during this time of his absence?

He's just laid it out for you men. To bear witness to the ends of the earth starting right here in Jerusalem. And not stopping until every nation has heard.

[14:30] And you know what they did? They went back into Jerusalem. And they waited there as they had been told to wait for the coming of the spirit.

And 10 days later, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them. And in his power, they bore witness to the gospel with great effect. And notice how Peter explains it all in chapter 2 and verse 33.

He explains it as the work of their ascended reigning king. He says of Christ in Acts 2.33. What's the explanation of what you've just seen here today?

In all of these followers of Jesus, speaking the praises of God in all these different languages that you can understand. Well, this is the explanation.

That Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God. He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. We sing that hymn for your gift of God the Spirit.

[15:36] Crowning gift of resurrection sent from your ascended throne. Exalted to the right hand of God. He receives the Spirit and as king pours out this regal gift upon his church.

So, we have the first act of our enthroned king. Equipping his people with the Holy Spirit. For what? For bearing witness to the ends of the earth. And it came with such power that 3,000 were swept into the kingdom in one day.

In the very city where seven weeks earlier Jesus Christ had been crucified. How's that for kingdom power and authority from Christ's throne?

His mighty scepter is being extended from Zion. And from there it will go forth and gather in the nations. So, our king's last words while he was on earth.

[16 : 39] And his first act once he was enthroned in heaven. All, both combined to make plain. What is the program for the kingdom until he returns?

Is this. The expansion of the kingdom to the ends of the earth. Kingdom expansion. That's this age that you and I find ourselves living in.

That's the program. The agenda for the king and his kingdom. The Lord Jesus talked about his kingdom in parables, didn't he?

Some of you are getting ready to plant your garden. And Jesus used the garden as a parable for his kingdom. And he says the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed planted in a field.

And though it is the smallest of your garden plants or seeds, yet when it grows, it becomes the largest of your garden plants. So, tiny seed goes in the ground.

[17 : 47] And before it's done, it turns into a virtual tree that the birds of the air nest in. And that was symbolic Old Testament language for the nations.

The birds are the nations that take refuge in the kingdom. And so, my kingdom starts out like the tiny seed. But it must expand.

It can't stay confined. It must expand until it is a tree that encompasses the nations. Or that dream in Daniel portraying the kingdom of God as a rock that was cut out of the mountain, but not with human hands.

And then the rock comes tumbling down into the valley and it just smashes to dust this idol that represents all the kingdoms of the world. And the wind blows and there's nothing left but the rock.

And then before your eyes and your dream, you see this rock start to grow. And it grows and it grows until it's a mighty mountain. And it keeps growing until it fills the whole earth.

[18 : 48] Kingdom expansion. You cannot keep it locked up. You cannot keep God's grace in one nation, Israel.

It must overflow to all peoples of every nation to the ends of the earth. You cannot bottle up this love of God any more than you can bottle up the Niagara Fall and put it into one gallon jar.

You can't confine it to one nation, Israel. Well, kingdom expansion is built into the kingdom from its very beginning. Now think with me. Where did the kingdom start?

Where was it first established? Well, it was within the nation of Israel, wasn't it? Even though the nation as a whole rejected him as king, it was with believing Jews that his kingdom on earth began. As Israelites trusted in him as their long-promised king. He established his kingdom in their hearts. And we American Christians must remember that our king is a Jew.

[19 : 57] As to his human nature, he is a descendant of Abraham. The very first words of our New Testament established that fact.

He's a descendant of Abraham, the father of Israel. Our Messiah is a Jew.

He was born in Israel. He preached and ministered in Israel. And so the original citizens of his kingdom were almost entirely Israelites, believing Jews.

Oh, but it was never meant to stay that way. I say it was never meant. Because 700 years before Christ's birth, Isaiah prophesies.

And he gives us God's own words addressed to his son. And he says to his son, It's too small a thing for you to be my servant to gather those from Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles.

[20 : 57] That you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. To the ends of the earth. To the ends of the earth. Where do we hear that echoed?

The day of his ascension. And he says, You will be my witnesses into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria. To the ends of the earth. You see, it's always been intended.

It was inclusion of the Gentiles. It was not a plan B that God suddenly scrapped together when Israel rejected him as king. It was always plan A to include the nations in God's kingdom.

When God first chose the father of this nation, Abraham. He said, Through your seed, all nations on earth will be blessed. That's its intention from the very get-go.

Now he did it through Israel's rejection, but he did not do it because of their rejection. What I mean is it was his eternal plan to do it this way. The smallest seed was always intended to grow.

[22 : 05] Until it filled the earth and encompassed the nations. So there's a decided change in the program for the kingdom of God. That takes place after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

There's a shift in the program. It's a new day in the kingdom. No longer is the kingdom to remain within the nation of Israel alone. It's now to include all nations.

Yes, to the Jew first. But also to the non-Jew. The Gentiles. And that shift can be seen clearly in the Gospel of Matthew. You remember that day that Jesus had the Canaanite woman come to him seeking mercy for her demon-possessed daughter.

And I'm sure we were all surprised when we first read Jesus' response. I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now he eventually does heal her daughter.

But that's his answer. I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then in Matthew chapter 10, Jesus sends out the 12 disciples.

[23 : 16] To do what? To preach the gospel of the kingdom. To who? Listen. Do not go among the Gentiles. Don't go to the Gentiles.

Or enter any town of the Samaritans. Don't go there. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. Matthew 10, 5 and 6. See, you see the program for the kingdom while Jesus was here?

Only to the house of Israel. And then we come to the last verses of Matthew. And Jesus says, Go and make disciples of the nations.

There's been a shift. The risen, resurrected, soon to be glorified in heaven king is saying, No more. Don't go. He's now saying, Go. Go everywhere. To all people. And gather them into my kingdom. The age of the kingdom's advance to all nations is this time period in which you and I have been pleased to live.

[24 : 26] Between his first coming and his second coming. And that's good news for us. How many of us would be in the kingdom if it remained in Israel alone? How many of you are non-Jews?

Oh, how kind that God has said that we too can belong to this kingdom of his. Paul told the Greek pagans in Athens that in the past, God let this world go on and let the nations go on in their superstitions and idolatry and ignorance.

He let it go. But now, now he commands all people everywhere to repent. You see, there's a shift in the strategy of the kingdom of God.

No longer for Israel alone. All people everywhere. You must repent. The king has been raised from the dead. And he's given witness that there will be a day of judgment by raising the king from the dead.

But how does the kingdom advance to all nations? Well, it advances by the gospel chariot. Repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be preached in his name to all nations.

[25 : 57] That's it. The gospel preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is as the message of the gospel is proclaimed that God's kingdom is advanced to the ends of the earth.

So the kingdom grows one sinner at a time. Or 3,000 sinners at a time as it was at Pentecost. But one sinner at a time as they are supernaturally converted by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bringing them to new birth so that as the gospel is preached, they hear it and repent and believe and bow to King Jesus. Trusting in him and serving him.

And obeying everything that he has commanded. You know, that's how the gospel kingdom advances. As sinners are transplanted out of Satan's kingdom, they're transplanted into the kingdom of God's dear son.

You know, that's why he transplanted you into his kingdom. That's why you belong to the people of God. So that you may declare the praises of him. Who'd called you out of the darkness and put you into his wonderful light.

[27 : 19] So we seek to bring application then from these words. We've seen the program of the kingdom. You who claim Christ as your king and you're living in this period between his first and second coming.

You've seen the program. Kingdom expansion to the ends of the world. It's what our king's doing and that's what he expects his kingdom on earth to be doing.

It's what he expects us to be about. And when he returns, he will ask us, what did you do with my last command? What did you do with the program for the day?

You see, these are the marching orders of the king of kings. He demands our involvement in this expansion of the kingdom to the ends of the earth. And I want you to be ready to answer. And I want myself to be ready to answer.

And I want to hear as you want to hear from our king. Well done. Good and faithful servant. I don't want to be one of those slothful servants who hid his talent in the ground and did nothing.

[28 : 29] You wicked and lazy servant, he said to him. No, I want to make sure that my life is in line with the program of the kingdom in this age.

So let me give to you at least three ways to advance the kingdom. We advance the kingdom with our witness. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and on out to the end of the age. I'll make you my witnesses. I'll make you my witnesses. My witnesses who tell what you've seen. Who tell what this king has done for you. Tell about who he is and how he saves. I wonder if there should not be, if it should be the case that no one from our church goes to the ends of the earth, to other nations, to tell them about our Savior. But if you cannot cross the ocean and the heathen land explore, you can find the heathen nearer. You can help them at your door.

[29 : 34] So what about the nearer heathen? The lost around you. Will you tell them about your Lord? Will you invite them to come and to hear the gospel?

Wherever you go, you're representing the king. You go to school. You go to work. You talk to the neighbor in the backyard. You're representing the king. You're in the park. You're involved in outdoor activities during the spring. Yes, you're there to have fun and unwind and relax. But you're also there as a representative of the king. Whatever happens, conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel. This is the agenda. This is the program. Bearing witness that the kingdom of God might spread from your heart to another heart.

There Christ might be crowned and served. We're on the king's business wherever we go. So be looking for opportunities to speak of your king.

[30 : 36] The kingdom advances with our lips. Bearing witness to Christ. What if nobody in the kingdom bore witness more than you are? How much witness would be born?

Oh, somebody else is surely doing it. No, no. You have tasted the riches of his grace. You can say with a man born blind, one thing I know. I was blind, but now I see. And Jesus did it. If you know enough about Jesus to be saved, you know enough about Jesus to tell somebody else how to be saved. And so we advance the kingdom with our lips. And you can say to any boy or girl or man or woman, I have good news for you. Jesus Christ saved sinners. He saved me. But the kingdom not only advances with our mouths. It also advances with our prayers.

[31 : 36] Secondly, our king has taught us to pray. And when we pray, this is how we're to pray. Your kingdom come. Are you praying that way? Are you praying for this grand kingdom that Christ came to establish and one day he'll come to complete?

Are you praying for it to come? If somebody listened into your prayers, how often would they hear you praying for the kingdom of God to come and to expand from your heart to the hearts of others? Your kingdom come. Your will be done. And so we pray for the kingdom of God to come with power to our own hearts and to the hearts of other people. For the Holy Spirit to quicken them to new life. And for the enemies of the king to have their hearts pierced. And to have them convicted of sin. And to have them cry out to the Lord Jesus. And bow and serve and trust him. Obey him. We pray for that. Because it's only by prayer that the hidden power of the Holy Spirit is laid hold of.

[32 : 45] And here's the wonderful fact about prayer and kingdom advancement. You don't have to be in Eldoret, Kenya to advance the kingdom in Eldoret, Kenya. You don't have to be in France to advance the kingdom of God in France. You can do it from the prayer meeting of the church. You can do it in the closet of your own home. As there you lay hold of the throne that rules the universe. And has Eldoret, Kenya in his hands. You see. So by prayer we seek the advancement of the kingdom. Out to the ends of the earth. Are you praying for your missionaries? Are you praying for the preaching of the gospel here? Are you praying for the witness of each other to your acquaintances? If no one prayed for kingdom advancement more than you.

[33 : 50] How much praying would be getting done? The harvest is great, Jesus says. But the workers are so few. What are you to do about that problem? That inequality? Pray. Ask the Lord of the harvest that he would send out workers into his harvest field. Yes. That's how advance takes place. We advance the kingdom on our knees.

And lastly. Not only our witness, our prayers, but our money. It costs money to support ministers. It costs money to support missionaries.

And mission projects. But would you not agree that money spent to advance the kingdom of God is some of your best invested money?

Your best invested money. Because it is laying up for you treasures in heaven. Where moth and rust do not corrupt and thieves do not break through and steal.

[34:49] It's the best of investments. It's the best of investments. Kingdom advancement. Because through that money you are able to get the gospel in contact with sinners.

And to keep the gospel in contact with sinners. The only gospel that could save them. So that they would be able to be singing 10,000 years from now of God's wondrous grace.

And only having begun. If you lost your checkbook with the finder in reading your records. Discover that the kingdom of God is a priority with you.

What about your tax preparer? You see that the kingdom is to be advanced with our funds, our monies. So with our witness, with our prayers, with our monies, we seek the advancement of this kingdom.

That's the program. That's the mission. The last words of our king. The first act of the enthroned king. To pour out the spirit to enable this to happen.

[36:00] So how is the kingdom of God being advanced? Through your witness, your prayers, and your money. Our king is urging us to get with the program.

We can't have a limited local view of the kingdom of God. If we've heard what Jesus has said. It's not just me and my family and my church.

No, we cannot live in this period between the coming of Christ and his second coming without a global view of the kingdom. We have to lift up our eyes and look on the harvest.

The kingdom encompasses all peoples of the planet. And that means we've got to be concerned. We've got to bear a heart concern for people that we have never met.

That we will never see. We've got to spend some of our money on those kinds of people. Some of our prayers on those kinds of people that we've never seen before.

[37:06] Because the kingdom is not to stay in our Jerusalem. It's to go to the ends of the earth. It's to include all nations.

Now it's true that our nation is one of the nations, isn't it? So we will aim and work to make disciples for Jesus Christ right here in this place.

This is no small part of our labors, of our prayers, of our budget. The kingdom needs to advance right here. This is one of the nations to which Jesus wants to advance his kingdom.

But we dare not stop here. That's what we see. The king's heart embraces all nations. And so must ours. And if it does, it will mean that seeing God's kingdom come to the nations must have a part in our giving of finances.

And that's why one out of three dollars, one out of every three dollars that comes in to the offerings here, eventually makes it to ministry elsewhere, beyond this church.

[38:21] Because we must keep our focus global, beyond us, not Jerusalem, but on out into all Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

And it means that our prayers must have longer arms than only for ourselves. We pray your kingdom come, your will be done where? On earth.

Now, Bremen is part of the earth, and so we're right to pray your kingdom come and your will be done here in Bremen. And there in Plymouth, yes. And in Mishawaka, yes.

We must pray for the kingdom of God to come. But to come to the earth, to the ends of the earth. We dare not stop in our praying just for us.

We want the whole world to hear of our precious Savior. You say, I don't know who they are. I don't know. Well, you can read about them. You know there's a lot of information. You can read about them.

[39:23] But the important thing to realize is that they ought to be precious to you because they're precious to Christ. His blood has purchased men for God from all the nations.

So for the sake of your love for Jesus, pray. Pray to our King. He deserves to be acknowledged over there too. And so we pray, pity the nations, O our God.

Constrain the lost to come. Send forth. Send thy victorious word abroad and bring the strangers home. We long to see your churches full. We long to see this church full.

That's part of what it means to reach the nations, this nation, this place. We want to see this church full. We want to see other churches planted elsewhere. But we pray for all of the churches of Christ to be full around the world.

There's no such thing as a healthy Christian or a healthy church that's out of touch with the worldwide expansion of the kingdom. That's the program for the current day.

[40:28] And it's love for the King that moves our hearts to expand His kingdom. So rise up, O Church of God. Have done with lesser things.

Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of kings. A lot of lesser things to be done with. Piddly things.

Temporal things. That somehow come and choke out kingdom advancement. Oh, give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of kings.

Now some of you may be listening this morning and you say, You know, all this really just right over the top of me. I'm really not interested in kingdom advancement. You know, that could be the biggest indicator that you're not in the kingdom.

That you have no heart for the King and the advancement of His kingdom. That means that this spiritual war is about you.

[41:31] You're the battleground. And there's a war being waged for your soul. And Satan wants you to stay right where you are. Unconcerned about the King and the kingdom.

But the King is sending forth His ambassadors. To invite you. To come to Him. Come to me, He says. All you who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest.

It's still the age of grace and the door into the kingdom is wide open. You know, Jesus is the door. You enter the kingdom through Christ. You come to Christ. Don't neglect the open door.

Don't despise Christ. One day the door will be closed forever. Come and enter while you may. And as you think about your own efforts at advancing the kingdom.

Oh, there's much to discourage us. So I want to end with these words of encouragement. We don't go into the world to expand the kingdom as pessimists.

[42:38] We go optimistic. Optimistic. Why? Number one, because of the King's authority.

Remember how Matthew records this last word of Jesus? It starts with Jesus saying to His men, All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of the nations. All authority has been given to me. Where did it come from? God the Father gave it to Him. It's the reward of His suffering because He humbled Himself and died the death of the cross.

God the Father has highly exalted Him, given Him a place above every, a name above every name, given Him the highest place. All authority in heaven and earth. As Kuyper says, there's not one square foot over which Christ as King does not cry.

Mine. And that's why the gospel commission is to go to the ends of the earth. It rests upon the authority of our King.

Every place in the universe is His. He reigns there. And therefore, He says, now you go there. And as you go, know that my authority goes with you.

[43:49] I reign there. You say, but they're not recognizing your reign in China at the present. Or in Iraq or Iran. So maybe we shouldn't pray. All authority, heaven and earth, given to me.

Therefore, go. Go with your young men. Go with your preachers. Go with your witnesses. Go with your prayers. Go with your gifts. Because my authority extends there.

He is King. We say, the Lord reigns. Say among the nations, Psalm 96 says. Say among the nations, the Lord reigns. We don't call on boys and girls, men and women, to make Jesus King.

He is King. And we go among the nations and declare that. The Lord reigns. You need to bow to Him. You need to come before Him and submit to Him.

And own Him as your King. And serve and obey Him. Yes, the King's authority reaches everywhere. The King's presence is encouragement for us.

[44:48] For that great commission ends in Matthew 28, 20. And surely I am with you to the ends of the age. The King with us in this task of kingdom advancement.

So as you pray, He's with you. As you're praying for the nations, He's with you. As you're witnessing, He's with you.

The King, with all His authority, He's there with you. What encouragement. The King pledges His power and His presence to help us extend.

And then the King's equipping. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And the first thing He did when He came to His throne was to pour out His Spirit upon His church for powerful, effective witness.

Amazing. That He uses our poor, stammering tongues to do what? To bring people who are going to hell into the kingdom of heaven.

[45 : 51] That's not a small feat. And yet He does it through these tongues. These poor efforts that we make.

And we walk away and we say, I should have said this. And I should have said... And yet God is pleased to take our poor little witness. But with the Spirit to translate sinners out of darkness and into the kingdom of His dear Son.

And lastly, we are encouraged because of the King's inheritance. Psalm 2, verse 8 records the Father's words to His Son King.

The Father says, ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance. And the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession. They're yours.

Just ask me and I will give them to you. He's given to Jesus the nations as the reward of His sufferings. They're His. They're His.

[46 : 53] They belong to Him. He bought them with His own blood. He purchased them for God. Revelation 7 takes us to the throne of God at the end of time. And it says, after this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count.

From every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. And they were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice, salvation belongs to God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

You see, they had to come. They were given to Christ by His Father. So nothing is more sure.

You wonder, what's this money going to do? What's this five, ten minutes in prayer going to do?

What's this poor witness going to do? The Lord Jesus has been given the nations.

Nothing is more sure. His program will succeed. The nations have been promised. He will have them. And so what I want to leave you with is the fact, this great commission.

[48 : 06] We've often heard the great commission, haven't we? But have we heard it as the words of our king? The words of our risen, reigning king.

Saying, this is the program. Get with it. And I am going with you in it. With all my authority. And I'll give you my spirit. And the nations must be mine.

So go with confidence. And witness and pray and give with expectation to see the kingdom advance at home and abroad.

Let's pray. Our Father, we realize that you have a great plan that has been formed from eternity past.

And that in time you brought your son. And you made him king. And he established his kingdom on the earth.

[49 : 06] In the hearts of a few Israelite believers. Dying for their sins. Rising for their justification.

Ascending into heaven. And now the word is go into all the world and preach the gospel. So would you help us. We confess our sin. We confess that other programs have interfered with your program.

Cleanse us of our sin. And give us fresh hope. And fresh zeal this morning. From seeing our king. And seeing what is on his heart.

And lay upon our heart. His kingdom's advance. And come and help us. And pour out your spirit upon us. And do revive us again.

That not only we might be revived. But through our reviving. Others might hear the gospel. And see its power. And come to believe in our savior and king.

[50 : 06] Do it for your glory we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.