

The Gospel of the Kingdom

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Date: 31 January 2016

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[0:00] Well, good morning. My name's Billy Nye. I lead the high school ministry here, and it's my privilege to open God's Word with you this morning. So who knows what tomorrow is?

Anybody been watching the news? Iowa. Iowa caucuses. It's tomorrow, right? That's what I thought. Okay.

I know you're all really thrilled about that, and you're like, why is he starting off his sermon talking about the Iowa caucus? We don't want to hear any more about this election. Well, in honor of this very important day, I want to play a little game with you today.

I'm sure most of you watch the news. You're probably aware of some of the candidates. You can't be in this society without glimpsing some little snippet here and there of the candidates and the things that are going on.

So I'm sure probably some of you already have in your minds an ideal candidate and the opposite ideal candidate. A worst case scenario and a best case scenario.

[1:05] I'm assuming that's probably true. Let's play a little game. Let's pretend just for a moment, just for a moment, a very scary moment, that your worst case scenario candidate gets elected.

Yikes! Okay, okay, stop. Stop thinking. Stop pretending. I know that's painful. You're probably thinking, no, don't torment me with that anymore. Okay, so I did that just to communicate some comfort to you.

Just in case that worst case scenario happens, they have a maximum of eight years to do whatever damage they're going to do, right? A maximum of eight years. Okay. Unless they decide to change the Constitution.

But we're not going to go to those horrible contingencies. Okay. Let's play a better game. Let's pretend that if you're a worst case scenario candidate, get them out of your mind.

They're gone. Okay. Let's pretend you're a best case scenario candidate. Even if it's like the most unlikely person, but your best case scenario candidate, they get elected.

[2:08] Yay! Is that exciting or what? That's hope giving. It may not happen, but that's okay. We can pretend for a little bit. Here's the bad news. They only have a maximum of eight years to do whatever good they're going to do, right?

And then it's, you know, and then it's up to, you know, whoever comes after them. Okay, let's just keep pretending for just a little bit more. Let's just play a little game just for a little bit more. Let's take that best case scenario candidate that you had and let's stretch it to the extreme.

Someone comes to power who is infinitely good, infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful. So this person can do the maximum amount of good, an infinite amount of good, for the longest amount of time, and can do no wrong.

Now, even if you had a vote to get him out of power, you wouldn't want to. Because he's so good, and he's so wise, and he's so responsible, he's so capable, man, you wouldn't want to get him out. I've got, you know, some respect for the presidential candidates right now, a couple of them, but, you know, putting that aside, I'd rather have that guy who's infinitely good, infinitely wise, infinitely responsible, infinitely capable, and he's always going to be in power.

[3:40] We don't have to worry about some loser coming after him and wrecking all the bad things he's done. Well, I have good news for you. This guy exists. Let's go to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 4, and we're going to find out about him.

Matthew chapter 4, we're going to be in the last half of Matthew chapter 4, verses 12 through 25. While you're going, while you're turning there, let me just tell you some of the names we've heard this guy been called in the book of Matthew so far.

He's been called the son of David. David, the mighty king. The hearts of the people were his. He had a sword of power in his fist, and he was good, and he was wise, and this guy is this guy's greater son.

He's also called Emmanuel, God with us. His name is Jesus. He's the one who will save his people from their sins.

He's called the Christ, the Messiah, God's anointed, picked out, hand-picked leader of his people. He's called the king of the Jews, the king of God's people.

[4:49] He's called God's beloved son. He's so much like God and so resembling of God's perfect character that he's called God's son. John the Baptist called him the one who is mightier than he, and John the Baptist was the last great prophet, the one who spoke God's words, and this guy is mightier than John the Baptist, and so he's going to baptize God's people with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

He's going to do a mighty work to God's people, so that's his name, or those are his names. So we're going to be looking at this guy, this powerful figure, and we're going to be looking at his reign, his kingdom, his exercise of power when he gets into office, and this passage is going to help us see that his reign, his rule, his kingdom is the best case scenario we could ever imagine, the best good news that we could ever hear.

I want us to find that idea of his kingdom being the good news for us. I want us to find it in the passage real quick, so go to verse 23. I want you to know that I'm not making this up.

Look at verse 23, and he, Jesus, went throughout all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the, say it with me, gospel of the kingdom.

So this is the first time we see the phrase gospel of the kingdom in the book of Matthew, and Jesus is saying that the kingdom is gospel, the gospel of the kingdom.

[6:22] The kingdom is good news. That's what gospel means. So there's a good news about this kingdom, but whose kingdom? What kingdom are we talking about? Well, follow back up to verse 17, and we'll see the term kingdom used again, but it's got a little modifier.

Let's look at it. Jesus, from that time, began to preach, saying, repent, for the kingdom of, say it with me, heaven is at hand. So heaven is, this is, Jesus is proclaiming the kingdom of heaven, and heaven is God's space.

Heaven is where God's rule and reign are totally evident and unquestioned all the time. But this is not heaven. This is earth.

This is the world that we live in, and unfortunately, the one who has been delegated authority over this world is not very good. He is Satan. He has been given authority to rule over this world.

But all of a sudden, Jesus shows up on the scene here, and he says, behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent, the kingdom of heaven is here. So we see that God's rule is invading Satan's jurisdiction.

[7:35] God's reign has come near. That sounds like good news. But how? How has it come near? In what way has it come near? In the person who's speaking these words.

In the person of Jesus. This guy, Jesus, who is God with us. God himself drawn near to his rebellious image bearers to reestablish his reign over them and to do good to them for all time.

This sounds like a best case scenario to me. This sounds like good news. So what's the gospel of the kingdom? What's the good news about God's reign?

The good news is that God's reign has drawn near to us through the personal presence of the king. God's reign has drawn near to us to humans through the personal presence of the king.

And this passage is going to paint three pictures of what that personal presence of the king is going to do and why that's good. So let's look at these three pictures that this passage is going to show us about how this rule of God come near to us in the personal presence of the king is going to be good and do good for God's people and how we can respond to that today.

[8:59] Ready? Picture number one. Our king has drawn near to be the great light in our darkness. That's the first picture. Our king has drawn near

to be the great light in our darkness.

Let's read verses 12 through 17. Read with me. Now, when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light.

And for those dwelling in the region in the shadow of death, on them a light has dawned. From that time, Jesus began to preach saying, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Literally, has come near. He's in the state of being near. So what's Matthew trying to paint a picture of here? It appears he's just telling us that Jesus made a geographical move from the south of Israel in Judea where he was baptized up to the north of Israel and to Galilee.

[10:25] So what's the big deal? But there's a big deal. There's a very intentional, significant reason that Matthew has given us this detail about Jesus' life and he's going to give us the significance through the lens of a prophecy made 700 years before Jesus was born in Isaiah chapter 9.

That sounds very interesting. So, let's go there. hop over to me, with me, to Isaiah chapter 9. I just want you guys to see this in the context. Isaiah chapter 9. Isaiah's kind of right in the middle of your Bible. Isaiah chapter 9. We just read, basically, the first two verses of Isaiah chapter 9 in Matthew chapter 4.

Matthew's quoting Isaiah. And I just want to read the rest of this passage and I want you to get a feel for what and who Matthew is talking about as he's talking about this light dawning.

You have multiplied the nation. I'm starting at verse 3. You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with the joy at the harvest. Man, there's a lot of joy going on.

[11:43] And they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. No more war. Broken yoke on their backs.

For what reason? For to us a child is born. This should sound familiar. To us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end and on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

That's what Matthew has in mind as he is quoting Isaiah chapter 9. So Jesus, he's making a very clear connection here.

Jesus is that one that Isaiah 9 is talking about. The son that was given. The child that was born. The one who is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.

[12:59] The one who is Everlasting Father. The one who has the government of God's people on his shoulder and he can bear it. The one who is going to sit on the throne of David. I mean it just keeps going.

It's the Messiah. It's God's King. The one is finally come and he's about to announce his reign. But the really interesting thing is where is he going to do it?

Where is he going to announce God's reign? His reign come to invade Satan's jurisdiction. Is he going to do it in Jerusalem? I mean Jerusalem was the capital city. It was the city of David.

That's where David's throne was, his ancestor. So that's where God's presence resides in the temple. That's where the sacrifices are made. That's where God communes with his people.

That's where the power and the influences politically. All the important Jews live there. Is he going to do it there? No, he goes to Galilee. Galilee was a little bustling backwater of a region that was far away from the Jewish center of power.

[14:02] Why did he go there? Galilee was quite a melting pot of diversity. It was a Jewish territory. There were Jews living there. It was the ancient territory of the tribes Zebulun and Naphtali according to

Isaiah 9.

But in the 8th century BC a bunch of crazy Assyrians rode in at God's bidding and they took out the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali and destroyed their towns and villages and carved off the survivors to Assyria and they went into exile.

And in their place came a whole lot of different pagan, non-Jew, not knowing living God people and they came and they settled in that area and eventually some exiles trickled back.

Jews coming back and they settled there. So Galilee was just a it was a melting pot. There were Jews there. There were Gentiles there. And in Jesus' time it was it was kind of like St. Louis was 150 years ago.

St. Louis was the gateway to the west. Everyone driven through St. Louis seen the arch? Okay. It's the gateway to the west. You go to St. Louis and if you want to go to the west you go through St. Louis and that's where you get on the Oregon Trail to go west.

[15:14] Well, Galilee was like that only it was the gateway to the heathen north and the heathen east. And the roads from the Roman Empire ran down through Galilee.

And so lots of trade routes were set up that ran to east to the Mediterranean or west to the Mediterranean coast as well as to the riches in the east in the old Persian Empire.

And so all these places were surrounded by Galilee was surrounded by heathen people. People who didn't know the living God. People who were living in darkness.

There were Jews there too but they were certainly influenced by their Gentile neighbors. So why did he go there? Why did Jesus go to this place?

You might be tempted to think that he's acting out of fear because we just read that John had been arrested. But Satan, Jesus has just been staring down Satan in the wilderness.

[16:13] I don't think he's afraid of being arrested. This is Jesus we're talking about. Did you notice the verbs that were used? He withdrew into Galilee. That sounds very intentional.

And he went and he lived. Literally he settled down. He took up housekeeping in Capernaum. So there's intention here. But what is that intention?

It's because these people were living in darkness. It's because they were dwelling. Literally the word for dwelling means sitting. They were sitting in darkness.

For those sitting in the region and the shadow of death a light has dawned. Jesus has come to be the light in the darkness.

Where it was most needed Jesus came to dawn the light of the kingdom. And what does he do? He announces his kingdom.

[17:13] Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Isaiah saw it 700 years before Jesus came. The king would come and he would announce and begin his reign of light not in the center of the cultural hub of Jerusalem but in the backwater of Galilee where much light was needed.

God's been doing this for the whole of history. Even from the very beginning of the garden when Adam and Eve fell he promised that he would send a snake crusher.

He promised that he would send someone to deliver God's people from the darkness. And then he gave a promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 where he says all the nations of the earth will be blessed through your family.

God set a rescue plan into motion and that was God's mission to save to dawn the light upon those who were in darkness. And now it's happening.

Where there was total darkness and no hope the king came and the light was dawned. And the cool thing is they didn't ask for it.

[18:27] They weren't looking for it. It was unanticipated. It was kind of like the shepherds watching their flocks by night. They weren't asking for a bunch of angels to show up and blind them with the glory of heaven and tell them he's here!

It was totally by grace that Jesus has come to dawn upon those in darkness. But did you notice that the presence of the king and the announcement of his reign demands action?

What does Jesus say? Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Those dwelling in darkness must respond to the light that has dawned upon them by turning from the darkness and of sin and

self-sufficiency and pride and turn toward the light of the king who has drawn near to them to be their light in the darkness.

Can I ask you something? Have you seen this light? Have you seen the light? Has this light dawned upon you? If you're a Christian then it has.

I want to remind you of the words of a beautiful hymn written by Charles Wesley. Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray.

[19:48] I woke the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off. My heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed thee. Many of you remember what that dungeon was like.

I do. You still remember the feeling of being trapped by sin and the way that your enemy was in power over you. You still feel the effects of it.

The ache of that. But you have seen the great light and the light has set you free. So what are you to do? Rejoice. Be grateful.

This light did not, you did not deserve for this light to dawn upon you. You were in darkness and a light dawned on you. But maybe you don't remember.

Maybe you're a Christian but maybe you don't remember what that dungeon was like. Maybe your heart has become hard and desensitized to sin after a while.

[20:43] This happens to me. Happens to all of us. Your eyes have become accustomed to the darkness maybe again. It doesn't seem so bad because your eyes haven't been looking at the great light of the gospel for a while.

So brother or sister if that's you can I speak some words of encouragement to you? Stop and ask God to cause a light of the gospel of the glory of Jesus to shine in your heart once again.

Ask God to get your eyes on the blinding light of his glory and let your eyes adjust to how beautiful it is so you can see your sin so you can confess your sin repent and turn again to the light.

Don't let this world satisfy you with its promises of comfort and convenience and contentment because the king has come to give us life and life abundant that far outweighs anything the world can give.

Maybe you're wondering what the big deal is. Maybe you're wondering darkness, light those sound like exclusive polarizing terms I mean come on what's the big deal? Our modern culture we've kind of moved past that right?

[21:53] We don't really like terms like that pure good and evil light and dark but the message of the Bible is clear there is a king and he is good and he is drawn near to be light to those in darkness and so if you are not under his rule can I encourage you you will continue in the darkness living under the shadow of sin and death unless you turn and repent and see the light of the glory of Jesus he has come to give you life so can I ask you to learn a little bit more to ask questions and to put your life under this great light that has shown in your darkness our king has drawn near and his coming was like the rising of the sun to scatter the deepest darkness picture number two our king has drawn near to be our light and our darkness our king now picture number two our king has drawn near to call his own to himself let's read verses 18 through 22 read with me please while walking by the sea of Galilee he saw two brothers

Simon who was called Peter and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen and he said to them follow me and I will make you fishers of men immediately they left their nets and they followed him and going on from there he saw two other brothers James the son of Zebedee and John his brother in the boat with Zebedee at their father mending their nets and he called them also immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him a couple things stand out about this little picture we see here first it's interesting Jesus begins small he's just made this huge announcement the kingdom of heaven has drawn near we're kind of expecting this some world changing drama to happen right massive movements put into action but what happens instead Jesus walks along the shore of this lake he sees two fishermen tells them to follow him they leave their stuff and they follow him and this happens again to two other guys that's it not very world changing so far the kingdom isn't doing anything big just four local fishermen that's the cool thing about what Matthew wants us to see about God's rule coming in

King Jesus is all about God doesn't work according to our expectations Jesus' kingdom is an upside down kingdom it works against human expectations it starts small it's not flashy God works God works though very powerfully through small faith filled people Jesus is interested in get this Jesus is interested in individuals people like you and me he's got his eye on massive movements but he's interested in individuals he calls his own to himself one by one so do you see that this morning Matthew wants us to see this is the way the individuals get into the kingdom of heaven we are called by the king personally do you ever doubt that Jesus cares about you that you have a place or a role in God's kingdom let this passage assure you of something if you're a kingdom Jesus has called you individually personally he looked at you and he said I want you in my kingdom he didn't send out a massive generic Facebook invitation to everyone in his social media circle no he looked up your address he walked to your house he knocked on the door and he said follow me he came near to you you weren't looking for him and he came near to you in grace Jesus cares about you he calls individuals notice this too did you also notice that there's a cost did you notice that there's a cost to following Jesus these disciples leave their jobs and their families by the way Galilee had a very thriving fishing industry they had good jobs upper middle class they were doing well it's not like they're just you know straggling for the next bite to eat and Jesus comes along and offers them something better it's not it there's a cost here in our culture we value financial independence and security and that's a good thing

I'm not saying you should quit your job to follow Jesus and I'm saying that however I'm saying that Jesus demands our whole hearts and our whole lives our jobs are his our families are his our goals are his our money is his our retirement is his our priorities are his so are you withholding something from your king is there something that you know he is requiring of you in obedience and trust but you're saying I'll follow you Jesus I like you but our king demands our lives and he promises us true life whatever he demands of us he will supply to us a hundredfold as we trust him and obey him in this world or the next it's another part of Matthew is he part of your life or is he your life lastly notice something else about this picture he promises to transform the disciples into people fishermen fishers of men not just men men women children people fishermen fishers of people he is the one who transforms us into useful members of his community as we follow him he's not looking for the rock stars of the varsity

[28:15] Christian team he is looking for small faith filled people who will give him their lives and trust him with their whole hearts and he promises to make us into fishers of men do you notice that I will make you fishers of men I don't know about you but I'm really bad at sharing my faith I'll just be honest I don't think I have the gift of evangelism I definitely know people who do but guess what Jesus promises to make me one to make me an evangelist to make me into a fishers of men some are better than others naturally for sure but he has called us all to be fishers of men part of following Jesus is seeing his light having the light dawn upon you and then also seeing that there are some in darkness and they desperately need the light and that's here in this area here in your neighborhood and that's also in China and that's also in the universities of this land that's also in Europe that's also in Africa that's also in the Muslim world all over the place people need to hear the gospel people need to be fished into the kingdom and he promises to make us into fishers of his kingdom and so if that sounds like an incredible task it is but he has promised to do it after service we can have an opportunity to start small we got a ministry fair going on downstairs our mission as a church is to just join

Jesus and his mission of fishing people out of the darkness and into the light and so come downstairs after the service and find out where you can meaningfully be a part of our mission which is Jesus' mission to make disciples of all nations picture number three so our king is drawn near to be our light in our darkness he's drawn near to call his own to himself and three our king has drawn near to deliver all people from the power of sin and evil he's drawn near to deliver all people from the power of sin and evil read with me verses 23 through 25 and he went throughout all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people so his fame spread throughout all Syria and

they brought to him all the sick those afflicted with various diseases and pains those oppressed by demons epileptics and paralytics and he healed them and great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and from Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan so this little section right here kind of serves as a summary that Matthew is going to use to springboard us into the next several chapters of his gospel so it's a summary of what Jesus did in Galilee in proclaiming the good news of the kingdom so we're going to see in the weeks and months to come this little summary gets spelled out in greater detail but even in this little teaser there are two big things that stand out

I want you guys to see first the king is on the move and he's on the move for all people the king is on the move and he's on the move for all people I absolutely love the Chronicles of Narnia I'm sure I think I've already said that before from the pulpit I love the Chronicles of Narnia and there's this part in the Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe when the four Pevensie children are in Mr. and Mrs. Beaver's house and they hear the name of Aslan for the first time and they have no idea who Mr. and Mrs. Beaver are talking about but they hear them say Aslan is on the move and they don't even know who Aslan is and yet they feel this thrill rise in their hearts Aslan is on the move the king is on the move here did you notice all the alls and the everys he is moving and did you see all the geographical place names Galilee Decapolis Jerusalem Judea beyond the Jordan Syria holy smokes the king is moving and he's moving to all people so he went throughout all Galilee did you notice that verse 23 teaching preaching and healing tons of people every disease and every affliction among the people that means everything that was brought to him he dealt with it everything he encountered he dealt with it but his activity in all of Galilee also made his fame spread to all of Syria verse 24 by the way

Syria is just probably just the Roman province that included all of Palestine and the surrounding area so this is Jews Gentiles everybody so it's a big area and so his fame is spread from his operation in Galilee it's gone out and then we see great crowds are following him from Galilee Decapolis Galilee's in the north Decapolis is in the southeast on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee Jerusalem and Judea all the way in the south you have to come over lots of mountains to get up to Galilee from Jerusalem and Judea and then beyond the Jordan which is probably the area to the southeast south of the Decapolis and so oh and the west is not mentioned because that's the Mediterranean Sea there's nobody there so basically they're everywhere where there are people around and they were coming to Jesus and the blessings of God's rule and his reign were coming to them through him he's on the move secondly notice this the good news of the king's nearness to all these people came in the form of deliverance from the effects of and the consequences of sin and evil

Jesus' healings were like little sparks of light in the darkness that signaled the breaking in of God's good rule to undo and heal the brokenness of our world they were signs of his kingly credentials that yes he is the king spreading God's kingdom to the kingdom of darkness by healing all and every kind of ugly effect of the fall of man that he encountered he was exercising the kingly authority to extend the blessings of his rule mastering every illness and disease among them simply by his presence simply by his word simply by his touch if you read through the healings of Jesus throughout the gospels all he does is just touch or heal people but with a word that's all he does he speaks a word or he touches them or he make a little mud thingamajig and put it on their eyes it's just simple it's not there were ancient healers in this time who just made elaborate healing methods and they kind of wrote books of how to heal by mixing this potion and that

[35:06] Jesus says it's gone done that's his authority and so it's a little spark of light in the darkness physical ailments even paralysis total disability you're paralyzed this was considered incurable by the way by all those ancient healers they were subject to him with a word mental disabilities like epilepsy were mastered by him with a word spiritual torment through demonic influence was abruptly ended by a word from the son of God I'm really grateful for modern medicine I think it's a wonderful thing it's God's blessing on the age we live in but it can't hold a candle to this kind of authority our king simply mastered every form of illness just by virtue of his authority of his person and it shouldn't surprise us he's the king of life he's the light in the darkness but even more than that

Jesus' healings they were signs of his authority signs of God's rule breaking into this kingdom of darkness but even more than that they were pointing forward to what Jesus was going to do that Isaiah 53 had announced beforehand that we were he was crushed for our iniquities he was pierced for our transgressions the chastisement that brought us peace was upon him by his wounds we were healed and so all this is pointing forward to all of his healings are pointing forward to the way that he would heal the entire broken world and every lost human soul that comes to him by taking on all the darkness into himself and beating it on the cross and the empty tomb he came to deliver all people from the effects and the power of sin and evil the darkness no longer has dominion still has a presence we still live in this world that is affected by sin and evil we all feel it we all feel those creaks and groans of our own bodies and of creation we're under the weight of the curse of sin and death we feel sickness and disease and suffering but now and forever our king has showed that he is authoritative over all of that and one day he's going to come he's going to put an end to all of that listen to Revelation 21

I heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold the dwelling place of God is with man God is with man God with us he will dwell with them and they will be his people God himself will be with them as they're did you hear how many withs there were with us Emmanuel God is with us now and forever and forever he will wipe away every tear from their eyes death will be no more and neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away because Christ has taken it all into himself at the cross so on this side of Revelation 21 we still feel it but we also know that our king has power over it are you feeling the effects and the power of sin and evil at work in your own life or in the lives of those that you are close to there is nothing outside the authority of King Jesus there is no chain of sin no spiritual oppression no work of the enemy that he cannot break or turn on its head go to him in prayer the elders will be here in front at the end of the service if you want to come and pray

Christ the King Church your king is drawn near to you his rule and his reign are near to you this is good news and it is good news to all people and all kinds of people Jew Gentile Chinese and American to us to the people in your neighborhoods to the people you work with the people of all nations he is the light in our darkness he calls us as his own he delivers us and all people from the darkness of sin and death and Satan so repent if you need to repent for the kingdom of heaven is drawn near to you give to him what he asks of you in grace and know that he is calling you to be his own and trust that he will make you into a fisher of men and rejoice in his reign of great light let's pray father we thank you that you did not have to but you drew near to us to say that the kingdom of heaven is near god the kingdom of heaven is still near to us because you are with us and you've promised to be with us to the very end of the age and you've given us jobs to do to be the light and the darkness in your place ambassadors of the light

I pray god that you would help us to do that I pray that you would equip us as we go to the ministry fair to do that well God would you strengthen us as a church to be on your mission to be trusting in the light that is dawned and to be spreading that light God I pray that you would cause the light to dawn on all those within the hearing of this word cause that light to dawn in power would you bring repentance where it is needed we ask this God in Christ's name Amen