

GOOD FRIDAY - The Enthroned King

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[0 : 0 0] our father we thank you for your great grace to us and we pray today that we might learn more of this and learning more father we might live like your son we pray this in jesus name amen well friends i thought i'd start today's talk by showing you some images of thrones which hopefully chris will be putting up for me in a moment now just as we look at these thrones i want you to imagine what sort of ruler would sit on a throne like this who are they what might they look like what would their rule be like now some some of you may have seen this throne actually in the flesh as it were well thrones aren't in the flesh but you know what i mean it is the throne of the kings and queens of england now let me show you another throne number two what sort of ruler do you think might sit on this throne and what would his rule be like in case you're guessing this is the throne of the egyptian king tutankhamen let's have a look at another one what about this throne now many of you will know this throne in fact nearly all the chinese congregation knew this throne when i tried it out on them last week this is the throne of the chinese emperors try and imagine what the rule of such a ruler might be like the chinese congregations knew here is another one this is a picture from gnosis it's the ancient it's an ancient greek throne room what might have the ruler here looked like how might he have ruled and here's another one this is a particularly uncomfortable one i think nevertheless it is a throne believe it or not it is the throne of the ancient kings of sri lanka now i've got one more throne that i want you to have a look at that's this next one what sort of ruler would have a throne like this uh friends the language of john's gospel portrays this quite strongly in a number of places it talks about jesus being lifted up for the world to see and when it does the language used implies being physically lifted up on a cross so it may have a double reference perhaps to uh him being seated with god the father later on but it often refers to him being physically lifted up to the cross uh it also implies exaltation at the same time what john is doing is he's telling us that the rule of jesus is to be seen through the cross the place where jesus is enthroned is in many ways on the cross for on the cross you see he reveals what his real his rule is like what sort of a king he is and that's the topic for today's talk today we're going to engage in a sort of examination of kingship i want to examine two sorts of kingship that are presented in the bible and i want to then look at how these kingships find their expression in the story that we have just read we'll see how these models of kingship work out in the trial and the crucifixion of jesus and we'll look at their results and then we're going to look at the implications of what this means for us following jesus in everyday life now the first thing so let's get started on the on this and the first thing to say is that the bible outlines two patterns of rule god's rule and human rule now let's have a look at god's rule for a start and that'll then lead to human rule i have five things i want to say about god's rule first the bible makes clear that god is a ruler if you like a king you see that in places such as psalm 145 which we read earlier on a second the bible makes clear that god's kingship is a sort of kingship that always has the best interests of its subjects in mind so in psalm 145 which we read earlier on we read these words the lord is gracious and merciful slow to anger abounding in steadfast love the lord is good to all his compassion is over all that he has made all your works shall give you thanks oh lord and all your faithful shall bless you and then here comes the crunch they shall speak

of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power to make known to all people your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your kingdom you see what god's kingship is like it always has the good of his people in mind in mind later on in that psalm it says you open your hand and fill it with good things third thing to say about god's kingship is that he delegates it genesis 1 tells us he makes man in his own image and he gives them the rule of the world psalm 8 says the same thing you see god delegates his kingship to humans the fourth thing that god wants humans to know about his rule is that they are to model their delegated rule upon his own rule and so in psalm 73 i think it's probably david praying for his son solomon and he wants him to be a good ruler and so i want you to listen to what david prays for solomon give the king your justice oh god and your righteousness to a king's son may he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice may the mountains yield prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness may he that is the king defend the cause of the poor of the people give deliverance to the needy and crush the oppressor can you hear it those who rule under god's rule are to rule like god so five things i'm sorry four things god is king god's kingship always has the best interests of his subjects in mind god delegates his kingship to humans and humans are to model their delegated rule on god's rule they are to be benevolent and just as he is they are to always have the best interests of their subjects in mind but now let's turn to the reality of human rule again there's just a few points to note first almost as soon as we are introduced to humans we find out the nature of their rule in the bible in genesis 2 we're told how humans should live in genesis 3 humans say well god thank you for telling me this well they don't actually say that but this is in effect what they're doing but i would like to rule my own way thank you very much i don't want to rule under your rule i would rather exercise my own rule in my own way they reject god's kingly rule in its place they put their own they are if you like their own kings independent of the kingship of god so that's the first thing to say about humans you see humans at their roots reject god as king and assert their own independence the second thing that the bible has to say about human rule is that it is characterized by self-interest if it starts that way you'd expect it to go on that way wouldn't you it is not like god's rule in other words god's rule has the best interests of the subjects in mind human rule has its own interests in mind and you see that with adam and eve you see it with the kings of israel who follow in israel's history and so the third thing to say about human rule is that it inevitably leads to disharmony and tyranny you see that with adam and eve they fall out of relation their relationship with god with each other with the environment god's placed them in is destroyed by their sin adam and eve's bid for independence leads to sin spiraling out of control as genesis progresses you see it getting worse and worse you see it in the history of the kings of israel the bid for independence that we humans make leads leads us into sin and tyranny in the history of israel it leads to the pain of the exile so there are three things to say about human rule first human rule is fundamentally about the rejection of god and independence from him second human rule is

characterized by self-interest third because it's characterized by self-interest it invariably leads to disharmony and tyranny so there are those two sorts of rule now let's take a quick look at the passion of Jesus and let's see what rule looks like there before we do though let's remember what we've learned the last few weeks about the rule of Pilate and the Jews you see we learned that their rule looked like most human rule we saw that in John 19:8 to 16 as we read today Pilate is clearly isn't he motivated by self-interest we know he regards Jesus as innocent of the charges that are leveled against him but in verse two the Jews threaten him and so he caves in self-interest wins out and he discards doing the right thing and then there are the Jews their attitude is heightened in verses 13 to 16 just have a look at them with me we read this when Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus outside and he sat on the judge's bench in a place called the stone pavement or in Hebrew Gabbatha he sat on as it were a ruler's throne and dispensed tyranny that was the day of the preparation for the Passover and it was about noon and he said to the Jews here is your king and they cried out away with him away with him crucify him and Pilate asked shall I crucify your king and the chief priest answered we have no king but the emperor that's the Jews saying this and then he handed them over him over to be crucified an innocent man which he knew you see friends here is human rule in its essence human rule wants to throw aside God as king it wants human rule and such rule reaches its pinnacle in injustice in tyranny in this act it causes humans to reject God's rule violently and cruelly and to cast his son onto a cross there is human rule at its worst it puts to death the incarnate son of God in the most cruel and inhuman sorry perhaps I should say human way it demonstrates a final devastating rejection of God and his rule now let's look at the rule of Jesus in all of this and in a number of places in this story the word king is mentioned in relation to Jesus and the pinnacle of the exercise of his kingship occurs at precisely the same place as it occurs with the Jews and Pilate it occurs at the crucifixion for there on the cross Jesus acts as God does he rules as God rules he does what is in the best interest of his subjects he acts as a true king laying down his life for his subjects as he himself said in John 12 now is the judgment of this world now the ruler of this world will be driven out and I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself in this one act you see Jesus exposes the pretensions of the evil one he overthrows all evil rule he saves humanity and he demonstrates true rule you see Godlike rule results in Jesus laying down his life for his friends it results in him drawing all people to himself and it results in the purposes of God being reached it results in extreme good which is why we call this day Good Friday so friends let's now look briefly at the results of the passion and the narrative itself has presented us with a clear choice we can go with self-rule here here are the two options you can go with we can go with self-rule and we know where self-rule will end self-rule will end in tyranny and in enmity with God and in pain and in violence but there is an alternative we can go with God's rule and God's rule leads to forgiveness and peace now most of us here today know God's rule we have experienced the grace of

god in christ we have seen the glory of god's kingly son and we have seen and experienced the fullness of grace and truth but through his for through his death you see we have received the power to become children of god friends we have seen the rule of god in jesus and if this is so then his style of god like rule becomes foundational for us it becomes a model of our rule from now on we are going to act like jesus we will speak like jesus our existence will be characterized by self-interest not by self-interest it will be characterized by having the interests of others at the forefront of our existence we will speak truth act truth deny ourselves at all costs live humbly before our god friends let me talk about this in practical terms we are humans we are made by god to live under his rule our rule is to imitate his rule and we've seen what his rule is like in the death of jesus you see the death of jesus the rule of god is not sitting on a throne no it's carrying a cross and hanging on it so how do we go about this day by day well i want you to pick up your bibles i'm going to just show you in about four or five passages how this works out in the new testament i want you to turn in your bibles to page 1001 so turn to page 1001 this is a great passage during the while jesus was alive and uh what happens at this particular point is his disciples come and uh they want to be you know that is right and his left that is they want great positions of power and i want you to see what happens it's in mark chapter 10 and uh sorry 10:13 thank you 10:13 and i just want you to turn to verses 35-41 thank you 35 to 45 and i want you to see what happens james and john come and they say we'd like to sit one at your right and one at your left in your kingdom that is we want to be great ones there and look at what jesus says right at the end he says this from verse 41 when the 10 heard about this they became indignant with james and john why because they wanted to sit on the right and the left themselves and jesus called them together and said you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the gentiles lord it over them and that their high officials exercise authority over them not so with you instead whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all for even the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many you see friends who do you want to be a great one then become like jesus the greatest one but let's flip over and let's turn to first corinthians 10 page 1135 let's see if we've got this one right 11:35 and i want to look right at the end of chapter 10 so so i've got it wrong again haven't i what is it 11:50 thank you this is what happens when you don't have your glasses on when you're looking at bible verses so i want you to notice just what happens what's being talked about by paul here is going shopping actually down at the local marketplace and

you're buying food and he says this is what your attitude should be as you go shopping so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do do all for the glory of god do not cause anyone to stumble whether jews greeks or the church of god even as i try to please everyone in every way for i am not seeking my own good but the good of many so that they may be saved follow my example as i follow the example of christ friends in everything you should be looking at what can i do so that others might come to know the lord jesus for that will be following the example of paul who is following the example of christ and even in the smallest thing you do going to the marketplace and buying meat this should be your disposition but let's keep flipping over let's go now just to 2 corinthians 8 and i'm very wary of giving you page numbers now but you can flip over to corinthians 8 and i want you to look at chapter 8 and uh let's look at verse 8 and following i'm not commanding you says paul but i want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others now now listen carefully for you know the grace of our lord jesus christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that through his poverty you might become rich and do you know what paul's using that for he's using it to tell them with your money be generous why because god is generous how do i know that because god in the came down in the flesh in jesus christ so that we might be brought back to god and relationship with him be like that when you think of what you're going to do with your money do what god does with his son be generous so we've now touched on a number of areas haven't we but i want to look at one more two more i want you to turn over to philippians to ephesians chapter 5 sorry ephesians chapter 5 so just keep going and i think it's one one five nine five five perhaps oh well seven six oh dear it's all designed to just keep you on your toes so ephesians 5 paul is talking about a husband and wife together and i want you to notice what he says so i'm reading from chapter 5 and uh from about verse 21 on i'll read just a few bits to you he he instructs people about their household and he says verse 21 submit to one and one another out of reverence for christ and he says wives submit to your own husbands as you do to the lord and for the husband is head of the wife as christ is head of the church his body of which he is the savior now as the church submits to christ so also wives should submit to their husbands and then look at what he says to husbands husbands love your wives just as christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy cleansing her by washing with water through the word and to present her to himself as a radiant church can you see what's being said i mean he's touched on so many areas of life hasn't he now and now he's he says your marriages are founded in the cross as well husbands when you think of how you live with your wife just think of the cross be ready to lay down your life for your wife and then just to be even handed with us all let's turn to philippians chapter 2 so keep going only a page or two and to philippians 2 and this is where we'll end

[20 : 21] and this is talking about relationships in church and look how it goes therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with christ if any comfort from his love if any common sharing in the spirit if any tenderness and compassion then make my joy complete by being like-minded having the same love being one in spirit and of one mind in do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit can you hear it do not rule do not live like the rest of humanity does no what is the alternative rather in humility value others above yourself like the rule of jesus and we'll find that out in a moment not looking out to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others in your relationship with one another have the same mindset as christ jesus who though being in very nature god did not consider equality with god something to be used to his own advantage rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant and being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross and therefore god exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that jesus christ is lord to the glory of god the father friends this event we remember today undergirds every corner of our existence it is who we are it is what we look like it is how we will conduct our relationships with our spouse our parents our children our everyone it is everything it forms us that's why we remember it today while everyone else takes a holiday we come here to remember this event because in it we were saved and in it our lives have been formed so let's pray father god thank you for the death of your son thank you for this remembrance of it today both as we look at your word and as we celebrate the lord's supper we thank you for this and we pray that you might help us to be thankful in all of our lives we pray this in jesus name amen amen