

How The King Grows His Army

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[0 : 00] Well, I want to talk to you today about King Jesus and the nature of his kingdom.

You can say it this way, that this text, everything we just read is really all about that. It's how the king gathers his army. A king's actions reveal the nature of his kingdom.

If you're taking notes, kids, you've got the handout. This is an important point. A king's actions reveal the nature of his kingdom.

Think about it. That's the reason why presidential candidates will platform with promises about what they will do in their first 100 days of taking office. They know that their actions, those initial actions, are revealing what their kingdom or their rule is really all about.

Well, who was the king of Israel? And what was he all about? Well, the Bible says that it was Herod. In Acts chapter 2, Herod is called the king of Israel.

[1 : 05] We're told that King Herod laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. And he killed James, the brother of John. So the man who wrote this apostle, the apostle who wrote this letter here, this gospel of John, his brother, James, was killed by the king of Israel, King Herod.

Well, what else was this king known for? King Herod the Great. You could say he built a replica of Rome itself. So you travel across the civilized world, the Roman Empire, and you come to Rome, and you were supposed to be stunned by the majesty of their architecture.

Their aqueducts, their arches, you know, the way that they tried to intimidate their enemy with everything that was imposed upon them from what they built. And that was Rome. But in Judea, Herod the Great built a little replica.

And it was in the city called Caesarea Philippi. And that little fortress, he had at his palace and it faced the Mediterranean Ocean, which would be like saltwater, you know, the Mediterranean Sea. They called it the Great Sea. And right there in his palace, he built an indoor swimming pool, larger than a swimming pool. And he had an aqueduct built just to bring fresh water to his palace.

[2 : 14] So as you came to visit him or you arrived on a ship, he wanted to stun you with his greatness. You might be thinking that would be a cool kingdom to belong to, the kingdom of Herod the Great.

But what else was the kingdom of Herod the Great known for? Well, this was the same man, Herod, who left his one wife and his other wife started to poison his thoughts about her and her whole family.

To the point that Herod the Great had her slain, along with her father, her relatives, including two of his own sons, killed because he was so suspicious. So you could say, by those actions, we know the nature of King Herod the Great's kingdom.

He was a man who loved Rome. He was obsessed with Rome. He was also a man who only knew how to rule using terror and fear, the force of manipulation and control.

The nature of the king's actions are revealing what their kingdom is about. And I believe here that what we just read, these initial movements of King Jesus.

[3 : 17] Remember, he's just been baptized into the water. And we read in Acts, in John chapter 1, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit remained on him. So when you hear this language of anointing, you know there's a special office being set up.

Jesus is being inaugurated as the king. He's been anointed. You'd be thinking now, just like Samuel poured the oil over the head of David, that sunburned shepherd boy.

And now he's going to be the king. Covenant, the office of King of Israel is anointed on him. Well, Jesus has been anointed. What is his kingdom all about? And every movement that he makes, I believe, is showing you what his kingdom is for.

I think, too, that people might have thought of other references to this rule of God over his people. And the one that came to mind to me that was maybe unusual or striking was in Joshua chapter 5. God is already fulfilling his promises. He brings his people, the second generation, into the promised land. And they now have to go fight the enemy that does not want them there, claiming their inheritance.

[4 : 20] And we're told in Joshua chapter 5 that as Joshua was praying and preparing now to lead the army of God and to do what they had been called to do, Joshua lifted his eyes up and looked.

And behold, a man was standing before him with his sword drawn in his hand. And he said, Are you for us or for our enemies? And this man said, Neither, but as commander of the Lord's army, I stand before you.

Now, Jesus had not yet taken a body, but that was the son of God, the second person before he was incarnate, revealing himself. This is what he has been prepared to do all along.

He will come and he will rule his people first in Israel to all the nations. So that's what will be in mind here, because look at verse 41 in our text today.

In verse 41, we read that this wonderful declaration. We have found the Messiah. Messiah means exactly that, anointed one.

[5 : 23] We have found the one that God has anointed and prepared all along, which means the Christ. So when we say our Lord, Jesus Christ, every word is meaningful.

He is our Lord. He rules over his new covenant people as the commander. And Christ means the anointed one, the same Savior that God has promised all along. Well, before I walk you through this text and show you these seven insights we get to the kingdom of God, I want us to appreciate and not take for granted the problem that we have.

See, the promise, the promise of God is really attached to one covenant. And it's it begins with Eve and it goes all the way through with Abraham to Moses.

But it gets super specific and clear with the covenant made with David and two pastors named Brown and Keel. They summarize the covenant God made with David this way. The Davidic king would make the people holy.

This is what scripture teaches. The king would establish the true temple of God. The king would keep the laws of God for the people as their representative. And the king, a son of David, would subdue all Israel's enemies and would reign in God's name.

[6 : 35] That's what he would do. Psalm 134 says the king will usher God's people into Zion to worship God forever in glory. And Zion represents the mountain on which the kingly and the priestly office are combined.

And the revelation of God is brought to the people. So Zion is that promise of a restored people of God that will be in his presence as his priests and kings, his army on earth.

It's a promise for the church. But the problem with that promise is that it's been over 500 years. Ever since Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed the temple, the people have not had a man from the line of David on the throne of Jerusalem.

So this is a big problem. You can understand why the people would be crying out in the words of Psalm 89. Lord, where is your steadfast love, which by your faithfulness you swore to David?

Where is it? Well, the answer to this problem, it comes once again to Mary by the angel Gabriel. He says this in Luke 1. See, God sent an angel Gabriel himself to show all those promises, all that expectation for the Messiah, the one who would fulfill this covenant as the king of Israel.

[8 : 07] So they are now fulfilled in God who took on flesh, Jesus Christ. And the actions of the king reveal the nature of his kingdom. So if that's true, if Jesus is God's warrior, the commander of the Lord's army, taken on the body of a man to be the representative of all God's people, what do his early movements here in the rest of chapter one show us about the kingdom of God?

Now, I'm going to walk us through seven observations. Ready? Here's number one. King Jesus cares about the heart of his people. King Jesus cares about the heart of his people.

Look at verse 38. Well, we saw last week how John the baptizer, once again on the new day, beheld the name of God.

And there were two disciples with him. Do you remember that? The two disciples. And those two disciples begin to follow Jesus. We're told that one of those disciples was who?

Look at your Bible. Who was one of them that we're told? You can say it out loud. Who was it?

Andrew. Yeah, one of them was Andrew. Now, I'm going to tell you who I think the second one was.

[9 : 19] Because we have some first person details given. Like they followed him and it was about the 10th hour. The 10th hour means you start counting when the sun comes up. It would be about 4 p.m. Well, who would know that?

Because Luke was the historian, right? Luke had done this research as a historian, not as an eyewitness. My guess is that John, the apostle that wrote this gospel, was that second disciple. And you see how John the baptizer always wanted to make himself less. The apostle John, I'm the one who Jesus loved. You don't need to know more about me. You need to know about Christ. There's a second disciple there who had some first-hand details.

That's a good probability it was John himself. Well, look at what he says in verse 38. As they start to follow Jesus, in verse 38, what are Jesus' first words to them?

Jesus says, what are you seeking? See how with just a few words, King Jesus shows his care for the heart of his people.

[10 : 20] He didn't ask them a lot of other things. He didn't say, how well have you kept the law of God? He didn't ask them, how often have you been to church? You've done all these external things.

Although true believers will want those things. They'll want to be with their king. He says in your heart, the part that no man can see, the part that you know, and God who knows all things, he sees it.

What are you seeking? It reminds me of Matthew chapter 6. Jesus said, don't be like those people who don't know the Lord. They only care about food and clothes.

In other words, they only care about external things. He said this, Matthew 6, 32 and 33. You need to seek first, first and foremost, the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

You know why? All these things will be added to you. The Father in heaven loves you and he knows you need all these things. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

[11 : 23] King Jesus wants to know that of his people today as well. He wants to have you as part of his army. Search your own heart. What are you seeking? And he asked this as your king and your commander.

Those who love anything more than Christ have no place in his kingdom. If you don't know what you're seeking, I want you to observe what these men did. See, what was their answer?

Verse 38 and 39. They didn't have a great answer. We are seeking, you know, they didn't have anything profound to say. They just said, where are you staying? In other words, can we be around you?

And maybe that's how you're today. You don't know your heart really. What am I seeking? And Jesus' words to you are, follow me. Come be with me. Stick around me. The King Jesus.

God himself. Follow him in all those ordinary ways. Where are you staying? What are we doing when we get there? We'll spend time with you. If you're doing the dishes, we'll do the dishes with you. If you're going to go, you know, help.

[12 : 22] We'll do that with you. We want to be around you. We want to be your disciples. And as simple as gathering as God's people on a Sunday morning feels, doesn't it feel so ordinary? We carry some tubs in and, you know, we sing some songs and mess up some chords on the guitar.

But it's so simple. But we want to be around King Jesus. We're seeking first his kingdom. Jesus cares about your heart today as well. And he gathers his army.

So what else can we learn about the nature of his kingdom? See, we read in our narrative that Andrew, one of those two, brought along his brother. And once again, how ordinary it is.

The way that King Jesus grows his army is so ordinary. In verse 40, we see that. Most likely, these men, the reason they're along the Jordan is probably because they came for those three feasts that we talked about.

And now they're going back to Galilee where they're fishermen, they're simple men traveling back along the Jordan. And they had come trusting God to be their deliverer and to show themselves, show himself to them, show them his forgiveness.

[13 : 30] He came to show them something much greater than that. He came to show them what his kingdom is really about. The second thing I want to point out is this, that his kingdom only grows through direct encounter with King Jesus himself.

See, Andrew was first a disciple of John the Baptizer. But look at verse 40 in your Bible. One of the two who heard John speak followed Jesus.

And then in verse 42, what did Andrew do? Look at verse 42. We're told Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. He brought him to Jesus.

So the king only grows his army as people are brought directly to him. As simple as this is, I think the applications are very hard.

And I'm sure you have a loved one, a friend, a family member. You know what they need is for Christ to be the king of their life. And it's so tempting, isn't it, to try to bring that person to anything else, even our own children.

[14 : 32] But bring him to Christ alone. That's how he grows his kingdom. You need to know that you cannot save that loved one. What that person needs is to encounter the king for themselves.

We're told in chapter 1, verse 17 of our chapter here, that grace and truth, that's what we all need. We need God's grace and the truth of the Bible.

Look at verse 17. They come through who? Through Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one. No one else can bring God's grace and truth. That's the only way his kingdom grows, is through direct encounter with Christ himself.

What we can do is pray. Because these men had been prepared. They had been drawn by the Spirit, by the Word of God, by the law, knowing they need forgiveness. And we can pray, we must pray, that God will bring more soldiers, more men and women, boys and girls, into his kingdom. His kingdom, listen to this, his kingdom cannot be manipulated by gimmicks or by the force of man. That's what King Herod is all about. That's not the way King Jesus grows his kingdom.

[15 : 41] His kingdom is the kingdom of light and it always overcomes the darkness. The true church grows when Christ builds his church and he promises, I will do that.

I will build my church. Can we trust him to do that? Let's let Christ be extraordinary as we are obedient with the ordinary things he's called us to do so that he gets all the glory.

The best we can ever do is to bring someone else to Jesus Christ himself because King Jesus is the one who gathers his army. What else do the king's actions in these early verses in chapter one reveal about the nature of his kingdom?

Number three, we see that King Jesus knows his people. Look at verse 42 again. We're told in verse 42 that Jesus looked at Peter and said, notice the next two words, you are, this is who you are.

And what he calls him is, is Cephas, it means Petras, it means the rock. And we'll get insights much later in the passion of Christ that Peter was a rock, not because he was a man of great faith.

[16 : 53] In fact, he is the one who denied Christ. He failed God most publicly and miserably. But it was his profession that Jesus is the son of God, the Messiah, the anointed one.

He is the Christ. That statement, that confession, which we've received and now we profess, that's the rock of the church. It's Christ himself. So that's what he calls Peter.

And the application for us is that Jesus looked at Peter and said, you are. The only way the king can do that is if he knows who you are. And the king knows his army. He knows every single one of his soldiers.

We need to never picture Jesus like that general, you know, sitting behind an office desk, looking at some figures on a paper or computer. King Jesus is like George Washington.

He's marching with his boots on muddy. And he's in the midst of his people. He is among his sheep. He's the shepherd king. That's who King Jesus is. He knows you.

[17 : 52] And maybe you feel invisible at work or in your own family. You feel like no one really knows who you are. Remember, this is King Jesus who knows your heart and cares about you.

And he knows how you will fail him in the future and he loves you still. He also knows how he will use you in your weakness to glorify him. How your kingdom will grow with one of your loved ones through you if you profess him and you confess Christ is your king.

It reminds me of 1 Chronicles chapter 11 where David is driven out of the kingdom, the established kingdom in Judah. Remember Saul? He didn't want David around.

David was a threat. So Saul was like King Herod. David is like Jesus. He's the one in the wilderness now. And the rejects from civilization are gathering around him.

These simple men from Galilee that would be mocked, they would sound different, they wouldn't be as pure as how others would view them. Fishermen, uneducated. That's like David gathering his mighty men of valor.

[18:57] We're told in 1 Chronicles 11, David's mighty men gave him strong support in his kingdom and made him king according to the word of God.

What a type we have of Christ. And if you have been drawn into the army of King Jesus, you are a mighty man of valor in his army. A mighty boy or girl or woman, you're raised up now as his army because King Jesus has gathered you.

He knows you. And he has called you to follow him according to his word to be a great support for his kingdom on earth. What else can we learn of the kingdom of God from these verses?

Number four, King Jesus is the one who finds his people. Look at verse 43. We're told that he found Philip.

Jesus found him. In Luke 19, Jesus said, I came, you know why? I came was to seek and save the lost. That was his mission from heaven, leaving the Father's glory and stripping himself of the glory that he held as ruler of all.

[20:07] to take on the flesh, to seek and to save those who are lost. Psalm 103 says, The Lord has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all.

So bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of the Lord. And he has come now with the angels of God behind him and the Holy Spirit preparing the way, drawing one.

He will find you. If you've walked away from him or you're praying for someone who has walked far away from him, that little lamb off the green pastures, he will find them.

That's who he is. I want you to turn to Ezekiel 37 to see the nature of his kingdom. Ezekiel chapter 37. This is one of our messianic prophecies.

So it's a prophecy about the covenant God made with David. And for context, briefly, you need to know that Ezekiel was a prophet of God during the time of exile. He wasn't even writing from Jerusalem.

[21:10] He's writing from Babylon. He's among those who have been vanished from the land. Ezekiel chapter 37. Let's look at verses 23 and 24. So even as God's people have received his punishment, he gives them this gracious promise.

He says, it's Ezekiel 37, 23 and 24. The Lord says, I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned.

I will cleanse them and they shall be my people and I shall be their God. Now look at verse 24. Who will do this? Who will go find those who are lost who have backslidden and restore them to being in the kingdom?

Verse 24 says, My servant David shall be king over them. Now David is long dead. And we're in that period where the seed of David is no longer on the throne of Israel anymore.

But the promise remains. You see how significant this is? Verse 24. They shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes.

[22:20] My servant shall be their prince forever. Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd of your soul. He will not let one of his lambs that he knows remain lost.

Now look at verse 43 back in John chapter 1. Gospel of John chapter 1 again. Look at verse 43. The next day, Jesus decided to go to Galilee.

See, according to God's providence, Christ is on the move. Jesus decided to go to Galilee and the next words is that he found Philip.

And notice his command when he finds one of his lambs. Follow me. Now a disciple would follow the rabbi. Sometimes they would just walk behind them like a line to show we are seeking to imitate the movements of our rabbi.

And you remember John the baptizer said, I'm not even worthy to untie his sandals. Well, it was the job of a disciple to untie the sandals of their rabbi. And Jesus says to Philip, follow me.

[23:29] Become my disciple. Become one who will follow me. And let no task that I ask of you be too lowly. In verse 43, Jesus found Philip.

And then Philip, following Jesus, spreads the word. He says to Nathanael, come and see. He learned from John the baptizer. If you behold the Lamb of God, it's going to bubble up out of you. Like John the baptizer said, behold the Lamb of God. Well, notice what Philip now does next. Same thing Andrew did. You need to come and see him for yourself. You need to follow this King.

My prayer today is that you will believe that by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he finds his people. The work of finding sinners that are lost is accomplished already.

Now the application of that comes through the Holy Spirit, through his church, and through his word. And we get to be part of that. Jesus finds his people. This should give us so much confidence for evangelism.

[24 : 37] This should give us so much hope for someone who we know, our own persuasion, our own work, we cannot convince anyone or change any heart. Karl Marx thought the hope of the civilization was in fixing the economy.

Freud thought it was in fixing psychology. I think many today have made an idol of education. They think education can fix the world's problems. Jesus finds his people.

The only hope of the world is in Christ, the gospel of Jesus through his church. We get to be part of that. Number five, what else do we see now from the movements of King Jesus? We see that the kingdom of God is recognized by ordinary people prepared by God.

God prepares ordinary people and when he reveals himself, they recognize him. They know this is true. It's that simple. He prepares people. So here we have fishermen, Galileans, uneducated men. They've been flunked out of traditional rabbinical school. But we told in verse 45, look there, verse 45, John 1, 45, they knew enough.

[25 : 44] They had been prepared by the word of God. In verse 45, they recognized this must be the one whom Moses and the law and also the prophets wrote about. The Lord had revealed himself to men who had been prepared as ordinary as they were.

And that's what the church is. It's ordinary people. Saved sinners. That's all we are and ever will be. But we're pronounced saints now. We're priests and kings in his kingdom. This reminds me again of Gideon now in Judges chapter 6.

Remember first, they gathered an army under Gideon. 22,000 warriors. God wasn't looking for the might of men. He said, I need 300 who are watchful.

They're watching for my kingdom to come and through whom I will be glorified. They're trusting in me. What else do the king's actions reveal about the nature of his kingdom? Number six, King Jesus sees you.

This brings us to the last of the men who are called to this passage. Look at verse 48. King Jesus sees Nathanael. In verse 48, we're told, before your friend brought you to me, says Jesus, I saw you.

[27 : 03] Now, who was this man, Nathanael? The other gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, they call him Bartholomew. I believe it's the same man. He's always associated with Philip.

Notice it was Philip who brought him. So they're close associates. Most likely, like, Bar means son. So Bartholomew, it probably means Nathanael was what they commonly called him, but he was the son of Thalomeu.

So Bartholomew would be his more formal name. And John calls him. I'm sorry, John calls him Nathanael, but Jesus was the one who said, I saw you. You're under that tree, but I saw who you are.

The encouragement I have for you here is this. We're told that Jesus is the son of God. He is the light of life. And in him, there is no darkness at all. This should both convict us and encourage us. If you feel invisible, and you feel like you are surrounded by so much darkness, you have no way of getting out on your own. Jesus, the light of God, sees you.

[28 : 13] And if the beam of light from God himself brings the light of God into your life, and I pray that he'll do that in every corner of your heart and my heart, there's no room for darkness.

When the ray of light comes in, all the darkness flees from Christ. So when Christ sees you, he sees you with the light of God's holiness. And how could you not respond as one who wants to walk in the light of God?

Jesus sees his soldiers. He sees everyone who he calls into his army. And he brings them life out of the shadows in his kingdom of light.

Well, number seven, King Jesus is the only one who bridges earth and heaven. He brings heaven to earth, and he brings men from earth to the kingdom of God in heaven.

Look at verse 51. Nathaniel was impressed that Jesus saw him and knew this inside. Jesus says, don't be impressed by that.

[29 : 17] In verse 51, truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened. Let me explain that phrase. Truly, truly, in all the other gospels, it's usually just given one time.

Truly, I say to you, in the gospel of John, remember, it's written much later than all the other gospels. He brings it twice, almost every time. Truly, truly. In other words, you all have read the gospels.

You've read Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This is what it felt like to hear Christ himself say that. And the word truly, it could mean amen. In other words, the weight of God's glory before God himself, I tell you this, you will see heaven opened.

And that phrase, heaven opened, is an expression for a great revelation. Heaven is the spiritual realm. It's where God in his spirit dwells and rules and reigns.

So he says, truly, truly, I say to you, and even though he was dealing with Nathanael, he's got disciples surrounding him, and he switches the tense. He says, I say to you, that's in the plural, and the application for us is this, Jesus is revealing to you, all of you, who are his disciples, with the truth of heaven itself, truly, truly.

[30 : 36] Notice his next words. What will it be that they will see? He's quoting from Genesis 28. And I'm going to read that so you can see how similar the quotation from Christ is.

Genesis 28. He dreamed, this is Jacob dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on earth that's actually resting on earth. Resting is ruling.

To rest is to rule. So a ladder that rules on earth is set up, and the top of it reaches to heaven, and behold, the angels of God were ascending, going up, and descending, going down on it.

So in Genesis, they're going down on this ladder, and Jacob doesn't have the full revelation. Who is that ladder, that stairway, this bridge between heaven and earth? And what does Jesus say the ladder is?

It is the Son of Man. Well, in the same chapter, He is the Son of God. Now we see He is God become man.

[31 : 35] The second Adam, the representative. The King's actions reveal that Christ Himself would lay down His life. What's the nature of His kingdom? His kingdom is one where the King lays down His life for His soldiers.

He brings heaven to them. And the angels that are ascending and descending will ascending angels means messengers. And yes, angels flooded to earth at the time of Christ to reveal the truth about Him, to confirm Jesus is the God, the Messiah.

And the angels are ministering even now among the church. But I think the angels could also be what Jacob pictured and what Christ is explaining. Angel means messenger or delegate or ambassador.

Who else is called an ambassador? Who else are the delegates of the kingdom of Jesus? It's His people. And when Christ comes to judge the living and the dead, we believe in the bodily resurrection of the saints.

So all those who are now in Christ, they will be ascending with Him. And when He comes to set up His eternal kingdom to rule over all earth and heaven, the new heavens, the new earth, the army of heaven would descend with Him.

[32 : 46] What a glorious vision. There's no path between sin and the flesh and death on earth and the holiness of God in heaven except on Jesus Christ.

That's what we confess. So in those seven observations, we see how King Jesus gathers His army. my argument to you is that He is not done gathering His army.

He gathers His army still today. Are you one who He has prepared and who can declare you are the Son of God?

You are the promised King from all God's Word, from all the Scripture. And I want to take you to Psalm 110 because I want you to evaluate how do you view Christ in light of this.

So please turn to Psalm 110. Verse 1, Psalm 10 says, The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool.

[34 : 05] So the Lord says to my Lord, that's a little confusing, isn't it? The Lord, Father in heaven, creator of earth, says to the psalmists, Lord, but hold on, we see at the top, this is a Psalm of David.

There's no one above the King. Who is the Lord of the King? So we have to understand in light of what God has revealed, David himself said, I have a Lord who is the covenant Lord.

He brings God's grace to earth. And who was it that said to my Lord? The Father says to the Son, Son, sit at my right hand until I have made my enemies your footstool.

That's where Christ sits right now, at the right hand of the Father. Who are the enemies of Christ? Well, today, the enemies of Christ, we're told, we don't fight against flesh and blood, but against the powers of darkness, these principalities of the spiritual realm.

And we know even in our own heart, we fight against sin, indwelling sin, like Romans 7. We fight against Satan. Although his head is crushed, he's still permitted to prowl around like a roaring lion, seeking who he can devour, because that's a mean God is using to draw us into his kingdom and to prepare us for heaven.

[35 : 22] And so he fights against sin, Satan, and the devil. Now, death, if you're in Christ, death has been destroyed. There's no longer a sting of death. But these are the enemies of God that are being brought under his rule until he returns in glory.

Now, look at verse 2, Psalm 110, verse 2. The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies.

The Father sent forth Jesus Christ as his sword or his scepter, as the one who will go out bringing the rule of God on earth.

In verse 3, what will be the nature of his army as he rules them? Verse 3, your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power in holy garments.

See, the people of God stand before God having been declared righteous. They're dressed in the righteousness of Christ alone. And how is it that they offer themselves back to him as he rules from heaven?

[36 : 26] They offer themselves freely. The nature of his kingdom is that everyone in the army of King Jesus is a volunteer. Not because they are more holy or anything, it's because how could you not want to follow Jesus?

Just like the disciples. They beheld him and they followed him. And I want to just share with you two willing warriors, two volunteer soldiers who freely gave themselves to Christ.

Both of them are from our text today. The first one is Andrew. John Fox, a Puritan historian and pastor, he put together a book telling the stories of martyrs.

And in this book, he said that Andrew, this apostle, he went on to be a missionary in Asia. And he was later arrested and brought to the city of Petrus, which is an amazing city in Greece, carved into stone.

And we're told that there, Andrew was tied to a cross that was in the shape of an X. So his legs and his arms would have been stretched out like that, tied there.

[37 : 33] And Andrew was probably reflecting on the glorious gospel, what it was to follow Christ, to tell others we found God's anointed one, the king, to join his army.

In Matthew 12, Jesus said, whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. So Andrew was full of joy to go and take the gospel to a different continent.

And the tradition of the church in Fox's book says that Andrew, from that position, was a very slow and torturous death. he preached the gospel of Jesus, gathering more by proclaiming Christ for three days.

That's a willing soldier. That's someone who belongs to the army of King Jesus has prophesied in Psalm 110. And the second willing warrior I want to tell you about is Nathaniel, Bartholomew.

Fox says that he went on to proclaim Christ to all who would believe in India. So the great continent of India that even today has so many dialects and languages that don't have the Bible complete yet.

[38 : 43] And he made it his lifelong project to translate the gospel of Matthew to the people of India where he was serving. One of the passages he would have translated would have been Matthew chapter 10.

It says this, whoever denies me before men, this is Christ speaking, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to earth.

I have not come to bring peace but a sword. And according to John Fox in church history, this apostle Nathaniel was flayed.

To be flayed, little children left the room, it means that they skinned you alive. They took a knife and cut your skin off while you're still living. And Nathaniel would not deny Christ.

Now I share this with those not so you think these men were special or that they were so much holier or better. I share this with you because this shows that the work of the Holy Spirit to give them a new heart, to cause them to believe Jesus and then to follow him in the way of his kingdom speaks a loud gospel to the whole world whoever will have ears to hear.

[39 : 58] Zephaniah 3.15 says, The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst. And Jesus was in their midst even as they were being martyred for his kingdom.

They did not leave them alone. He was with them. He says, You shall never again fear evil on the day of the Lord. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save.

He will rejoice over you with gladness and he will quiet you by his love. He will exult over you with loud singing. I just need to probably share with you what you might be wrestling with.

So you're saying Jesus rules from heaven and he's the King of kings and Lord of lords ruling. Yet you just told us these examples of how men in his army are being destroyed and torturously abused.

And we know our brothers and sisters around the world under persecution, I think more and more among the church in America we will face that same thing. How can you say Jesus is the King when that's all going on in his kingdom?

[41 : 04] John Calvin citing Augustine and his institutes was so helpful to me on this question. Here's the quote. Should God immediately punish all evil in the world?

He could do that. But should he do that? It would be thought of him that he has left nothing for his final day of judgment. There is a day coming. There is a day. The day of the Lord is coming.

And he will bring the final judgment. Praise him for being so patient with me and with you and with this world. Now, here's the rest of the quote. On the other hand, if God did not restrain and judge some evil in the world, then it would be thought of him that he does not hate any wickedness or exert any sovereignty or providence over his creation, which is also not true.

Our Lord rules and he preserves his broken world until his final day. We long for that day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Let's pray from Psalm chapter 2. Father, you promised that you have set your King Jesus on Zion, your holy hill.

[42 : 26] He rules from heaven. We believe and confess that Christ reigns today. He has gathered an army, his church around him, and he is still on the move gathering men and women, young and old, still today.

Lord, you have promised to make the nations his heritage and the ends of the earth his possession. Please do this, Father. Please do this for your glory through your church, by your word, so that you will be exalted among the nations.

We ask in your name. Amen.