

What Kind of Kingdom is God's Kingdom?

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[0 : 00] So please turn in your copy of God's Word to the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel. Today's sermon passage is the entire long chapter, all 42 verses of 1 Samuel 20.

! As we've seen with this genre, when there's a long chapter, an entire section, it's to draw attention that this is an important one, something major is going on.

Like the longest chapter was David and Goliath. Pay attention. This is the next longest, I believe. And so there's such treasures in it for us. The long chapter of David and Goliath, we broke it up into several parts, several sermons, several weeks.

Today, perhaps at a fall, it's going to be the entire chapter in one sermon with God's help. Because it's a long chapter, again, with God's help, it doesn't mean it has to be a long sermon.

So let's pray for the preacher, too. I'll read this trusting that it's God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, sufficient word. It's his very own word for you, his people. If you receive it that way, when I'm done reading it, I'll say the word of God for the people of God and we can respond together.

[1 : 08] Thanks be to God. Let me catch my breath. Here we go. It's a long one. And I should actually set it up for those who are jumping in midstream. The previous chapter right before this one was a display of God's power protecting David.

You can look back at chapter 19. David had to run away, flee for his life, and he went to Samuel. And with Samuel, Saul kept sending messenger after messenger.

And then finally saw himself and what God did each time has made them fall down and prophesy. He turned enemies into worshipers. So the question that's not answered super clearly, you should wrestle with this as I do.

Who knows at this point in these characters, the nation, the army, the inner court, Saul, Jonathan, do they know David will be the next king? Because God is sending very strong signals and you'll have to come to your own conclusions.

But that's what sets up the chapter we're in now. So here we go. First Samuel chapter 20. Then David fled from Naoth in Ramah and went and said to Jonathan.

[2 : 18] So Ramah is where Samuel was. Now he's going back to the court of the king Saul where the prince is, Jonathan, Saul's son. And he says, what have I done? What is my iniquity and what is my sin before your father that he seeks my life?

So Jonathan said to him, by no means, you shall not die. Indeed, my father will do nothing, either great or small, without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me?

It is not so. Then David took an oath again and said, your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes. And he has said, do not let Jonathan know this.

Lest he be grieved. But truly, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death. Verse four. So Jonathan said to David, whatever you do yourself, whatever you do yourself, desire, I will do it for you.

And David said to Jonathan. Indeed, tomorrow is the new moon. And I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening.

[3 : 28] If your father misses me at all, then say, David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city. For there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

If he says thus, it is well, your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him. Therefore, you shall deal kindly with your servant.

For you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself. For why should you bring me to your father?

But Jonathan said, far be it from you. For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come to you, then would I not tell you? Then David said to Jonathan, who will tell me?

Or what if your father answers you roughly? And Jonathan said to David, come, let us go out into the field. So both of them went out into the field. Then Jonathan said to David, the Lord God of Israel is witness.

[4 : 34] When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David. And I do not send to you and tell you, may the Lord do so much and more to Jonathan.

But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away that you may go in safety. And the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.

Verse 14. And you shall not only show me the kindness of the Lord while I still live, that I may not die, but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever.

No, not when the Lord has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, let the Lord require it at the hand of David's enemies.

Now Jonathan again caused David to vow because he loved him for he loved him as he loved his own soul. Then Jonathan said to David, tomorrow is the new moon and you will be missed because your seat will be empty.

[5 : 44] And when you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed and remain by the stone.

Then I will shoot three arrows to the side as though I shot at a target. And there I will send a lad saying, go find the arrows.

If I expressly say to the lad, look, the arrows are on this side of you. Get them and come. Then as the Lord lives, there is safety for you and no harm.

But if I thus say to the young man, look, the arrows are beyond you. Go your way for the Lord has sent you away. And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed, the Lord be between you and me forever.

Then David hid in the field. And when the new moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall.

[6 : 42] And Jonathan arose and Abner sat by David's by Saul's side. But David's seat was empty. Nevertheless, Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought something has happened to him.

He is unclean. Surely he is unclean. And it happened the next day, the second day of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan, his son, why has the son of Jesse not come to eat either yesterday or today?

So Jonathan answered, Saul, David earnestly asked permission of me to go to Bethlehem. And he said, please let me go for our family has a sacrifice in that city.

And my brother has commanded me to be there. And now if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers. Therefore, he has not come to the king's table.

Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan. And he said to him, you son of a perverse, rebellious woman. Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?

[7 : 52] For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now, therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.

And Jonathan answered Saul, his father, and said to him, why should he be killed? What has he done? Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.

So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month. For he was grieved for David because his father had treated him shamefully.

So it was in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David. And a little lad was with him. Then he said to the lad, now run, find the arrows which I shoot.

And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was, which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad, is not the arrow beyond you?

[8 : 56] And Jonathan cried out after the lad, make haste, hurry, do not delay. So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back to his master. But the lad did not know anything.

Only Jonathan and David knew of the matter. Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the lad and said to him, go carry them to the city. As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground and bowed down three times.

And they kissed one another and they wept together. But David more so than Jonathan said to David, go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, may the Lord be between you and me and between your descendants and my descendants forever. So he arose and departed and Jonathan went into the city. The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Please be seated. Lord, we ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you'll make this passage clear to us.

[10:16] We ask, Lord, that you will shine the glory of Jesus from these shadows in full substance, Lord, before the eyes of your people by faith.

I pray that you'll help the preacher to exalt Christ, that Christ will be lifted up. We pray, Lord, that the truth about your kingdom will be so clear to us. And we pray, Lord, that by the work of your spirit, you'll draw us deeper and deeper and deeper into communion with you to live as citizens within your kingdom with great joy.

For your glory we ask. Amen. Amen. As you hear this narrative, it makes you it makes you almost feel like you're there, doesn't it?

David had to run away once. He's coming back now. He's hoping he can stay. He's got wife. This is his home. This is his his nation. And he gets this horrible news.

He's going to lose it all. He has to flee and run away. And certainly he's questioning God's promises to him. Lord, you said I was anointed to be the king and I've submitted to your will.

[11:31] I'm not trying to take over or rush the timeline. Why can't I at least enjoy living with my family and with my loved ones? It's uncertain what the army knows at this time.

It's uncertain to me, at least what King saw in those other than that God has certainly rejected saw as king of the people. But I believe what's happening in this passage, it causes us to step back just like David and ask the same question.

Maybe everything I assumed about God's kingdom wasn't enough. Maybe God needs to teach me some new truths about his kingdom.

And that's what I focused on as I meditated and gleaned from this passage throughout this week. I believe here we have four revelations about God's kingdom.

The reason I believe this is so important for you and me, it's because. It's possible that we know the gospel, we know God's word, but we're still hesitant for one reason or another to to throw ourselves at the feet of Jesus as the king of kings and to abandon this world for his kingdom alone.

[12:50] And so these truths about his kingdom, he doesn't change. These are eternal. My encouragement is that you can trust King Jesus, the anointed Messiah, and that he's disclosing for you.

This is what my kingdom is really like. Come in. Come be part of it. So that's been my prayer. Let's see what these revelations about God's kingdom are from this passage.

What type of kingdom is God's kingdom? The first revelation is that the kingdom of God is not a kingdom of empty ritual, but of real righteousness.

This is the people of Israel. God gave him the law from Moses. He's brought them into the promised land. He's pushed away the foreign nations that are trying to wipe them out and kill them. And he's he's given them a ceremonial law to expose their sin, to show their need for a substitutionary atoning sacrifice.

So they will trust him and see he's a good God. But there are people who've rejected the Lord. And so one of these ceremonies that's given in Numbers 28 is called the new moon festival.

[14:05] God gave this law. It was a good law for them as part of the ceremonial commandments. What they had to do is on the beginning of each month when the new moon is is beginning its cycle.

You need to bring offerings on behalf of all the the representatives of clans and families and priests and kings. So all these sacrifices are presented. The king traditionally what we see from the Psalms would call a big gathering of the entire royal court and take attendance.

And it's a time to know that the Lord is giving us a fresh start. It's a new moon, a new cycle. We begin this new cycle with a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

And that's the occasion, at least back in the palace, for this intrigue. Now, you see the twisting of this this ritual or this ceremony by King Saul.

He's sitting there obsessing about how he's going to kill David, breaking one of the Ten Commandments, breaking the moral law. We see him even try to kill his own son in this passage.

[15:12] He does not have a righteous love for God and God's law in his heart. But yet, look at how Saul uses the law to accuse David.

Look at verse 26. When David's not there the first day, he says something has happened to him. He is unclean. Surely he is unclean. On the occasion of new beginnings and sin being atoned for, Saul's threatened by the new beginning that God has promised with David as king.

When you're coming before the Lord for a reminder of his atoning sacrifice and the pardon of sin, the only posture of the heart is to be humble before God and grateful.

But instead, Paul is, I'm sorry, Saul is proud and entitled. Notice how three times attention is drawn to the fact that David's seat at the table was empty.

Look at verse 18 and look at verse 25 and also verse 27. I'm not going to pretend to be a Hebrew expert, but those who are experts pointed out something fascinating about the word empty to say David's seat is empty.

[16:32] Linguistically, it's very close to another word, which means appointment. David's seat is empty. David's seat is empty and David's seat is appointed.

So in verse 25, we're told the king sat on his seat, as was his custom, with the back against the wall to grab his spear. But David's seat, you could say, was appointed.

So even with David's absence under the reign of Saul, it's not a sign of defeat, but a hint that a greater kingdom has been appointed.

You see the contrast. Saul is focused on the external rituals, ceremonial uncleanness. Spurgeon commented, Saul may sit at the feast with a heart full of murder, but the citizen of the true kingdom represented by David and Jonathan, they know that ritual without reality is but a painted pageant to go to hell in.

That's the end of Spurgeon's quote. Saul's ritual purity is a mask for his hypocrisy. David instead appeals to true righteousness.

[17:47] Look at verse one. He asked Jonathan, what have I done? What is my iniquity? What is my sin before your father that he seeks my life?

He even goes further. He says, Jonathan, you kill me if I'm in sin. You bring justice if that's what I deserve. Real righteousness is what God's about.

The posture of the heart before him. When our Lord Jesus came fulfilling this shadow of a righteous, anointed one appointed to redeem, to save, to establish a new beginning, a new kingdom.

In Luke 17, 20 and 21, Jesus said, the kingdom of God does not come with empty observation. The kingdom of God is within you.

And at the time when our Lord walked this earth, the religious elite did the same thing as Saul. They tried to use God's own law to condemn the true king.

[18:49] The only truly righteous man, Jesus Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 23, 27, for you are like a whitewashed tombstone, which indeed appears beautiful outwardly.

But inside it's full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Think of how our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a friend of those who truly have iniquity, who truly are unclean.

That's who he identified himself with. David is forced to stay away from the king's palace. Jesus was excluded from the community to suffer outside the gate.

Like David's empty seat, Jesus Christ's empty tomb proves that the king is alive and the covenant is secure. This was God's way of sparing David.

If he had been there, most likely another spear would have been coming his way. And our Lord Jesus left the empty tomb as proof that his kingdom has been appointed by God.

[20:01] And our Lord is in heaven right now. We receive him by faith, but one day he will come consummately. For we can't see him now with our eyes. One day we will see him and we will behold our redeemer on this earth with our very eyes.

Jesus said in Mark 115, the time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. Jesus is a friend of sinners.

When Satan accuses us as lawbreakers, just like Saul accused David, we can say back. Where is my iniquity? Where is my sin?

And maybe this is the very encouragement you need today. And you can tell your accuser.

Isaiah 40, 43, 42 says that Christ has blotted out my sins himself. Isaiah 43, 25 tells me God remembers my sins no more.

[21 : 06] Micah 7, 18 tells me the Lord himself took my sins away. Isaiah 30, 17 tells me God has cast my sins behind his back. Micah 7, 19 tells me he threw them into the deep.

Jeremiah 33, 8 tells me that God pardoned my sins and he sees them no more. Jeremiah 50, 20 tells me that God can't find my sins anymore.

And Isaiah 40, 1 and 2 promises me that my sins will be mentioned no more. Because Jesus is a friend for sinners like me.

I am completely covered and secure forever in his righteousness. Because the kingdom of God is not one of empty ritual, but of real righteousness from Christ alone.

Second revelation about the kingdom of God in this passage is that his kingdom is not a kingdom of self-preservation, but of self-sacrifice.

[22 : 16] Saul is trying to preserve his power, preserve his spot on the throne. And Jonathan shows the self-sacrifice that foreshadows our Lord Jesus.

In verse 31, Saul identifies the threat to his dynasty. A threat to Jonathan more so than Saul. Look at verse 31.

Saul says, as long as this son of Jesse lives on the earth, you, Jonathan, shall not be established nor your kingdom. Jonathan hears that David's life is his own political death.

And yet Jonathan chooses his friend. Jonathan ignores his own claim to the throne. And he says in verse 4 to David, whatever you desire, I will do it for you.

Jonathan values the covenant more than his own comfort and kingdom. Well, when Jonathan takes this side with God's anointed, with his dear friend, the one he covenanted for mutual protection and friendship.

[23 : 30] Saul's furious. He calls his own son a son of a perverse, rebellious woman. I joked earlier. This is a good example of how some passages in the scripture are descriptive, not prescriptive, not something we have to go and repeat.

Jonathan chooses the shame of David over the honor of becoming the next king of Israel. In doing this, John Gill pointed out that Jonathan is a type of Christ, a type meaning a shadow, like like you'd hit the key on a keyboard and it would make a symbol pointing to a word.

Proving that the glory of the kingdom is found in the prince becoming a servant to the fugitive.

Jonathan becomes a mediator here.

He stands between the wrath of the king and one upheld by God's covenant faithfulness, David.

Jonathan goes out to the field in verse 11 to meet up with his friend.

He leaves the palace to be with an outcast. Isn't that a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ? You and I are outcasts.

[24 : 44] We're enemies of God in our sin. And Jesus Christ is the great covenant friend to us who are so undeserving and ill deserving.

Philippians 2 7 reminds us that Jesus emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And he chose the shame of the cross to ensure our safety.

Just like Jonathan was shamed and name called. Our Lord Jesus left his comfort in heaven to save us, his friends.

We're going to sing a hymn here after the sermon. And one of the lines says this, Jesus, what a friend of sinners. Friends may fail me.

Foes assail me. He, my savior, helps me through. He is with me everywhere. In the field, behind a rock, in the caves, in an exile.

[25 : 45] Jesus did not preserve his glory. Instead, he came as the ultimate self-sacrifice to magnify God's glory in the eyes of those he would redeem.

What type of kingdom is God's kingdom? Number three, his is a kingdom not patterned off the world, but after the Lord's covenant faithfulness. See, all along, the pattern of Saul's reign as king has been like the world, be like all the other nations.

And you can see this bearing out in all of his actions and behaviors. Saul's the one always grabbing for the weapons made by by Philistine iron workers using threats and fear to manipulate people.

And instead, I believe this passage shows us how God's kingdom is built on a different pattern. King Saul was seeking first his kingdom, his external righteousness and his glory.

By trying to keep his own family on the throne. And even though he's telling Jonathan, David's going to be your downfall. He's the one that tries to take Jonathan's life for himself. Isn't that just like the behavior of Satan?

[27 : 00] He promises all this world can give you, but all of that is just bait to destroy your soul, to kill you. Jonathan, by God's grace, follows a different pattern opposite of Saul.

He seeks first the kindness of the Lord. Look at verse 14. Yes, there's a friendship between Jonathan, who's 40 years older than David and David.

But what Jonathan's really after is a forever blessing. The covenant, the request. Jonathan keeps asking for covenant faithfulness forever.

And by putting this covenant between in the presence of God between him and David, it's Jonathan's way of exercising faith in the anointed one.

Ultimately, Christ, who alone can ensure the covenant will be kept forever. And look at verse 14. Here's what Jonathan is seeking first. The kindness of the Lord.

[28 : 01] The Hebrew word is the hesed. And this means covenant faithfulness. He wants David to show him something that belongs to God. The loyalty of God himself.

It's odd because Jonathan is the one in a position of all power. You look at David, he's got nothing. He can't even go back home to pack up his stuff. Jonathan has everything.

He has the army at his disposal. He's got entitlement to the throne next. And yet here is the prince asking this fugitive for a royal treaty.

Jonathan begs that David shall not cut off your kindness from my house. Verse 15 forever. So Jonathan acknowledges that it's David's kingdom somehow in a way that he can only receive by faith.

At this time, it will be an eternal kingdom. This is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is from the line of David. In John 18, 36, Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world.

[29 : 07] If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight. But now my kingdom is not from here. Even though they didn't have this full revelation, you can see Jonathan is living according to the heavenly kingdom principle, even with Saul on the throne.

Think of how our Lord Jesus binds himself to us in his covenant of grace. He's the prince. We're the rejects. He's the superior one who yet is in covenant with us for no reason.

He treats us as his loyal, bonded covenant holders. We share in his royalty by his grace alone. We have nothing to offer him in return. And this kingdom is held together by God's covenant faithfulness. In verse 19, Jonathan tells David to hide yourself.

See, this is a gracious way for the prince to protect his covenant friend. Hide yourself. This is a glimpse in how the kingdom of heaven is not patterned after the world.

[30 : 22] It's patterned off of the kingdom of heaven. It's hidden for now, at least. Being hidden, being protected, safe. Sheltered by the provision of your covenant friend.

In Matthew 13, 44, which was fascinating. I never thought of it in light of 1 Samuel 20. Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven.

In this case, the kingdom is represented by David, who is anointed to be king. And Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man found and hid for joy over it.

He goes and sells all he has and buys that field. That's the love of Jonathan for David. And that's a glimpse into the kingdom of heaven.

John Flavel commented, this covenant of the Lord pictured here in 1 Samuel 20 is the believer's only anchor.

[31 : 35] For all the stability of the covenant of grace flows from the faithfulness of God rather than the strength of man. We're told at the end that David weeps even more than Jonathan was weeping.

Perhaps this is some of the grace he was receiving by faith. I have nothing. There's nothing I can contribute back in this relationship. I'm losing everything according to the world.

But I receive trusting God. His kingdom is not of this world. I know the enemy wants to accuse me and he wants to accuse you.

Most likely we all step in here today needing reminder of God's covenant faithfulness and grace to you. Not that it's unconditional. But because it is conditional and the condition has been met and fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

So now he turns around and pours it out on us. 2 Timothy 2.13 If we are faithless, he remains faithful.

[32 : 42] Why? He cannot deny himself. It's God's covenant faithfulness from beginning to end that saves you and me. The hymn says it well.

Jesus, what a strength in weakness. Let me hide myself in him. Because his kingdom is not patterned after the world, but after the Lord's covenant faithfulness.

Well, the fourth and final revelation from this wonderful passage is this. What type of kingdom is God's kingdom? His is a kingdom whose citizens have their eyes set above.

Their citizens have their eyes set on things above. Here David is getting close again to the tribe of Benjamin, the capital under Saul's regime.

And he's having his eyes set on that, wandering from a distance. And he recognizes the mortal danger of being close to Saul at this time. Look at verse 3, a precious verse.

[33 : 53] In verse 3, David says, Truly the Lord lives. And as your soul lives, Jonathan, there is but a step between me and death.

He's saying a lot in these verses. He can't see with his eyes on this earth right now what God is doing. But he knows one thing.

Truly the Lord lives. And as your soul lives, Jonathan, he's encouraging his friend and admitting his vulnerability. There is but a step between me and death.

The word step here uses a rare word. If my research was right, it's not used anywhere else in the entire Bible. Verse 3, where he says, I'm but a step away from death.

The way it sounds in the original language, it's a sharp sound. And the root of the word primarily means to jump or to leap or to skip over us.

[34 : 54] Skip over something. So here's David thinking about what's on the other side of this. Like what's the worst that can happen? I die. He takes my life.

It's going to be a step into the realm that I don't know. Into the life to come. That's how close I am to the eternal destiny of my soul.

I know the Lord lives. And that's true for citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We're more aware of this than the world. We're on the threshold right now.

This moment. The threshold like you'd cross into a door of all eternity. Well, David is sent by Jonathan to hide and wait for the signal.

And the place where David hides in verse 19, it's a stone named Ezel. The word Ezel means departure or going out.

[36 : 04] And that's interesting, isn't it? How true safety for David is not found in the palace, in the armies of Israel. It's not found in this world at all. But true safety is found in departure.

We're reminded that the kingdom of God will be inaugurated not by military victory first, but through exile, through Christ's own departure.

His death and resurrection inaugurates the kingdom of heaven. The future King David then closes this chapter in his second to last encounter with Jonathan, though that one's very brief.

And we're told David bows down three times to his friend. The promised anointed king bowing down now. The kingdom of heaven will find its strength in the humility of God's servant.

David's eyes are set on something he can only receive by faith. Jesus said in Matthew 5, 3, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[37 : 19] David had bound himself in a covenant now. And the anointed king, King Jesus, will be a man bound by covenant faithfulness.

Marked by self-forgetting humility and love that flows from God. And so in verse 41, David and Jonathan say their goodbye.

Something beautiful follows. Jonathan ministers to David in verse 42. He says, go in shalom. Go in peace.

He knows that this is not peace that the world can recognize. It's a deeper shalom. And he says, may the Lord be between you and me.

May the Lord be between you and me. And between your descendants and my descendants forever. There it is in verse 42. Jonathan clinging to the forever kingdom.

[38 : 23] The kingdom of the Lord is eternal. Because the Lord is the one between the parties of this covenant forever. On the cross, our Lord Jesus Christ took that step.

He crossed that threshold of death. And Christ's departure is the very thing that secures our safety. Now in Jesus Christ, our death is but a step into eternal joy.

And eternal communion with God. I was speaking with my grandma earlier this week. Because she's not doing well in her health. And she was suffering.

She fell and just had a lot of pain down her spine. And I encouraged her with this verse. For Christians, death is a step into eternity. The sanctification marathon is over. And this wonderful line from the hymn, Jesus, what a help in sorrow. She misses her husband. He's already with the Lord. While the billows o'er me roll.

[39 : 31] So with our eyes set on our Lord Jesus, the anchor of our hope, who's already crossed that threshold. You picture a ship throwing the anchor out first.

This is where I'm going. It's going to pull me in. This is my destiny now. Colossians 3.1 encourages us. Seek those things which are above. Where Christ is.

Seek that. He's seated at the right hand of God. John Cotton wrote that, Though there be but a step between me and death, the saints look upward, knowing that the death of a believer is not a step into the dark, but stepping into the light of the Father's house.

Jesus encourages us in Matthew 25, 34, Come, you blessed of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

When we meet our Lord Jesus, we'll do as David did. In verse 41, we will fall on our faces to the ground, and we will bow, not just three times before the Lord, 3,000 or more.

[40 : 43] In Luke 22, verses 29 and 30, Jesus said, I covenant to you, just as my Father covenanted to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.

We trust this. We set our eyes as citizens of heaven now on earth. We set our eyes on Christ, the anchor of our hope, for his is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we praise you for your glorious work. We praise you that your kingdom is not a kingdom this world can see.

It's a kingdom that the world will mock. It's a kingdom, Lord, that we would have hated unless you had given us regenerating grace. We thank you, Lord, for how this kingdom is also no surprise.

We can look back at your activity in human history and redemption. We can see, Lord, your faithfulness. We can see your promise and your purposes all along. We pray, Lord, that your work, your faith into us, grow us and help us to trust you to set our eyes on Jesus Christ, to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, that you may be glorified, Lord, in our lives and in this church, we pray.

[42 : 02] Amen. Amen.