

What Would Jesus Preach? The Kingdom of God.

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Date: 18 October 2020

[0:00] Now, you've heard the slogan, what would Jesus do?

! What would Jesus do? And I'm going to tell you this morning, God helping me, what would Jesus preach? What would Jesus preach? I wonder, what would Jesus preach about?

Someone has reckoned that the Lord Jesus' favourite sermon is seen in Acts chapter 1. And our Lord spent 40 days on this one message, this theme, the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God. So that's my message today, the kingdom of God. And we read this in Acts 1 verse 3, it says this, To him also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs. Our Lord had gone through the passion, the crucifixion, the cross. Now he's alive, he's risen, he's raised three days later, risen from the dead. And he's appearing now, it says, So what did he preach?

[1:29] The kingdom of God. The kingdom of God. See this repeated theme through his preaching? That he heralded the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God. Now we know there are two kingdoms. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, you could say. We want to make sure we're in the right one, don't we? The kingdom of God.

People have called this subject, the kingdom of God, Scripture's primary subject matter. And the Bible's most centrally important idea. Now this theme is really woven through the pages of the whole book.

And we see in the gospels, the kingdom, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. So it's something to reflect on and think about, I put to you, that it's important. As we consider this subject, let's start with the king.

Think about the king. Behold, your king. They didn't want him when he said that, did they? Consider the king. The king is the centre of the kingdom.

[2:34] He's the ultimate source of authority, isn't he? As we would consider a kingdom, a king, as a king was, the king was the ultimate source of authority. Didn't have to bang on straight to prime ministers and such petty subjects as that.

But the king was the absolute authority. He could not be voted in or out, as he cannot be voted in or out. The king is the king.

That's it. And so too in our lives, the subject, we are our subjects of the king. And we are more so actually as sons and daughters of the king.

The Bible tells us we are sons and daughters of the great king. And we have a royal privilege to live as would honour our wonderful king.

And he is surely due our reverence and praise. It says of the king, of this king, he's the eternal king. It says 1 Timothy 1.17.

[3:35] Now unto the king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honour and glory forever and ever.

Amen. Unto the king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honour and glory forever and ever.

This is the king we're talking about. This is no earthly king. This is no human king. He's clothed with majesty and strength. He's awesome. And not as the world would call awesome, as if some song that they play is awesome or some movie they watch is awesome.

He is awesome. He is awful. Awesome. Full of awe. And his throne, his kingdom, his dominion, it is everlasting. The Lord Jesus is king.

Not just that. He's called the king of kings. Now where a king rules a nation, it's his word that is the law of the kingdom.

[4:40] As I say, we're talking about where kings really rule. Not the quasi kings and queens of nowadays where they've got more just a ceremonial power. Where this king, the king, eternal, immortal, invisible rules.

He has absolute sway. Absolute. And his word, his word is law. The word of a king matters. It can bring condemnation or freedom. It says of the word of a king, Ecclesiastes 8.4 says, Where the word of a king is, there is power.

And whom I say unto him, what doest thou? He's got absolute power. Where the word of a king is, there is power. Friends, don't we have the word of the king? Amen. Don't we have his word? The word of the king.

For us to know the will and purpose of the king, we need to take heed to his word. To know it. The word of the king, it matters. If we care about what our king wants for us, we would do well to listen to his voice, wouldn't we?

[5:47] Where do we get his voice from? Here it is. He's written it down. There's no mistaking it. There's no confusing of his voice. There's no element of doubt to the voice.

It's here in black and white and red for us to read and heed. So we would do well to care about what our king wants us to do by taking heed of his word.

Do we make our decisions with a view to the authority of our king? Sometimes we can lightly make decisions, can't we? Without really thinking, what would honour and please my king?

His authority is significant and must be submitted to. Friends, we can know his authority over our lives. This is a wonderful blessing. To truly come under his rulership is the ultimate blessing.

To come under his dominion, to know this king. And this king that we hear about, it's more than that. We can know him. Not just know about the king, but know him.

[6:49] And he can know us. And his rulership and dominion is our ultimate good, absolute good. So think of it, friends, today. Which kingdom?

Whose rulership do we come under? Is it the one of that benevolent and gracious king? The king of kings? The most gracious king?

The most loving king? The wisest and most benevolent king? The wisest and best thing we can do is to come under his rulership, isn't it? So consider the king.

Secondly, consider the kingdom. The kingdom. We who know the king are part of God's kingdom. And what does that mean? It's the present real and active rule of God on this earth.

God's government. Of course, we know there's the element of Israel as a kingdom and such. But I put to you that nevertheless, we are part of the kingdom because we're under the king.

[7:53] We are subjects of the king and sons and daughters of the king. And so this theme of the kingdom is really, I put to you, it's for all. That would trust in the king.

What can we learn of this kingdom? The kingdom of God. It's a spiritual kingdom. And truly the kingdom of God is actually the state of salvation. To be saved is to be a subject of the king.

To be a son, a daughter, an adopted child of the king. It's eternal life. To be saved is the kingdom. To know that.

And we can know that. Present tense, here and now. And this message of the kingdom, we are to take it to others. This kingdom. And this message of the kingdom, the world is largely ignorant of, even hateful to, hostile to it.

And once I was in another kingdom. We all were, weren't we? I've got a book at home. It's called Citizens of Another Kingdom.

[8:59] That's what we are. We're outsiders. We're strangers. We're from another culture altogether.

Now, I was blessed to become a kind of an Australian, not a real one. I got naturalised. I got citizenship.

Really, it's kind of a bit, almost sounds a bit strange. I don't know, not proper. Because I wasn't born in this country.

But this country was willing to receive me as a citizen of Australia. Almost seems like I'm not a real Aussie because of that.

And I know when I became a citizen of Australia, I've got dual citizenship. So I'm still a citizen of the motherland, of mother England.

[9:55] Still a citizen of another kingdom. But friends, when you become a citizen of this kingdom, there's no dual citizenship. Amen? There's no dual.

You can't have it both ways. You can't say, it's like when I was a kid, you know, Australia was playing England in the soccer. I could barrack for both depending on who was winning. You know, I could have it both ways, you know.

But no. There's no dual citizenship. When you become a citizen of this kingdom, that's it. Amen? We're citizens of another kingdom. Amen? And we need that change of kingdoms. So we stop that allegiance to where we were. We transfer from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. Have you experienced this transfer? That's critical. Critical question. The kingdom of God is spiritually, it's his divine rule. He has rightful rule over all his creation.

[10:57] He always has. Had the rightful rule. But when Adam at the garden disobeyed God's authority, he created spiritual chaos.

Man rebelled against God's dominion and has suffered the consequences ever since. And the majority are under this different authority.

The God of this world, small g. And his kingdom, the kingdom of darkness. Friends, God is preparing a people. Amen? He's preparing a people for his kingdom, which is ultimately heaven. God is preparing us for a forever kingdom, which is ultimately heaven, but we don't have to wait. We can get it right now for a limited time only. We can enter the kingdom of God in this time zone, in the now. And the kingdom enters us.

[12:04] As our Lord Jesus says, he says, don't say, lo here, lo there. Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God is within you.

That God's purpose is for us to know the kingdom and the kingdom to enter us such that it is our life. And we can know the kingdom of God in our daily lives, in the here and the now.

It's amazing to think we can actually represent the kingdom of God on earth. It's hard to grapple with that thought, isn't it? That we actually represent the king.

That changes us, doesn't it? To think, well, wherever you go, wherever your foot goes, you are representing the kingdom of God. God's kingdom changes us.

It shapes who we are, transforms us from the inside out. It fills us. And our Lord wants us to prioritize the kingdom. He says this, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

[13:06] And all these things shall be added unto you. Seek ye, number one, the kingdom of God. Can we shift our focus such that is the primary purpose?

For our thinking, for our living. That we can have a kingdom mindset such that we are minded and mindful of the kingdom of God. What pleases God and his purposes. That we can think and live in accord with his will.

With what matters to our king. That our life could be governed such that we're governed by what matters to the king. What is it that the king wants from me?

And this should be what guides our life choices, our decisions in everyday life. Friends, the kingdom of God, it matters. It matters.

So importantly, it matters. And that's what guides my life choices. The kingdom. It matters. It's important. It's been observed that the Lord Jesus is recorded as saying, having taught on the kingdom of God over 100 times.

[14:11] Yet he mentions the church just twice. And in one of those occasions, he simply said he would build the church. So he preached on the kingdom 50 times more often than he preached on the church.

And that's not to lessen the importance of the church. Because as God's people, we are part of a kingdom community. That's the church, isn't it? We're part of a kingdom community.

We are an outpost of heaven. Such as we're brothers and sisters. We're sons and daughters. We're princes and princesses of the king. Of kings, in a sense. And we are the royal family, in a way.

The ultimate royal family. The Lord Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God many times. And the early church preachers also preached on the same theme.

They used the same phrase, the kingdom. The kingdom of God. Philip preached it. Paul preached it. Peter referred to it. So consider the qualities of this kingdom.

[15:09] It's important that we consider the kingdom of God. God's kingdom is ruled by justice, mercy and love. See in Romans 14, 17. Paul says, It's not so much in intangible physical matters that might raise question, but more about these spiritual qualities and values.

These truths of what is righteousness, of what is peace, what is joy, what is the spiritual life, the Holy Ghost, God's kingdom.

It's the best and highest way of living. The noblest way of living. Consider, do we exercise a kingdom lifestyle? Like we really are representatives of heaven.

Do we actually think of that? And contemplate that? You know, sometimes we... I know for myself, there's occasions I take that hat off. And we shouldn't take the hat off, if you like.

You know, the sense where you might not be gracious with someone when you're out shopping or whatever it be and say things curtly or unthinking.

[16:36] Now imagine if you were a prince of the country of England or queen from the land of Hawaii.

And, you know, the media would be... What do they call them? A paparazzi. Be kind of hiding behind the bushes of your home.

Just trying to catch that moment. Or catch, you know, through the video camera. Oh, got that.

That's going to be... That's going to go viral now. What I just caught the king's heirs doing.

What the prince or the princesses were doing. And you know how it is. You'd be on the front page of the... What do they call them? The glossy magazines.

And, I mean, it's like that today, isn't it? For even, like, footy players. They can't have any little misdemeanor. You know, a little too much to drink or just a moment of relapse, of inattention, doing something stupid.

[17:39] And they're on the front page of the newspapers. And politicians, you know, they're especially under the scrutiny. But think of us, brothers and sisters. We represent someone who is greater and higher than any king or queen of this world, than any government position or noble position of the world's reckoning or of any role of stardom that the world would elevate you to as a star of movie or screen or sport.

We are far exceeding and above anything that compares with that. So, wouldn't we to exercise that kingdom lifestyle but actually, I represent the king.

The king. The king. Do we live like we're his representatives or maybe we have those off moments when we don't? Think of the king.

He owns everything in his kingdom and he freely gives us of his abundance. It says of the king's wealth, his abundance. It says the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof the world and they that dwell therein.

David sang that in Psalm 24 verse 1 and Psalm 24 is filled with imageries of the king, of the kingdom. We see in Psalm 89 verse 11, the writer says, the heavens are thine and the earth also is thine for the world and the fullness thereof they must have founded them.

[19:12] So, this king, he's, wow, he's over everything. He's just man. The king, but yeah, the king wants to expand his kingdom.

We see on earthly kingdoms, you know, you read of some of the greats of old who, you know, the Roman Empire, Alexander's Empire, the king of Genghis Khan.

Yeah, here's another one. He virtually ruled the whole world, Genghis Khan. And then his sons, his son ruled further, but then it all collapsed. And the point is that all of these various kingdoms, when they had a rule, they wanted to expand.

They wanted to extend the kingdom. And think of it, friends, today, that our king wants to extend his kingdom. He wants to have as many included as we can reach.

He wants to extend and grow his kingdom. And our king wants his kingdom to reach and bless others, to come under his godly and righteous rule, to take them out of the kingdom of darkness and to invite them into his beloved royal family.

[20:30] We represent the kingdom of God on the earth. And he's called us to be a part of that, beckoning others to come into the kingdom, as it

were, to come into God's family, the royal family, to know the king as we do.

And our prayer is, as Matthew 6, verse 10, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. God's kingdom will surely come. And we know he's got the time already set.

We don't know what it is, but it is set. And for the meantime, we should be part of extending his kingdom. Now, another thought about this thought of kingdom is that this kingdom that we identify with, the kingdom of God, is in open hostilities to the other kingdom.

Open hostilities with the kingdoms of this fallen world. We have a duty of resistance. I like to think, you know, as you think of World War times, how a land was overtaken by the Nazis, and there was a resistance movement that kept fighting the unjust rule that France was under and other countries. And so we could think we should be the resistance movement, in effect. And we should resist, submit to God and resist the devil and his kingdom. And we've got a duty to resist, to be different, to be counter-cultural, and to face pressure and opposition by the world because the world, by and large, won't submit to our king.

[22:04] They're like the people in the parable where it says, Luke 19, 14, we will not have this man to reign over us. The vast bulk of humanity says, we don't want him to rule over us.

They would dethrone Christ. And they would crucify him afresh if they could. I saw this picture here of a man holding a sign. And this foolish man says this on his sign, if Jesus returns, kill him again. And he's got a picture there of a man throwing a cross in a waste paper basket. This is the mentality of some of our world today. They would crucify him afresh.

They willfully reject his authority still. They'd be there in that screaming crowd, screaming for his blood, cursing him, mocking him, deriding him, denying his word, refusing his gift, rejecting his lordship, his kingship.

We will not have this man reign over us. And these ungodly fools then go and blame God for the moral mayhem that Christ's rejection leads to.

[23:16] You know, it boggles my mind when you have those who say they're an atheist who then say, blame God for the world's woes.

They hate him, they reject him, and they're part of the problem. Christ's rejection causes mayhem and moral madness and sins rule.

And friends, we face opposition from these demented Christ rejecters and they're willful and active. Friends, we're in the middle of a war between two kingdoms.

There's a war going on. We must ready ourselves for what lies ahead. As soldiers of the king, not only are we servants, subjects of the kingdom or sons and daughters of the kingdom, we're soldiers of the king.

And we face hatred for his namesake, yet this must not deter us. It's been said that it's when olives are pressed, they release the oil.

[24:18] Seeds grow in times of darkness. Diamonds are formed under pressure. Friends, we might face some of that. The kingdom of God is given to us, though.

It's given to us freely by God's mercy. And he says to us, Luke 12, 32, Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

This world hates our king, yet he wants to give us the kingdom. He wants others to have this gift. And we, it seems, we're such a little flock, hopelessly outnumbered.

Outnumbered. You know, good godly Bible preaching churches are few and getting fewer. We're outnumbered. The odds are against us.

God says, fear not. Fear not, little flock. What matters beyond this short space-time continuum of the present is that we know the king.

[25:16] That's what matters. We know him. We come under his authority system. We confess him as lord, as king. And for the meantime, we're in training for royal duties.

You think of those that would enter the royal family as one that might marry royalty and they have to suddenly learn how to be a royal. We are in training as royalty in a sense.

We have a royal calling. That's a high and holy calling, isn't it? It says in 1 Peter 2 verse 9, amongst other things we're a royal priesthood. There's a royalty.

You are the royal family of heaven. Wow. We're in training for the meantime. One day we'll be in the company of our king and children of royal birth are groomed and taught in the ways of nobility. Everything has to be just so. You know, little idiosyncrasies, you know, everything's just got to be speak and span. There's people in my life a bit like that. They want everything speak and span, you know.

[26:16] And, you know, Julie's just a perfectionist. You know, that says, it's a good thing. Amen? Because she keeps me in check. So I need to be, come on, Andrew, get your act together.

That's what I need. You know, in a sense, that's what we need, isn't it, from God? Get those promptings that we've got a royal calling that we should be speak and span for God.

We've got a high privilege. This is, we're in training for nobility, you know. And this is not just some earthly kingship or queenship. Our high privilege and blessing is to be sons and daughters of the king, of kings.

So consider as we close this royal highness, our king, the king of kings, his power, his reign, the dignity of it. This should move us to, wow, this is, this is so important.

It's so important that I'm mindful of this and that this kingdom is something to be zealous for. So our loyalty should be clear. You know, it's like we don't go to a football game wearing a crow's beanie and a port scarf.

[27:25] You know, you've got to choose one. Choose one. One colour. One team. You know, we can't wear both of the colours of the two teams that are playing.

Which kingdom are you going to side with? We ought to have an uncompromising seal for the king that we serve. Just one more, second to last scripture here.

Matthew 11, it says, and it could be stretching some of the points here of this verse, but it tells us that from the days of John the Baptist till now, the kingdom of heaven suffer of violence and the violent take it by force.

There's different ways of understanding this verse, but there's a sense of forcefulness here to do with the kingdom and there's a sense where there's a taking it by force.

Some have commented that it means to seize it, to press into it, to lay hold of it, to take hold of it as a prize. It's a sense of urgency, of zeal.

[28:29] It speaks of being vigorous, of forcefulness. And we could reflect that there's a call here for a forcefulness. There's a call here for a vigour, of a courage.

And surely in these days where everything's wishy-washy and there's this, how would you put it, this fluffy kind of Christianity today and this soft, you know, just compromising, liberal, weak kind of Christianity today and effeminate Christianity that we need to be men of courage and determination. God is looking for men and women who will rise up and break away from that which is contrary or even from tradition, from the stuffiness, from the flashiness that is fake and to take hold of God. Take hold of God and his word. No matter the cost, men will be eager to enter the fight, to conquer, to have that zeal of God. And this king, this kingdom, surely it should excite in us a zeal to uphold our best, our utmost Christ.

Because one day our king will be enthroned as the rightful ruler of his creation. Revelation 19, it says that there'll be this crescendo of these voices of, as it were, as the voice of many waters.

[30:08] There'll be these praisings and gatherings and rejoicings and the atmosphere of heaven will be unveiled as we see in these last chapters of Revelation.

And it says of this great multitude, and they're going to shout and sing hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent reigner. He is omnipotent as in all powerful.

This is the king we're talking about today. After you die, you meet God. Are you ready?

Friends, it's very important. Are you a citizen of his kingdom? Will you come under God's rule? I urge you to enter into it, to live under it, his dominion, to be governed by him.

And friends, it's a gift that he gives. He gives it to us as his gracious gift. He says, as we read before, it's his good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

[31:15] He wants to give you the kingdom as his gift. It's not that you work for it or deserve it or merit it. He gives it to those who will

receive it.

And it's by virtue of your receiving his gift that you can receive that royal calling into that nobility of the sons and daughters of the king of kings and the lord of lords.

I urge you today that he is the rightful ruler. He's the rightful ruler of this planet and he will be one day and he's the rightful ruler of your heart. What does it say, the old song?

Love is the flag flown high from the castle of my heart. When the king is in residence there. When the king is in residence there.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you can enter a heart by faith and take rulership. Lord, we thank you that at the cross you took every penalty of our sin and paid the price for our saving.

[32:21] That your great gift is still extended and it's your good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Lord, that we can know a transfer, a translation from the kingdom of darkness into your royal kingdom and it is a forever kingdom and your mercies endure forever.

Lord God, we pray for each one, each heart here represents adhering this time. Lord, that we might have that heart after God. That we'll have a heart, a zeal. That we'll take this and this will be a forceful thing in our lives.

We'll take this seriously and solemnly our responsibility as sons and daughters of royal birth by adoption into your royal family.

Lord God, help us to have that mind as we go about our earthly journey that we won't contemplate we've got dual citizenship but that our citizenship is entirely as citizens of heaven.

Our citizenship is in heaven where you've brought us to that privilege and you give us that gift of salvation.

[33:31] Praise God. Thank you.