

On Earth as It is in Heaven

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Preacher: Michael Waddell

[0 : 0 0] So welcome here for this Sunday, November 24th. My name is Kent Dixon. It's my joy to be the pastor here. Did I say November 24th? I even heard it come out.

And it was too late, you know, when you try to. November 10th, Sunday, November 10th, which I even have in my notes, but my brain failed me. Let's start.

Can you just read? Let's rewind the morning. This morning, it's my pleasure to welcome Michael Waddell as our guest this morning. Michael is the team lead for marketplace engagement at CBM, Canadian Baptist Ministries.

And he works closely with colleagues to support CBM's Canadian and international partnerships. It's the first time he's been to Alberta, so be kind to him. He collaborates with his colleagues to guide Venture.

And Venture is a CBM initiative that's focused on integrating faith and work. His journey with CBM began in 2015. Some of you know Michael and his journey prior to this role.

[1 : 0 7] He led a pivotal role in the Philippines from 2016 to 2020, where he was focused on faith and work integration with local partners. Michael returned to Canada during COVID-19 pandemic and assumed his current role in 2021, bringing a wealth of experience in practical theology, having earned his master's degree from Acadia Divinity College, and business, having run his own small business for many years before joining CBM.

Michael lives in New Brunswick. I have genealogical roots in New Brunswick, so I may carry his bags back there for him. He frequently travels for work across Canada and internationally.

He enjoys traveling, watching sports, listening to music, spending time with friends and family. Michael works fervently to help people discover how their daily work connects to God's ongoing redemptive work in their community and around the world.

Welcome here this morning, Michael. God bless you as you share from your heart and from your passions. Thank you so much.

You're welcome. Good morning. I'm just going to set these here because they're going to slide off if I don't. Well, yeah, thanks, Pastor Kent, for the warm introduction.

[2 : 3 6] It sounded all too familiar, I think, because I wrote it. And as I was listening to it, I was thinking, oh, I should probably cut those things out. That's really long. But anyway, it's still nice to be warmly received.

And just so nice already this morning I've had the opportunity, just as you were making your way in this morning, of having the opportunity to greet a number of you and have brief conversations. And I look forward to being able to do that with you after the service as well.

Yeah, as Pastor Kent just mentioned, in my role, I do travel quite a bit. And in that introduction, it said that I travel across Canada. But you also heard him say that this is my first time to Alberta.

In fact, in nine years with CBM, this is my first time west of Ontario. So I've spoken in churches all across Atlantic Canada. I've spoken in churches all across Ontario.

But I've never had the opportunity to travel west. And so I am really thrilled and honored, really, to be here at Braemar Baptist this morning. And just really appreciate the warm hospitality and welcome that you've already shown to me.

[3 : 42] I want to begin this morning really just by starting off and saying thank you. Thank you to each of you as individuals, but collectively as Braemar Baptist, just for years of faithful prayers.

Even this morning, as people were talking to me, a few people saying, oh, we're part of a prayer group that prays for CBM and prays for you and prays for the work. And it's just so moving to know that there are faithful people praying here in this church for the work of CBM around the world.

And, of course, for generous financial support over the years, whether that's for supporting field staff team support, for, I think, individual support for Gato Munyumasako, who works with us in East Africa, in the Congo, for much support that you've offered over the years in crisis response and just where else needed within CBM's broader work.

It's because of this kind of faithful support from Canadian Baptist churches across the country that allows us to be able to do what we do on behalf of Canadian Baptist.

And so we just want to say thank you for that. I did bring with me, and you saw me set them here. Who's familiar with this? Hopeful Gifts for Change. Well, this is the newest edition of Hopeful Gifts for Change.

[5 : 00] Which, it's our Christmas catalog, like the Sears Wish catalog, or wish book, if you will. You know, it's filled with gift ideas, ranging from small amounts to larger amounts, that you can purchase, you know, sort of to honor someone, a loved one or a family member, a friend, who you want to buy a gift for.

But, you know, sometimes there's those people like, what do I buy that person? They don't need anything. Well, this is a way to support a really good cause, and to do so this Christmas. So I will leave these with you here.

I only had a limited number I could bring, so there's, I think, maybe 10 here. But you can visit hopefulgifts.ca, and the entire catalog is there online, and so you can do it online if you prefer that method.

So I'm going to talk this morning, really, I've got maybe 25-ish slides, which sounds like a lot. I'm just going to tell you right now, some of it I'm going to move really quickly through, and then I'll slow down where necessary.

Does that sound okay? I'm sure, I'm very confident you'll be able to follow along, no problem. I'm not going to spend a long time talking about CBM as an organization, because I believe that you already have a really good handle on who CBM is.

[6 : 14] Am I right about that? Yeah. So I will briefly say this, though. As the slide shows there, we are guided by these five causes.

And so you can see them on the screen. Poverty, justice, kids at risk, build the church, and crisis response. These five causes guide and give shape to all of the work that we do all around the world with our network of partners.

And we do this really through partnership, local partnerships with churches and denominations in countries around the world. We do this also here in Canada by inviting churches like Braemar Baptist into partnership with the work that Canadian Baptists are doing around the world with other local churches.

This partnership model, as you can see here, partnering with local churches around the world to bring hope, healing, and reconciliation through word and deed.

If you know anything about CBM, you know that those two last words that I just said, word and deed, are central to everything that we do, the approach that we take in the work that we do with churches around the world.

[7 : 23] It's also known as integral mission. Are you familiar with that idea? That integral mission is weaving together our words and our deeds. It's really actually saying there is no way to separate them.

We believe that both word and deed are essential. Neither takes priority over the other or should be done independently. Each part is essential and necessary for the completeness of God's desire for his creation.

Integral mission. And as Pastor Kent said, I am the team lead for Marketplace Engagement, and one of the things that I have the responsibility of doing is giving leadership to Venture.

Venture is our faith meets work initiative. It's sort of the sub-brand of CBM, where everything that we do in the marketplace space falls under.

And so I have this privilege and honor, really, to lead this work. I have colleagues in CBM who work with me in this. It's not me alone. But you can see our tagline here.

[8 : 27] When faith meets work, all the hours of our lives can be infused with meaning. And through Venture, we really have two key things that we focus on.

The first being formational training and teaching on biblical theology of work and vocation. To help people discover God's design and God's purpose for what work is intended to be.

And to see that our work provides us with unique opportunities to join God on his redemptive mission, or in his redemptive mission throughout all of creation. Believe it or not, you probably do know this for sure, that there are lots of things in the Bible that teach us about work, and what God thinks about work, and what his purpose for our work is.

In fact, we learn right in Genesis 1 that God himself is a... Are you with me? He's a worker, right? And we later learn that God created us, men and women, in his image.

And as image bearers, the work that we do is significant and matters to God and his kingdom. And so those are the kinds of foundational truths and teachings that we are working on through Venture with partners here in Canada and around the world.

[9 : 47] The second thing that we focus on through Venture is creating or supporting transformational and redemptive business initiatives with our partners and with people around the world, particularly in the majority world.

We believe that supporting the creation or growth of businesses is one of the best ways to alleviate poverty and to bring about individual and community flourishing.

At this time, I'm going to, yeah, just sort of move into more of the sermon portion of my talk. And you'll see on the screen there the title that I've given this, On Earth As It Is In Heaven.

Now, again, I could do a skill testing question, and most of you, I think, would be able to come up with the answer to this one, that that title is not original to me. It comes from the Lord's Prayer.

And we know that the Lord's Prayer, you know, as recorded in Scripture, is part of a larger teaching that Jesus is doing throughout what's known as the Sermon on the Mount, found through Matthew 5, 6, and 7.

[10 : 55] And, of course, I've pulled out this line from the Lord's Prayer, On Earth As It Is In Heaven, which follows the statement, Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done.

On Earth As It Is In Heaven. As you already know, I work with CBM, and at CBM, we talk a lot about the gospel.

We talk about integral mission, as I mentioned already, proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel, the good news. And as churches, right, as individual churches here in this community, you talk a lot about the gospel.

But oftentimes, we tend to put a focus on one aspect of the gospel, which is, you know, kind of highlighting the fact that it's that last word.

It's heaven. It's that the gospel, as good news, is that we can somehow be saved through faith in Jesus, right, through what he accomplished on the cross, and that one day we will have eternal life with him in heaven.

[12 : 04] Now, extra, extra. We know this, right? I mean, we don't see that on our street corners anymore. But when newspapers used to print, they would print overnight, in the wee hours of the night, so that the paper was hot off the press first thing in the morning, and people would buy that from street vendors and stuff, and they would read the newspaper.

Well, what would happen is that when something special was going on, either in that community, if it was a local newspaper, or more particularly around the world or within the nation, newspapers would make the decision, the executives would, the editors would, to print an extra edition of the newspaper on that particular day.

And they would print that out because there's something special or extraordinary happening, some big piece of news, and they would send that out to the vendors again, and the vendors on the street corner would shout out, extra, extra, read all about it.

And that shouting became sort of synonymous with extra, extra. They knew, oh, there's something. Even though I've read the newspaper already, I know what's happened around the world or in my community. I know it because I read the morning edition.

And that extra, extra told them there was something that they weren't aware of. There was something new, something extra that they needed to buy a new paper and read about so that they wouldn't miss out on what it was that was happening in the world.

[13 : 27] Well, I feel like sometimes as followers of Jesus, this is sort of the stance that we need to take. We need to be shouting, extra, extra, read all about it.

But there's more to this good news. There's more to this gospel than just the opportunity for us one day when we pass on from this life to go into eternal life and spend it with Jesus in heaven.

Let me explain what I mean. Of course, what is gospel? Well, we've already decided or defined it that gospel really means good news.

But what is that good news? Is it that, as I've said already, that we just have salvation from this life when we die, that we get to spend eternity in heaven?

Is that the good news? Is that the good news? Well, it is. It's part of it, right? It's part of the good news.

[14 : 25] But there's more. The gospel is not just good news for when we die. But the gospel is good news for today, for tomorrow, for the next day.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that? I hope you believe that. Probably this is familiar to you.

Of course, we refer to the fall, right? And, of course, redemption. This is often how we, you know, if we were going to do a t-shirt, maybe, to explain the gospel, an elevator pitch, we would often refer to these two scriptures.

Romans 3.23. For everyone has sinned, right? And fallen short of the glorious, this version, fall short of God's glorious standard. And then John 3.16, right?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life. And by putting the focus on these two verses, that we are sinners because of the fall, but we have salvation and eternal life through Jesus, we are sort of, in a way, only telling part of the good news.

[15 : 43] Only sharing part of the story. We see images like this one. Is this a familiar image out west? Certainly, in my growing up in rural New Brunswick, this was very common.

You'd see various versions of this. Which really just depict, in an image form, those two verses that I just had on the screen. That wages of sin is death, right? And there's this thing called eternal life with God.

It's a free gift. And the way to get there is Jesus and what he accomplished on the cross. Now, I want to be perfectly clear. I am in no way saying that that's not right, okay?

That's not what I'm saying. This is 100% true, right? Jesus did accomplish that on the cross for each and every one of us, if we believe in him.

But there is more to the story, if you will. There is more to the gospel message. Are you familiar with Dr. Paul Stevens?

[16 : 42] I feel like that's a name many might know. Paul was a professor at Regent College for a number of years. He now leads an organization called the Institute for Marketplace Transformation, based out of Vancouver.

And we do a lot of work with them through venture. And Paul, in one of his books, he says this. He says, The central message of Jesus is that the kingdom of God has come and is coming.

The Christian gospel is not just getting our souls saved and gaining a ticket to enter heaven when we die. That's too narrow of a gospel.

It's too narrow of an understanding that focuses all of our missional focus or energy on saving souls and getting people into heaven. Which, again, as I want to stress, is not wrong.

It's not bad. It's what we should be doing. But it's only part of what we should be doing. This idea that he talks about there that the kingdom of God has come and is coming.

[17 : 51] The already but not yet aspect of the kingdom. What does that actually mean? Well, I found this to be a helpful way for me to understand it. It's kind of like when we say that spring will come.

Spring has come on April 21st. But yet when we go outdoors on April 21st expecting to see all the signs of spring, we still see piles of decaying snow and slush and leaves that have been rotting all winter long.

And it doesn't look like spring, does it? There's all this stuff that's still there. That eventually, as time moves along, we will get to the full coming of spring where all of a sudden the trees are beginning to bud and to bear new signs of life.

And grass is starting to turn green and the tulips start to sprout up out of the earth. And that's kind of an image for us, I think, to help us gain an understanding of what does it mean that the kingdom has come but has not come fully yet.

Anyone know what those are? Oh, you're very quick. They are bookends that look like elephants. I bought these bookends in 2009, I think it was, on a trip to Kenya from a market there.

[19 : 11] And I just bought them because I thought they were really cool. They're made out of ebony wood and they had little, you know, the little tusks for the elephants were carved out of something. I don't know. Maybe I don't want to know. But I think this is a helpful image for us because oftentimes when we think about the gospel narrative, the gospel story, the story that we find in this book, this sacred book, that begins in Genesis chapter 1 with God creating everything and goes all the way to the end of the book of Revelation, sometimes, as a couple of the images that I shared earlier on, sometimes we put the bookends in the wrong spot.

We put the bookends of the biblical story, of God's redemptive story, we put it at Genesis chapter 3. What happened in Genesis 3?

Anyone know? It's where the fall takes place, right? And then we put the other bookend at Revelation 20, which is when the final kind of redemption act happens, when Satan is defeated, final judgment takes place.

And that's kind of where we put the bookends. But in actual fact, the bookends don't belong there. Tom Nelson, who is a pastor from down in the States and author of a few books and runs an organization called Made to Flourish, he says this about these bookends.

He says, when we lose the richness of the bookends, the gospel becomes truncated. Now, if you're anything like me, I didn't know what that word meant.

[20 : 57] So to help us, I put in brackets what it really means. Okay? Shortened. The gospel becomes truncated or shortened and myopic, short-sighted.

To focus primarily on people's souls and eternity, rather than how the gospel speaks into all of life now.

When we miss the richness of the bookends, people also hear the gospel as something that primarily talks about their soul and about the future, rather than the richness of how it transforms everyday life.

So I want to add to that earlier image that I had and really emphasize the fact that this is the entire biblical narrative, beginning with creation in Genesis 1, all the way through to new creation at the end of Revelation 22.

That is the entire story. And when we put the bookends in the right place at the beginning and the end, and we begin to study the scriptures with that kind of a lens, we begin to realize that God actually gives us a mandate in Genesis 1 and 2 that we as his people are meant to be fruitful and to multiply.

[22 : 08] We're meant to cultivate the earth. We're meant to help communities to grow and people to flourish. And it's why that today we have a city like Edmonton, right?

Because people took that mandate seriously and they began to work and to do good things with their hands and with their minds for the common good of humanity.

These words at the top, ought, is, can, will, you might find these to be helpful words. What it's really meaning is, under the first category of fall, or of creation, sorry, that's how the world creation ought to have been.

It was perfect when God created it, right? He said everything, after every day, it was good, it was good. He created humanity, he said it was very good, right?

It's the way things ought to be. But then we move to the fall, and of course the serpent and tents, Adam and Eve, they eat the fruit, the fall occurs, sin enters the world, and now all of a sudden things are a little broken or a little bent, right?

[23 : 16] Things are distorted, decay, destruction begins to enter our world. And this is, is, right, is how the world is today. We look in our newspapers, we look on the TV, we see darkness, and we see war and conflict and famine and strife all around us.

But the beauty is, is that that's not the end of this story, because along comes God in his redemptive purposes, and of course he sends Jesus to this earth to fulfill that redemptive work.

But he does give us this mandate, right, to work even though the world is broken. He gives us this mandate to somehow participate through the things that we do, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and so on, to participate in God's redemptive acts, in God's redemptive mission in the world.

And all of a sudden we begin to realize that the world can be better. It can be different. And God has the power to do those things.

He can make the world better. Do you believe that? And guess how he often chooses to do that? He often chooses to do that through you and through me, through the things that we do.

[24 : 29] When we're gathered here in our church buildings like this, but more often when we're scattered. When we're the church of God, scattered out into our communities, going into schools, going into hospitals, going into grocery stores, going into our workplaces, into community events, being redemptive presences, image bearers for God.

Anybody know what those are? VHS tapes. Clamshell. The plastic, that's what they called them.

So VHS, I mean, how many people still have VHS tapes around their house? How many people still have a VHS player? How many people actually sometimes still put the VHS into the player and watch?

Yeah, I mean, this is great. Okay. So you guys should know the answer to this question. What was at the beginning of every VHS movie that you would watch? Okay.

Audience ratings. But then you would see this come up. Right? This, or the following preview, has been approved for all audiences. Or if it was a different rated, it might say something different.

[25 : 36] But they would put those up there. And those previews that they would put at the front of a movie, they were there for a very specific reason. The reason was is that, I mean, everybody was going to watch whatever that movie was, Bambi or Little Mermaid or whatever, right?

But just before, they would play this preview, and that preview would be pointing to some other movie that was going to come out at some other future date. Right? So it was preview.

It was previewing a coming attraction. A coming attraction. It would advertise something that's going to happen in the future.

A feature film that's going to be exhibited in the future at a movie theater or cinema, or it was going to come out on another VHS, or when it started to move to DVDs and Blu-ray and all of that type of stuff.

Now they call them trailers, I guess, because they're not at the beginning. They often come at the end, or they just put them out on social media to watch. But I think it's still a helpful illustration for us, because here's the point, is that just like previews are pointing to some future thing, that's actually what we are supposed to do as God's people here in this world.

[26 : 50] That our role as God's children is to offer a preview of the coming attraction. What is that coming attraction? Well, it's the full coming of the kingdom of God to our neighbors here in Edmonton and beyond.

Do you believe that? There is no better opportunity. I believe this wholeheartedly, which is why I've really kind of given myself over to this work through venture at CBM.

That there is no better opportunity for us, as God's people, to offer a preview of God's kingdom and of the full gospel story, than through the daily work and through the engagement that we have with people out in the community.

As I've already said, as we go out of this building, out into the world, and begin to interact with people in everyday life. There's no better way.

Our work provides us with opportunities that are unique to ourselves, right? And provide us open doors for relationship and for conversation and for being able to proclaim and to demonstrate the gospel in its entirety.

[28 : 03] What you do in the present matters. It's not just about some future goal to get to heaven when we die. Yes, that is a reward.

That is amazing. We will cherish that when it comes. But what we do in the present matters. Whether we're building houses or structures or whatever we build, or painting, or doing bookkeeping or accounting, designing or architecture, singing, preaching, sewing, teaching, praying, cooking, fixing things, digging wells, campaigning for justice, cleaning, writing poems, gardening, caring for the needy, loving our neighbors.

I just started writing out things. But you could fill in the blanks there. And you could put in there things that you are involved with. These things matter for today, for tomorrow, for the next day.

And they make a difference in God's kingdom and previewing the full coming of his kingdom that is still to come. The work that we do, whether it's paid or unpaid, is part of building for God's kingdom.

Do you believe that? I want to share with you a passage of scripture. It's just a short one. And there it is. I was going to open up my Bible, but it's right on the screen, so I don't need to.

[29 : 22] But it's a very short passage of scripture. It says, When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices. When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices.

One of the key words I want to point out here is the word rejoices. This is a Hebrew word or Hebrew term that's only used one other time in the Old Testament.

But in both of these cases, it's about a kind of ecstatic gladness or excitement that one would feel. That as they begin to feel the release from oppression or from bondage that an enemy might have over you.

When your enemy has been overthrown and God has given you victory. It's that kind of rejoicing that this scripture is talking about. But it's really not talking about God in the part above that.

It says, When the righteous prosper. Not when God prospers or when God does something. When the righteous prosper. Well, I want to also point out that the word prosper here is not really about financial prosperity.

[30 : 30] We often in our Western lens often read things like that and immediately think it's about, Well, when the righteous have wealth and possessions and all these things, That the city would rejoice in the person's personal gain.

Right? But that's actually not what this prosper is about. This word prosper is really more about whole life flourishing. About a shalom, if you will.

The word righteous that's used there, again, is a Hebrew word. And I'm going to butcher the pronunciation of this. But it's sadikim. Okay? Sadikim.

And this word righteous that's used in that passage is used over 200 times in the Old Testament. It's a pretty significant word. And this righteousness that's being talked about here, Again, with our Western understanding, our lens, a cultural lens, Sometimes we read the word righteousness and we hear it only in one way.

And we think of it as an internal sort of holiness. Right? That that person's righteous. But really the meaning of this word sadikim has three dimensions to it.

[31 : 40] It has an inward righteousness aspect to it. That it is about a holiness, you know, a lifestyle that is pleasing to God.

But it also has an upward direction to this righteousness. That our life is somehow meant to bring glory to God. And then lastly, there's this outward demonstration, Or this outward display of this righteousness.

That's really talking about, as a righteous person, That the way in which we carry out ourselves, The way that we go about doing life, That it somehow is blessing, Or is somehow contributing positively To the common good of humanity, And to others in our community, Around justice and dignity.

Dr. Amy Sherman, In her book, Kingdom Calling, She writes this about the word sadikim. She says, The sadikim, the righteous, Are defined as those who are so in love with God, And his kingdom, That they steward everything that they have been given, So their assets, Their social position, Their vocational skills, Their power, Their gifts, Their prosperity, Not for self-enrichment.

Not for the purpose of self-aggrandizement, Or aggrandizement, I don't know how to say that word, But for the common good. They steward all the dimensions of their prosperity, For the purpose of shalom.

[33 : 18] For the purpose of advocating God's justice, And goodness. In the world, In your community, The people that you come into contact with.

This church, Bram our Baptist, Just like every other church, Is meant to be a collective of sadikim, Of righteous people, Who are gathering together, Like we are right now, To open up God's word, To study, To learn, To bring glory through our worship to God, For fellowship, For all of those things.

A collective of righteous people, Who gather together, But then who intentionally scatter, As sadikim, Righteous people, Going out into our communities, Out into our workplaces, To be a redemptive presence, That is pointing people, That is a preview, Of the full coming of God's kingdom, And bringing about justice, And shalom, For all.

So my challenge for you, For me today, Is will we be those kinds of stewards? Will you steward everything, That you have, That God has entrusted into your care, To build for his kingdom?

And will you advocate for God's justice, For his goodness, And for shalom, In the lives of others, Here in this community, And around the world?

[34 : 54] Let's pray together. Our God and our Father, We're thankful for this building, Where we can gather together, To worship you, To learn from your word.

God, I'm thankful for, The people that are here, That call themselves, Braemire Baptist Church, And for, The work that they do, In serving their community, In serving their world, Through the programs, And ministries of this church, When they're gathered together, Here in this building, But I also pray for, Each of them as individuals, And as Braemire, As they scatter out, As they go into this community, Into their workplaces, Engaging in all kinds, Of different activities, God, I pray that you would, Yeah, Just help them to discover, All the unique ways, And opportunities, That you have given to them, To join you on mission, To join you on mission, Of, Of helping to redeem, This creation, Of helping to bring, Shalom, And goodness, And justice, And compassion, To everyone, That they meet, God, I pray for this church, That you would, Give it what it needs,

To continue to be, A presence, A redemptive presence, In this community, Pray that you would be, With Pastor Kent, And the leadership here, As they make decisions, God, We pray your blessing, Upon each one today, We pray this in your name, Amen.