

Everyday Kingdom Living

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[0 : 0 0] You're listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee. To learn more about us, visit our website at gracereformed.org.

And now, today's sermon. Through men's group and youth that we had this last week and the parenting seminar that we had, one of the themes that keeps coming up is the kingdom, the kingdom of Christ.

What does it look like to live for the king? This is something that I have been encouraged by and studying and rethinking through for the last several years since we did the Lord's Prayer when we literally pray, your kingdom come.

What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of Christ? And so that's what we're going to look at this morning using Timothy, Paul's letter to Timothy, thinking through how Paul words certain things and then making practical application for us for today.

So we're going to really just kind of walk through. There's four sections. There's four verses. We're going to walk through each verse and try to look at it not only in its original context, but how does this apply when we walk out of these doors?

[1 : 1 8] And what does this look like at every age that is in this room and at every stage of life? So I'm excited. This section of scripture has been one that's fascinated me for a long time.

We've been, as elders, we've talked about it and as men around the fire, we've talked about it. So this is something that I've been pretty excited about for a while as we get ready because first, or second Peter is really going to jump into kind of the heart behind living for the king in a time of suffering as he continues from his first letter.

So as we look at verse one, here's the breakdown. Here's part one. As we're thinking about what does it mean to live for a king in a kingdom.

Before I jump into this, let me set a stage for us. United States is unique for us. Tom was just talking about the elections that are coming up. In world history, you didn't choose your leaders.

They were chosen for you by many different means. The idea of living in a king and under a kingdom is foreign. Most of us have not been raised in this way.

[2 : 3 0] And so this is not a language we're familiar with. Not only that, but it's very hard as physical beings to think about spiritual realities. We all face this.

Especially when Paul says, walk by the spirit to not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Does anybody ever struggle with that verse? I do. I was thinking about it this morning. What does that mean?

How do I walk by something I cannot see to control something I can see? This is very hard. When we're thinking about Christ's kingdom, Jesus was very clear that it's not one that we can see.

You can't point it and say, there's the king. There's the kingdom. But we want to do that. We want to feel the power and the strength that is connected to something that is real and physical.

It is interesting. There's a reason why we're going to look at multiple times in Scripture when Paul says, don't be ashamed of the message. Think about our message for a moment. You tell people you believe in a king who's above all other kings.

[3 : 28] He's the creator of the universe. He has a kingdom and it's powerful. There's nothing more powerful than his kingdom. He has saved you and he's going to take you to his new world and his new kingdom.

You know what that sounds like? The fantasy section of Barnes and Noble. That's what that sounds like. In the middle of a war, when someone is struggling with cancer, when we can see all of the pain and suffering, you are offering them a power that does not affect or influence their struggle right now.

They're saying, how does your kingdom help me right now? Now, this is why it can sound foolish. Now, you come and offer a solution that affects my bank account, it affects the economy, it affects my health, it affects my safety.

I will put my trust in that savior. I will put my trust in that power. Even if that power is lesser than the claims of Jesus, I will trust in him. So, this is the struggle that we face.

And this is what Paul and Peter and the New Testament writers are trying to get our eyes off of what we can see to open our eyes behind what we can't see. I was talking to the youth about this on Thursday.

[4 : 42] There are multiple times in scripture where it says that there is something that's standing before them that's spiritual, whether it's an angel or a chariot's fire. You guys remember the story of Balaam and the donkey or Balaam's donkey?

So, the donkey stops walking and he gets angry. And then Balaam starts having this conversation with the donkey. By the way, that's just fascinating to me that his first question isn't, how are you talking to me?

But he goes ahead and has a conversation. Secondly, this is just for funsies to keep you awake this morning. The Bible says that God opened his mouth, meaning like he had the capacity, but it's limited.

Now, he's opening it up for a little while. Now, C.S. Lewis seemed to think that animals used to be able to talk. I don't know. We get to heaven, we might be having conversations with the rover. We might not be. I don't know. But it says that God opened Balaam's eyes to see what was already there, physically there, stopping the donkey.

And that was the angel of the Lord. So, there are interactions that we have in our world. There are, there's real forces, there's real entities that are presently here, but our mind and our spiritual capacities are limited to where we can't see them.

[5 : 56] But we are to interact with them and we are to be aware of them. And this is how Paul is writing, speaking about being a part of a war that we see the physical influences of, but we don't see the powers behind it.

And so, we're going to look into that. I think the only way that our life can truly be kingdom-minded is that we have to constantly be renewing our minds, not by physical means, not by what we can see, but what we can't see.

And this only comes to us from Scripture. So, verse 1 says this, You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Jesus, when we're thinking about the kingdom that we live in, we're, we're citizens. We are literally citizens of a whole nother kingdom, by a whole nother ruler, in a whole nother world.

And he says, you don't live in the same power as everyone else does. So, this is our first point. The first reality that we have when we're thinking about living in the kingdom is that we live by a different power.

[6 : 57] You could also say we live under a different power. If you turn with me, if you're in 2 Timothy chapter 2, go to chapter 1. Paul also references this, and he explains it in light of the suffering.

But 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 7, he says this, So, he is pointing us to saying we're going to be living.

We literally don't have to be afraid of anything. Physical death, physical pain, spiritual attacks, there's nothing we need to be afraid of. Because we're not standing in our own strength.

We're not standing in our own might. He literally says, you're standing for the gospel. And when you do this, which is God's grace upon you, when you do this, you're standing in God's power. I don't know about you, but this week I have felt often very weak.

And very frail. And very set back. Because of my weakness. And thinking through that when God looks to me and calls me to do his work. To love my wife and to love my children and to love my neighbors.

[8 : 17] And take care of you. And advance the gospel. I'm thinking, man, I just can't do this. He's like, in your own strength, you cannot. This is why we don't do it in our own strength. But we, it's hard for humans to function this way.

Right? We are so ingrained and born and trained to trust in ourselves. To trust in our own strength. He does not say your strength is in your talent.

Your efforts. Your faithfulness. Your abilities. How many of you, you don't have to raise your hand, but how many of you struggle with the comparativeness?

Right? You compare yourself to everybody. How they work. How they act. How they look. We've got some of us who are honest in here. Yeah. We all face this. I think social media has only exacerbated this issue to where, by the way, just to encourage all of you, whatever you see on there, you know it's like not real, right?

It's totally fake. Totally fake. My favorite thing is to watch couples come into my office and their marriage is literally on the brink of corruption and the next day I see this post as if their marriage is all better now.

[9 : 24] I'm like, right. Right. So who is that for? Everybody's like, I am not coming to see him for marriage counseling. My plan worked. I should get back to my notes.

Anyways. No, what's interesting is that when we're thinking about doing something that seems impossible to live for an invisible kingdom, there's no way we're going to accomplish this if we're going to try and figure it out in our own flesh, in our own mind.

He says this. He says that it's the grace that is in Jesus Christ. So it's not by our power, capacity, abilities, and knowledge.

He says it's grace. And it's grace that picks us up day after day when we have sinned against the king. The thing is, people keep telling me you need to stop emphasizing grace, John, or people won't obey.

And I'm like, I don't know what you're reading, but Paul just said your strength comes from grace. The forgiveness that is in Jesus Christ, the undeserved love, the undeserved power he puts upon your life, when you sin against him, it's grace that draws us back into him.

[10 : 35] If you think I'm going to stand up here and give you means for your flesh to fulfill spiritual kingdom work, it cannot be done. This is why week after week, we need to sing about the solid rock. We need to read of scripture that is his power for us, not our own.

And secondly, it's grace that reminds us that we have hope because our future is in God's hands and not ours. Let me tell you what, there are times you can look at your life, you can look at your country, and you're thinking to yourself, there doesn't seem to be a relief point coming.

There isn't a moment where I feel like I'm going to finally arrive. How many of you have the arrival fallacy? This is, I have it. When I get to this area of income, when I get to this weight, when I get to this level of acceptance, when my children get to this age, I've always thought like, all right, when my kids are older and they're not, you know, messing up their diapers anymore, life's going to be easier.

It was until I found out there were other problems that five-year-olds get into. And I thought, okay, when I no longer have to feed them and put them to bed and they can take care of themselves. And then every stage is difficult.

And as a matter of fact, I hate to disappoint you parents, it just gets harder as they get older. Someone lied to me. Like, how did that happen? I was like, if you would have stayed one, this would have been a lot easier.

[11 : 51] Now I know what's to come. And poor Knox, man, that poor kid, he got the brunt of the first three we failed on. All right, buddy, we're going to try our best on you now. The grace of God reminds us that our future is not in our current circumstances and it's not in our capacities.

Third, it is grace that reminds us that he loves us no matter our past, present circumstances or whatever future that awaits us.

The most powerful motivation that every person has in this room is love. We will do the absolute crazy things for the love of our children.

You've heard the stories about what moms have done, like picking up entire cars to move them out of love for their child, protection for their child. Love is a massive motivation. God doesn't want us to be afraid of him.

Literally, it says he's not giving us a spirit of fear. First John says that his love should remove all fear. So we need the powerful strength of God's love that comes to us through grace, reminding us that God's love does not increase or decrease based upon our performance.

[13 : 08] We do this to each other in our marriages, in our friendships. We can go distant from each other or go closer based on our experience with each other.

But God's experience with us doesn't change. My favorite part about my relationship with Jesus is this. He goes, yeah, when you were your absolute worst, you could not get any worse than you were, that's when I saved you.

So you wouldn't think that there could be a circumstance worse than this one. You can't get any worse than underneath the wrath of God. So now that you're in his love, that cannot change.

That's part of the strength. Then we start thinking about, well, why would I want to serve any earthly king or myself or anything else when I have that kind of love waiting for me? But it's that kind of love that we forget because we replace it all the time.

And number, the last one is, it is grace that comforts us in our suffering, knowing that his strength will keep our faith, not our faithfulness. As we have already, Tom has already prayed and we've already acknowledged, there's a lot of suffering that goes on in our world.

[14 : 12] There are many in here, in this room today that I have spoken with this week or the last several weeks that you are suffering. And it's really hard to make sense of suffering.

We were talking about this with the youth on Thursday. Today, that how can an all-powerful God, who has as much strength as he claims that he does, let such horrible things happen to us?

And he never tells us the answer to that other than, my grace is sufficient. If you trust me, I will never fail you. And you being in suffering and you being in calamity is not God failing and it's not you failing God.

I was watching something yesterday and the crops had been destroyed and the first thing under the guy's mouth is, what did I do for God to do this to me?

And that's how, isn't that how we work? God will keep me good as long as I obey him and God will hurt me if I disobey him. But this is not how the world works. So, in order for us to survive a suffering world that is collapsing, that is under immense amount of dark pressure, the only way we make it through is the power of grace in the gospel for ourselves.

[15 : 28] So, when we think about how are we going to survive in this world, we're going to survive by the gospel, by the grace of God. Number two, look at verse two. So, number one is we live by a different power.

First Timothy 2.2, And what have you heard from me in the presence of many witnesses and trust of faithful men who will be able to teach others also? Paul is setting it up that in our kingdom, we live to disciple others.

So, we live by a different power and we live to disciple others. This is definitely in connection to point one. When you learn to live by a strength found in Christ, this doesn't come naturally.

The church would be meaningless if we could do this on our own, by the way. If all of a sudden, Jesus lives in you, the Holy Spirit's power is in you, and he's the one who just does the work, and you don't, you just sit back and let go and let God, this would be awesome, by the way.

It would be great. My job would be super simple and super easy. Your parents, your job as parents would be easy, but this is not how it works. God says that we are both a sinner and a saint.

[16 : 36] We still wrestle. We're not fully glorified yet. We still have to be trained in the ways of righteousness. Many of us here continue to walk in our own strength, making the same mistakes and falling into the same traps week in and week out because we fill our schedules tightly, so tight that we cannot actually have our souls and our minds trained in the means of grace, in God's grace.

When we call ourselves a disciple of Jesus, when we say that we live for the king and his kingdom, do our words match our actual heart's desires and the implications of our actions?

So when Paul is talking about, it's interesting how he says, to faithful men, it's those who are willing to see the kingdom as the priority of the heart and their mind and dedicate it to them.

They will be entrusted with this truth, who then is going to what? Pass it down. Discipleship is a part of the kingdom work. We bring people into the kingdom and then we train them how to think and live different.

I think that it's hard sometimes. We see Sunday mornings as basically all that is necessary. But in the membership class, for those of you that are going or have gone through it with myself or Curtis, one of the parts that we go over is the difference between teaching and preaching.

[18 : 07] Preaching is designed to encourage and strengthen your heart, to convict your heart and lead you back into the mercy of Christ. Teaching is very different. Teaching is designed to train you in the way of Christ.

One is for faith and encouragement and building up and one is for development. But you need both in a healthy diet. And so we've had to be creative in our church because we don't have access to this building all the time.

We will very soon have access to our own place. But we've had to be creative using men's and women's groups, using Saturday grace academies and different opportunities for teaching.

But these are designed so that we can learn how to function in the kingdom. But we tend to see these as, well, not really necessary. This one really connects with the next one, which is this.

If we look at verse 3, he says, share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We live by a different power.

[19 : 09] We live to disciple others or to be under discipleship because, number 3, we live in the devil's domain. Turn with me very quick to Colossians chapter 1.

This is why he says we share in suffering as a good soldier. He's using wartime language because we don't live in the king's kingdom yet. His spirit is here.

His work is being done. But we are not living in the king's kingdom. Why do we suffer? And what does suffering look like? Does this mean that we will be put in a prison here in the United States because we've been, or we're going to be chased down?

Are we going to be killed? I don't know. Maybe. Maybe not in my lifetime. Maybe in my children's. It's possible. But that's not the type of, I don't think Christianity has always been underneath the extreme persecution that we do see at times in church history.

I think it might be more common and more normal that we live underneath the mocking and criticisms of others. Look at Colossians chapter 1 and verse 13.

[20 : 19] He introduces the early church to this idea. He says this, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness, or you could translate that kingdom of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

So we live in physical proximity. We live in the kingdom of darkness. This is still ruled and reigned by a force that is evil. God has not brought judgment upon humanity, and he's not brought judgment upon spiritual rebellion yet.

He will. So there's two kingdoms at war. We've been transferred out of the one that everyone else still lives in, and we have been set free. We've been delivered. What's interesting is that the delivery means that we were held captive.

So his power freed us of the sinful passions of our flesh. And Satan never, so we're not underneath his force anymore to do his will.

But for those who are still in the kingdom of darkness, it's interesting. James uses this language where he says that he lures us, he entices us, he baits us to do the very things that we want.

[21 : 31] So we are a slave of the kingdom of darkness willfully because he keeps gratifying us with that which we want. You guys remember in the chronicles of Narnia where the white witch uses the Turkish delight to bribe, oh, what's his name?

Edmund. You all are listening. This is awesome. I start talking about Narnia. Everybody goes, what? What? Edmund, right? So he comes back. He totally deceives himself because she's totally going after his flesh.

And he brings his brothers and sisters back and what does he ask for? Well, it's too late. He's now caught, trapped, and in prison. This is what is happening in the kingdom of darkness.

If you've ever been around an addict, they will say and do almost anything to get their next fix, to satisfy their flesh. They are not controlled by love or sound logic, but by their addiction to satisfy their body's hunger.

It's horrible to watch. Turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 4. There's a reason why when we have been set free, we're no longer living in our flesh.

[22 : 43] We're now living in the freedom of our king. Our eyes have been opened. We act out of love, not out of compulsion. Our passions is not what drives us. Jesus is what drives us.

Peter speaks about this. This is just as a reminder of something we have covered several months ago. 1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 1. Since therefore Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

You know, arm means to like brace yourself. Brace for impact. Have you ever told your kids this? You're about to either go over a big bump or about to slam on the brakes? Hey guys, brace yourself.

Because what you're about to endure could be painful. Why is it painful? Well, because we're no longer going to be indulging ourselves in the addiction that the world is in.

So as to live for the rest of the time, verse 2, in the flesh no longer for human passions, but for the will of God. For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

[23 : 49] With respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and malign you. Why are they surprised? Because everybody does it.

Everybody does this. And you are the strange, weird person that doesn't. And it comes across to them as judgmentalism. So what they do is they don't applaud you.

Wow, what great morals you have. Like, who are you to judge me? Hey, I should be able to live however I want. And we're going, so should we. We should be able to live how we want.

But according to you, we can't. We're not asking you to live our way. We're just telling you we don't want to live your way. And they're like, no, you're maligned. So when he's warning us about the suffering, we are going to suffer because we're going to fight against the very thing that they're indulging in, which is destructive to them, destructive to everyone around them.

And it's a total defaming of God. But we're not judging them. We're just saying, no, we're not going to participate. We see them as captives of a domain of darkness. This is why it's so important, church, as we go through politics.

[24 : 58] It's interesting to me how it's just mudslinging. Do not fall into this trap. It doesn't matter what side parties are on. They're both in the domain of darkness.

They both need Christ. Let's be reminding that our mission is not a political party. And I'm not saying it's wrong to choose one. What I am saying is don't lose sight of the real kingdom work.

And that all of a sudden, I've heard some horrible things said about our president. I've heard some horrible things said about our vice president, about a president's elect, all of this. And I don't think some of them are untrue.

I think some of it's true, but it's the attitude behind it. We need to remind ourselves, as Peter tells us, we need to pray for them. As we do every Sunday, this is why we pray for our leaders.

To remind ourselves they are the mission field. They are not proclaiming to be of Christ. They are leading their decision-making process by the domain of darkness.

[25 : 57] This is going to be a conversation that we're going to have to deal with for the rest of our lives.

Almost every New Testament letter deals with the struggle that we face as we proclaim our faith and say no to the world. At the parenting seminar, we covered this subject related to things like dating, sexuality, and modesty.

I think the Christian world has been influenced by Satan so much so that they have inappropriately dealt with this, where it creates legalism and harshness.

Because of this, many of us have been under these type of harsh Christianities. Therefore, we now want to refrain from it, and we balk and kick back. We hear the word modesty, and it's a dirty word in our mouth.

No, modesty is a good word. What it means is that we are appropriately reflecting that which is a part of our heart. What is on the inside is reflected on the outside.

[26 : 59] It doesn't matter if you're male or female. So the way in which we interact in romance, the way we think about sexuality, and the way we think about our bodies and how we represent ourselves, we get excited about those because they are a reflection of the freedom that we have in Jesus.

Instead, we turn them into rules and regulations to beat each other up. I don't appreciate that either. But that doesn't mean we throw everything out because it's done wrong.

If you're still in 1 Peter, look at verse 3 again. He says, For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

This describes our culture today. I think it describes every culture that's ever existed. What is at the center of all of our entertainment and advertisement? Just this verse alone.

When we as Christians call this a prison, and it is a prison, we refuse to engage or even endorse, we're mocked. We're mocked for it.

[28 : 03] This is part of the suffering that Peter is talking about, that Paul is talking about. My children have felt this. I know that your children have felt this. When they choose to be appropriate in their language, appropriate in their dress, in their interactions, they want to honor the king instead of drawing attention to their bodies.

I know that many of the youth in here have been mocked and laughed at because they will not participate in school or in activities or their sports team, in the sexual jokes or the movies that are going on.

And it's hard for them. They come back and say, why is it that we can't just not participate in it be okay? Because they're blind. The evil one not only imprisons them, he turns their hearts.

But here's the key. He's not to blame. Because what does Paul say? They want to do this. They're responsible.

They're guilty. He simply set the bait. They ate it. Church, I don't want to speak in theories. I speak feeling the same pressures that every parent here faces.

[29 : 15] But I refuse to let my children live in a prison of Satan so they can be accepted by those who are blind and addicted to their flesh.

And it is hard. It is hard to raise a child to live for the king in a world that does not understand the difference. So yes, I think it's not, you know, sometimes we think, oh, we're going to be persecuted because we're trying to preach the gospel and they hate Jesus.

No, we're going to be suffering because we actually believe in the morals of the kingdom. We actually believe that it is healthy and good to live in the freedom of Christ.

And then when we say, oh, no, this is unhealthy. This is damaging to the image of God. This is not how God has designed the world to be. You're living in prisons. When you speak like that, you will be persecuted.

So why do we refrain from our flesh? Just because it's wrong? No. No. We're not just in the world so we can tell the world that they're wrong. And this leads us to our last and final point of what Paul is getting to in verse 4.

[30 : 23] He says this. So turn back with me to 2 Timothy chapter 4. Our fourth and final point is that we live for a different purpose.

When we live in a kingdom, our purpose is different. And it is seen here in the negative.

Paul points out what we're not doing. And then he points out what we are doing. So 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 4, it says this. No soldier gets entangled in the civilian pursuits or in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

I often like to see how other translators have translated this. Some of you have these Bibles here. This is the New King James Version. It says, no one engages in warfare, engages himself with the affairs of this life.

That's how they translated it. The New American Standard says, no soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life. Or the Net Bible says, no one in military service gets entangled in matters of everyday life.

[31 : 33] I think all of those are really helpful. Different perspectives of the same truth. This one is definitely complicated, right? Well, wait a minute. This is complicated.

For me, at least, it is helpful to remind ourselves that Paul is using a physical illustration, something we can see with our minds, with our eyes, and then transported over to a spiritual reality.

This is what he's doing. Sometimes when this verse is read, people assume they shouldn't worry about having a job or owning a home or paying their taxes. That one is probably the one that's used the most.

See, I'm not supposed to pay my taxes. Spiritually speaking, we don't put our faith and trust in what the rest of the world does because we are currently not in a state of rest.

This is what he's getting at. Your heart and your soul right now are in a constant war. They are in warfare. This is why he's talking about the concept of being a soldier. And if we stop soldiering, if we stop warring, which is why we're here, and we start worrying about how to fix our homes and build our wealth and find hobbies and to occupy our time, we'll have so many things to hold us down, which means to be entangled, that we will not be able to fight.

[32 : 55] Paul is talking about the state of our mind, the way in which that we think, because every action starts here. It moves to our heart's conviction and our love, and then it moves to the actual outflow.

This is why I don't want to, we were talking about this in the parenting seminar, I don't want my children, I'm not trying to do behavioral modification so they do the right action. I want them to do the reverse and go, why did the action happen?

What affection did it come from? And what influenced your mind to have that affection? It's a scary process, by the way, because you find some pretty dark corners in your heart of why you do things. Paul is using this reality of a war, saying this is the war of your mind.

To keep the warfare idea in our minds, so whatever we are using our mental and physical energy towards, it is towards a fight that has a spiritual reality. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 10 quickly.

We often want to be able to rest now. And I wrote a whole book on rest, so I understand what that means.

[34 : 03] It is true. When it comes to your entrance into the kingdom, and your affection of the king, and all your future hope, you have every reason to just rest. Be like, whew, that part of the war is over.

Thank God I do not have to fight that anymore. But then he takes your confidence in him and says, now the war begins because you need to lead others into the same rest.

So we go fight. We go fight. 2 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 4 tells us how this war happens.

It says this, For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh. Okay, so we're not actually talking about real soldiers then. But have divine power to destroy strongholds. We know where that power comes from because we learn that it's the gospel of grace.

It is the power of God. Well, he confirms that for us in verse 5. We destroy arguments of every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

[35 : 04] So anything that comes into our heart and our mind and our lives that is an attack against God, we're going to get rid of that by what? Filtering it through the truth of the gospel. So when we're thinking about our minds, our minds are being occupied by the work of the king.

We don't have time to let our minds be occupied by anything else because we're in a moment of war. We are people that are driven by the truth of scripture in a world that is not driven by that at all.

We focus on learning it, teaching it, discovering it, defending it, and living in light of it. The truth of scripture governs our entire life, including our personal morality, our marriages, our families, and even our citizenships of another country.

So the truth of scripture tells us that our highest and ultimate authority is Jesus, our king. We are loyal to him and him alone.

He is a real king, and he has a real kingdom, and we are citizens of that kingdom. And he says, The presence of it is not here yet, but you are going to live in light of it.

[36 : 19] Therefore, it happens here, and it affects in our bodies. Part of the warfare plan given to us by the king is that we live in this world.

So we're still, he doesn't take us out to the kingdom yet. We live in the world, the world that we were rescued from to be a part of the search and rescue until he comes back.

So here's the question I always get. So I wanted to give you all that backdrop to get to this point. How does that work? How are we part of this search and rescue plan?

How are we part of the kingdom living for a king we cannot see? How does that work every day when I'm not at church? So we're going to break this down into some practical parts for our lives.

First, let's look at our homes. How does this work in our home? Our homes are to be governed by the king's call to warfare.

[37 : 18] This is the part of where, as parents, we have to change. And as those who are single, you have to think about how you govern your own life. So this isn't just for families that don't have children.

For you and adults, we start with ourselves, which then it flows out to our children. We center our home on the truth of the gospel and the kingdom. When you believe there is a threat, you take action.

How many of you have alarm systems in your home? Raise your hand. And I'm like, nobody wants to raise their hands.

Why are they there? Because you're worried about an intruder. So you put something in place because you believe there was a real threat. This is true of how it is that our king calls us to work.

He says, you actually live in a world that is in a real war. It's attacking you and your children. Therefore, your home must be protected.

[38 : 19] And the only way it's protected is by truth and the truth of the gospel, this grace, the power of the grace that we're talking about. So our sense of value and purpose comes from listening to our king because our home is going to be attacked to have all different kinds of purposes and all different kinds of values.

It is so easy because I fall prey to this. We gain our purpose and our values from the domain of darkness and we don't even realize that we do it. You know why? Because the bait he uses to lure us in is good bait.

It's good bait. I see it and I go, oh man, that looks good. And if I'm not washing my mind in the truth, if I'm not having the truth projected to me by you, if we're not encouraging and building and discipling each other, we're going to take the bait and we intoxicate ourselves.

And before we know it, we may not be indulging in the grotesqueness of the sin that the world is, but we are not doing the work of the king. So we raise our children to know the king, to respect him, to be aware of the fight and the gifts that the grace of God is for our kingdom, for our home.

Therefore, the home becomes the priority of the kingdom. We ask this to the parent at the parenting seminar. If we were to ask your kids to tell us what the priority of your home is, what would they say? What would they tell you what it is?

[39 : 39] This is a great convicting reminder to all of us, including me, that we need to be teaching our children about the real presence of a real kingdom that we live our lives for.

So we need, because of this to be true, we need weekly encouragement, training, and discipleship. We also need to carry the burdens of those in the kingdom to help them fight this war as well.

We are not rogue soldiers. This part of Christianity is a brilliant tactic by Satan where he designs us to isolate ourselves and comfort ourselves and train ourselves, and therefore we are weak.

No one soldier ever won a war for anyone other than Jesus. So the priority of our home is not our entertainment, our jobs, our children, sports schedules.

The priority of our home has to be the kingdom. Now, just pause for a moment, because that's a complicated list that I have just given. So, John, are you saying that we are not to participate in anything outside of church activities?

[40 : 47] No, I'm not saying that. Not at all. This is how Satan has so skewed our minds. We are to be lights in the world, therefore it is healthy and good and encouraged and commanded to be engaging in our world to bring the light to it.

We are also called to do everything with our hands for the glory of God and his kingdom. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it as a light that shines for the king.

So we show the kingdom of darkness as we engage with them what true freedom looks like. We engage in art and sports and entertainment, and they are not there to control us, but they become tools for us.

One, to enjoy God's goodness. Listen, food can be enjoyed for God's goodness, or it can enslave you. Alcohol can be enjoyed for God's goodness, or it can control you.

Anything in this world can be turned as a weapon against us. We are not retreatists. We don't retreat from the very thing we're trying to rescue.

[41 : 58] We're not living in bunkers. We are engaging people because we understand they are our mission field. So we show this kingdom how different it is for us to live for our king in the domain of darkness.

We are not controlled by these activities. These activities are controlled by us. They will not keep us from our kingdom work, but are a part of the kingdom work.

And the moment our hearts, minds, and schedules are overpowered by these means, it's at that moment we have stopped working for the kingdom of light, and we are now working for the kingdom of darkness without even knowing it.

This is the way Paul is speaking of as we run in our war, as we are running in this race. We all know this. I'm just going to quote it to you. 1 Corinthians 10, verse 23 and following.

What does he say? All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of another.

[43 : 02] So we're thinking about, okay, I can do this, but is it going to build someone else up, or is it just for my own benefit? The writer of Hebrews writes it this way, laying aside the weight and the sin that easily besets us.

So we're focused on a goal. We have a race to run, and we're not going to stop running it until the end of our life. That's the finish line. And so Paul's like, hey, look, it might not be wrong, but it's probably holding you back from being, progressing as you should for the work of the kingdom.

So we're training our children and ourselves to live by truth, not by desire of the flesh or the approval of others. The truth sets us free and helps us set others free from the domain of darkness.

So our home, listen, I want to encourage all of you to use any means possible for the work of the kingdom, but do not let that means use you. And it's easy to be done, because at times if you want to be successful at certain entertainments and arts, and if you want to be successful at certain sports, you have to give your soul for it.

And I just think as we think about it at the end of our life, is that what we really want to spend our time doing? There's better work to be done. Now let's talk about our occupations.

[44 : 20] So this is how the kingdom works in our home. How does it work in our jobs? The world tells us that we are what we do, or we fall into the trap of that the level of income creates the significance of who we are.

I fall into this trap. We all fall into this trap. What's the first and second question we ask people? Well, nowadays we ask them, where are you from?

Because we're going to judge you from California. Shame on you for coming here. I agree. I got here first. And what's the second question? What is it?

What do you do? What do you do for a living? Because we don't, don't judge me, but we all create in our minds a caste system of where that person now is.

We're either going to be interested in their job, or we're like, oh, that's interesting. I mean, you could do that if you want. We value people on what they do.

[45 : 20] We're impressed or not impressed by their occupation. This is not how we are engaging in our world. We don't need the approval of the world or the world's kingdom because we're not living under that rule and reign.

We find our value and acceptance not in what we are doing, but what has already been given to us. Think about all the words that the New Testament uses to describe your identity, of how you think about the work that you do.

You're a soldier. You're a priest. You carry the very presence of God to the nations. You're an ambassador. You're a living temple. And the title is owned by the king. You're literally a spy for the king.

He goes, okay, I got you a job here, and I got you a job there, and I got you a job there. Go rescue people. Go take their money.

Take it out of the kingdom of darkness. Take care of your family. It's part of the kingdom work. And then we're gonna wash and clean that money for the work of the kingdom. By the way, I will take money from pagans.

[46 : 33] All of it. Sometimes people are like, I will never take money from non-believer. I'm like, great, have them call me. We'll say a prayer over it. I'm gonna put it to work. Because we see our identity and our work as, all right, God's plan to rescue the nations is for me to be a light in all that I do.

You may never share the gospel with one of your coworkers because you are literally being hired to do a job, and it's not that. Do your job.

Do it well. Do it for the light of the king, and do it with respect and honor and conviction, and let God bring forth the results. But every day that you show up, you show up saying, I represent my king, and I have no idea what he's doing in the hearts and the minds of these people.

Do you understand what Daniel's title was? I would be like, well, God knows that I didn't create that title, that title was given to me, but my title is the chief of the magicians.

Strange title. All right, I'm in charge of all the other guys who worship false gods. This is complicated. But he was never asked to go against his own convictions, and when he was, what did he do?

[47 : 58] He disobeyed. Quietly. Quietly. Did what he knew was right. And this is the same idea that we have here. This is why in 1 Peter, he's not telling us to run from the government, to run from our jobs, even for those who might have been saved and now live in a marriage that is, there's an unbeliever involved.

He is saying, stay there that we might win them, that we might be there for them. This is why, by the way, when you're shepherding your children, we talked about this in the marriage seminar, you have so opposing values going on, you have to teach your children that when they're pursuing marriage and romance, you need to find someone who has the same mind about your king, because you have opposing values that go in opposite directions.

So when we think about it, we have opportunities to be a light in darkness. Number two, we have opportunities to take the money that we have gained, provide for our families, and then whatever is left, whatever God has blessed us with, we're going to use for the advancement of the kingdom.

But we just think about money differently, don't we? Well, if I accumulate this much money, I can accomplish this, and if I accumulate that much money, I can accomplish that. And Jesus is like, look, seek first the kingdom of God. And all these things that you're worried about, I have that taken care of.

Use your money for the advancement of the king. But that's just not how we think, do we? And we're all, listen, including me, we're all feeling guilty at this moment. What does that look like, to use our finances for the advancement of the kingdom?

[49 : 24] That's something that the elders are working on. I'm going to have them preach on it. Oh! They may have told me to do the opposite, and I'm still wrestling with it. But yeah, what does kingdom finances look like?

Another day for another time. I think what's encouraging, if you're a stay-at-home mom, you're doing the work of the king. You're shepherding and training those children to see Jesus and how you love them.

The Bible says, when two disciples love each other appropriately, it says, the world will know my love, and they will know that you're a disciple of me by the love that you have for one another.

How you treat your spouse at home, and how you treat your spouse in front of your neighbors, Jesus says, is part of kingdom work. It's a part of it. Don't be bad-mouthing your wife to your neighbors, or your husband to your neighbors.

Our jobs are our means to an end, and they are not the identity to itself. Some of us are very much easily controlled by our careers.

[50 : 32] So much so, that the career takes precedent over the kingdom work to where you can't even involve yourself in kingdom work. I think that's something we need to think about.

I know that everyone here, not everyone, but I know many are here who keep telling themselves, one day, one day I will have enough time, one day I will get to a point, one day I will not be, and before you know it, that one day never comes.

What is encouraging by our Father and our King is that we are free to find any work that we choose. Whatever God has put us in opportunities, and whatever he has gifted us in, and we can take delight in knowing that God is going to use that for his work.

But do not use that as your identity or means of acceptance. Lastly, what does this look like in our church? Because our view of life is kingdom focused, our church must remain warfare ready.

And we've already, if you go back, I'm not going to re-preach this sermon, but this is why we started with the priority of the church being the gospel, the ordinary means of grace, and the kingdom.

[51 : 48] So we're going to close this morning with that. Let's pray. Father, I'm so thankful for the hope that we have far beyond our capacities and our strength. Lord, strengthen us with your power by the means of not only the preached word, but the table.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee, where everyone is in equal need of grace.

To plan a visit or to learn more about us, visit our website at gracereformed.org. Gracias. Hallelujah. posso alimination by■o my next time. Anyway, we could have little time to leave the room you certainly should.

The story of God is still right here. Amen. At is because we're here. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Amen.