

When Thy Kingdom Comes

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Preacher: Rev. Richard James

[0 : 00] If you take a seat, would you pick up your Blue Bibles and turn to page 77 in the New Testament section. I feel the need to start with an apology because the following teaching you'll find quite distressing.

Let me explain by showing you two of the verses that we're going to be looking at. It's quite a shocking reality. So on page 77, if you have a look near the top of that first column at verses 34 and 35, you'll see what I mean.

Jesus says about the last day, I tell you in that night there will be two in one bed, one will be taken and the other left.

There will be two women grinding together, one will be taken and the other left. Jesus is telling his disciples about a moment in history in the future where the day of judgment comes to the whole earth.

And I'd like you to reflect with me just for a moment the gravity of that day. A husband and wife in bed, perhaps a parent and child in bed.

[1 : 16] And in an instant one is taken and one is left behind. I have family members who are not yet Christians. I pray that they will become Christians before that day.

Or two people working together, perhaps friends, close friends. But in an instant one is taken and one is left behind. I have friends who still have not put their faith in Jesus.

And if they don't, they'll be left behind. I mean the gravity of this moment cannot be overstated, can it? This day we're told by Jesus will be as unexpected and devastating as the days of Noah and Lot. If you have a look at verse 26 on page 76, you'll see how he describes it. As it was in the days of Noah, verse 26, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise it was in the days of Lot.

[2 : 24] They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built. But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all.

So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. How disturbing. Life just happening as normal. Then with virtually no warning, complete, unmistakable judgment.

Total destruction. You'll notice in verse 27 and 28 the expression, and destroyed them all. You may be interested, the word there is the same word that Jesus used of lost.

It can be translated lost. Remember chapter 15, how the sheep was lost. The son was lost. The idea is lost in the sense that unless they're found, they will be destroyed.

We just had the kids remind us. The reason Jesus came was to seek and to save the lost, lest they be destroyed.

[3 : 30] It's quite disturbing, isn't it? We're not just talking about ceasing to exist, but perishing beyond the grave. A lost that is without hope, like the rich man who was lost while he heard of Lazarus and saw Lazarus in heaven.

Well, when will this happen? Verse 30 is crystal clear. It will be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. A time in the future when Jesus is revealed, all will be revealed.

Revealed is from the word we get, apocalypse. When Jesus is revealed, it will be apocalyptic.

When he is revealed, everyone will see him because that's what revelation means.

They will see him. And as with Noah and Lot, with Jesus' revelation, there will be complete destruction of those that are left behind, except for those who have been found, rescued, saved.

Now I'm aware that if you are listening carefully, you will probably be quite shaken by Jesus' words. I am.

[4 : 51] I suggest we take a deep breath and I'll just pray that God helps us. Listen. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Be our comforter. Help us to hear your teaching and know how we should respond. Grant us the courage to face reality as things really are and live in the light of the truth.

Amen. Amen. Now again, I'm sorry for the pain these words bring us. But sometimes the truth hurts. Sadly, there are some who profess Jesus in this city who take away from God's word what hurts. They teach a Jesus teaching without pain. It's not the whole truth. It's a lie. You realise every preacher throughout the centuries has faced the pressure from their hearers to say things they want to hear, to please our people.

Pray that your preachers do not give in to the pressure and temptation to be people pleasers. Pray instead, Lord, may we hear the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

[6 : 12] Because you know, as Jesus promised, it's by knowing the truth that you will be set free. Now I think it's helpful to understand the context where Jesus began to talk about the end of the world, the coming of the kingdom of God.

It began with a question from his opponents, the Pharisees. You can see it in verse 20. Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, lo, here it is, or there.

For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you. Now you realise we're going through Luke, and as we've been going through Luke, one of the pressing questions that seems to be everyone is asking, is Jesus the Christ?

Christ, and Christ means king. Now Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem. Everyone knows in the next couple of weeks it's the final showdown.

And when he arrives, we read in chapter 19, that everyone greets him as a king, waving their arms, here comes our king. And the Pharisees, who are his opponents, fear that more than anything.

[7 : 31] They fear for their future if Jesus becomes the king, so their question about the kingdom is a loaded one. But what's interesting is the expression, the kingdom of God, in verses 21 and 22.

Jesus introduced that expression. Until he came, that expression was never used. He spoke of the kingdom of God. Not just any kingdom, but God's kingdom on earth.

And not just any king, but God's king, his Christ. And Jesus actually gives two answers to them. Two parts, basically. The first part is simply, it won't come with observable signs.

You won't be able to see it coming. You won't be able to guess, ah, it's tomorrow. The second thing, though, he says is somewhat more beguiling for them. In verse 21, he says, besides, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

The kingdom of God is right here, verse 21. They didn't understand. Now think about it, the kingdom of God just needs two things. God's king ruling.

[8 : 38] That's the kingdom of God. Where God's king rules, the kingdom of God is present. Listen, well, Jesus is God's king. He is there in their presence.

And you think about it. This is how it worked. When Jesus was there, he would command sickness, and it would be healed. When Jesus was there, he would command blindness, and there would be sight.

When Jesus was there, he would command storms, and they would be still. When Jesus was there, he would command demons, and they would obey. When Jesus the king was there, he would command death, and it would become life.

The king is in their midst. The rule of God is absolute when Jesus is in their presence, but they refuse to see it. They are lost, blind, and deaf.

You may remember back in Luke 11, Jesus cast out a demon. They couldn't dispute he did it. So they said, ah, the way you're doing that is by the devil. Jesus said, nonsense.

[9 : 41] And then he said in verse 20, but if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

God's kingdom is right here if I'm doing this by the finger of God. But they refuse to believe. So Jesus has less and less time for the Pharisees. You'll notice in verse 22, he turns his back on the Pharisees and now starts talking to his disciples who obviously would like to know more about this subject.

And look what he says to the disciples in verse 22. He said to the disciples, the days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man and you will not see it.

And they will say to you, low there or low here, do not go, do not follow them. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first, he must suffer many things, be rejected by this generation and die. A few weeks later, Jesus is rejected, suffers and dies.

[10:52] They put his cold and broken body in a tomb only to be raised king of the universe. Jesus, however, being God's king, knowing about God's kingdom, tells his disciples a couple of things about that kingdom.

He starts by telling them basically what the future is to be and what they are to do about it. Now, if you're wondering what it is we should do, I want to remind you that your parish life notes, the white sheets, always have a bit of blank page, take notes.

Might be too late to find a pen now, but you should come with a pen. I want to remember what's said. I'll help you. The five things I hope you'll remember all begin with P. And the first thing that Jesus says is to persevere.

If you have a look in verse 22, he's saying, you know, in the future, you'll long for another day like the day of the Son of Man. For three years I've been with you and each day you saw me, the King, demonstrate the kingdom of God in my power.

It brought peace. It brought praise. You heard my preaching. You will long for one of those days but it won't be like that again. I won't come back and be like that again.

[12:15] You must wait. Some people will say, oh yes, he's out there or he's over there. Don't listen to them. It won't happen like that. They must persevere. In fact, he tells us in verse 24 that his coming will be so obvious it will be like lightning that flashes and fills the sky.

Think of lightning. Sudden, unmistakable and everyone sees it. That's what it will be like when he comes. I remember 10 years ago watching telly in Australia we have one of those comic things that looks at the ridiculous news that has happened in the last week and one of the ridiculous news items was Jesus had appeared in Pakistan and there was a picture of Jesus.

He looked like a Middle Eastern kind of guy in Pakistan and everyone looking at him as if he was Jesus and I was comforted to know that was not Jesus because he will come like lightning, sudden, unmistakable and everyone will see it.

Friends, you will never wonder if it has happened. Jesus has returned. Oh, I missed that. Was it on telly? No, never. Never will you wonder.

So the first thing Jesus says to his disciples is don't be confused, persevere, keep waiting. You'll long for that day like it was in the good old days but not yet.

[13:37] The second thing he tells them to do is pray. In fact, Luke introduces the parable he tells us in verse 1 of 18. Look at what it says.

He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. As we wait, as we persevere, we are tempted to lose heart.

Jesus tells a parable so that we will pray and not lose heart. The parable is about an unjust judge who doesn't give a widow what she needs but she nags him and he finally gives it to her because he can't stand the nagging.

But before we look at the reason Jesus told that, his reason is take heart, keep praying. Now, the actual parable is one of those ones with the formula.

If that's the case with him, how much more will it be with God? If God is someone that loves you, you can see it in verse 7, will not God vindicate his elect who cry out to him day and night?

[14:44] Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Pray, do not lose heart. However, verse 8, nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

What is the mark of faith? Well, we're persevering and we're praying. Faith is seen in people calling out to the Lord day and night. Lord, help us.

Lord, we trust you. Lord, help us obey you. It's not easy. Living life now in the light of the future to come. Now, stop for a moment.

Someone said this and it hadn't occurred to me until they said how clever it was. Answer this question. If you know the future, what's going to happen then and live your life now in the light of what's going to happen in the future, what's that called?

That's faith. That's faith. I know what's going to happen in the future. I'm going to live in the light of it. Faith is wearing a parachute in an aeroplane.

[15 : 53] We're not jumping any minute, but we could jump any minute. I'll keep on my parachute. There's the thing. Everything's ready. Why are you wearing a parachute? Well, we could be jumping any minute. Oh, I don't believe that.

Well, you don't have to wear a parachute. I am living in the light of the truth that we will have to jump. Faith is believing Jesus by living differently now because he tells us what will happen in the future.

So persevere, friends, and pray. But I want to become very practical because Jesus becomes very practical with three other things you can do. They also begin with P.

As you persevere and as you pray, consider these three things. Your possessions, your pursuits, and people.

First, your possessions. Look at verse 31. On that day, let him who is on the housetop with his goods in the house not come down to take them away.

[16 : 53] And likewise, let him who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Now Jesus is telling what it will be like in the future.

I don't think it means that when Jesus is returning, I have time to rush into my house and grab my belongings. What he's doing is he says, on the last day when I come, don't be thinking like that. Live your life now in the way that you should when he returns. Live life with a view that what is in my house or what I leave behind, my possessions, don't matter.

Nothing in my hands do I cling. Everything I own, God, is yours. Remember Lot's wife, we're told? She was rescued from Sodom.

But we're told she longingly looked back to the possessions she'd left, to the places she loved to go, to the pleasures she enjoyed and she made the choice and was judged.

[17 : 55] What you own, what you have bought, none of these things will matter on that day. Hold them with open hands. This is yet another blow for us first world wealthy Christians.

We've got a lot of stuff. The Lord says, it doesn't matter. I don't think he means treat our possessions with contempt or disregard, he just means treat them with care, thankfulness and generosity.

Open hands. In a matter of weeks, my friends, a court is going to decide whether we keep our building or not. It's a possession, it's a wonderful possession.

If we lose, praise the Lord. If we win, praise the Lord. We just need to remember, the Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord, we still have him and we still have each other.

If everyone stepped outside and remain standing, the church is standing. We are the church. So our possessions, we just hold lightly. Second, our pursuits.

[19 : 05] Look at verse 33. Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it. Jesus says things so funny. You want to be first, come last.

You want to live, die. You want to receive, give. If you want your life, lose it. Because those who seek first themselves, those who are self-seeking, have not put God first.

Remember the main thing? The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. First things must come first.

I need to seek first the kingdom of God. But if I put something else first, if I seek to gain my life, I will lose it. It will be destroyed. Now I don't think this means we have no ambitions.

I consider myself quite ambitious. For goodness sake, if anyone's going to be ambitious, we should be. We serve the king of heaven. We should be highly ambitious and motivated.

[20 : 11] It's just our ambitions have changed. Our ambitions are his. Our pursuits are his. For goodness sake, we are seeking to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength.

We are seeking to love our neighbours, ourselves and one another as much as Christ has loved us. We're going to even try and love our enemies and live for God's glory in everything we say and do. That's fairly ambitious.

But it's his pursuit, not mine. What I pursue often is just so petty, so pale compared to his greatness. So a life of faith finds us persevering, praying, open handed with our possessions, focused in our pursuits and finally it has a priority towards people.

Another great street sign, you ready? The most important things are not things. things. What's the most important things?

It's not things, it's people. I can leave things. Jesus leaves us with the sobering images in 34 and 35 of the two being taken, one from the bed, a loved one, one from a workplace, a good friend.

[21 : 34] People matter. it occurred to me, in what context will I emphasize how important people are? And I thought I'd do this. In Australia, it's becoming more and more common for families to not come to church every week.

I get cross with the parents because they're making a decision for their children that the children, I think, if they were given the choice, will not choose. St. John's has the best Sunday school I have ever seen, ever.

When you bring your children, you don't just have childcare, you have faithful shepherds teaching our little lambs what the Lord Jesus is like so they follow him and trust him and do not fear.

Now I'm not saying you can't occasionally have a Sunday off, but I'm saying you should avoid the casual, even careless absence from church to do other things that you could do at other times.

Yes, you might think you can do without church, but people matter, our children matter. If friends want you to go somewhere with them, why not flip the coin and say, well why didn't you come with us first?

[22 : 46] Why am I saying this? It's very easy, it's very easy to get our pursuits wrong. We are to love people. The only thing you can take with you to heaven is people.

Every week we pray, do we not? Thy kingdom come, God return and rule, thy will be done, may I live in obedience to you.

Every week we pray, give us today, only today, our daily bread. No more, that's all I ask for. Lead us not into the temptations of this world that call us to run after everything else but you.

Deliver us from the evil one who wants our faith to falter, who wants us to lead others away. Dear brothers and sisters, persevere, do not give up and pray daily for the lost, for the people of God.

Openly and freely offer your possessions and saying, Lord, they're yours. Say, God, help me to make sure the main thing is the main thing and first things come first.

[24 : 02] And may I treasure the one thing you came to give your life for, other people. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, they are strong words, but they are good words.

teach us to trust you and live by faith. Help us to follow you always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

And we continue in prayer. Father God, we come before you this morning and we want to worship you and praise your name for you are great and greatly to be praised.

Father God, we pray that your kingdom would come in our lives, in our church, in our communities. We pray, Lord, that you would be the king in our lives.

forgive us for the times when we place ourselves on the throne. Lord, this morning we kneel before you and we praise and glorify your holy name.

[25 : 23] Father God, this morning as we think about the world we live in, we pray that you would give renewed strength and hope to those who call on your name in places where there's persecution, violence, and hardship.

Let your strength be seen through their present weakness and guard them from all danger. Father God, we also lift before you the Canadian troops who are overseas.

We pray your protection upon them. Lord, we pray Lord, for the Christian soldiers that you would give them your strength and enable them to be your light in the places where they are.

Lord, in your mercy. Father God, we also pray for the provincial election coming up. we know that there is no authority except from God and that those which exist are established by you, O God.

And so we pray for your hand to be upon this election, that you would raise up leaders. Lord, in your mercy. Father God, we also want to lift before you this morning, the missionaries of our church.

[26 : 50] Lord, we think of the fact that you came to seek and to save the lost. And Lord, we especially pray this morning for Paul Ratsoy of the Lighthouse Ministries as he goes on the ships that come into this harbor, our harbors, to share your gospel with the sailors.

I pray that you would give him open access to the ships and opportunities to share with people whose hearts you are touching. We pray especially for the Filipino sailor that Paul spoke with last week, that he would be open to hearing the truth of your gospel and not be led astray by the false gospels that he has heard before.

We also pray, Lord, for Siri from Sri Lanka as he pursues a refugee claim. We pray for your hand to be upon his life and your way for him.

Father God, we also lift before you Marian Maxwell at Genesis House. We pray that you would give her strength and courage and energy for the task that you have given to her.

And Lord, we would also especially pray for one of the women who has been in that program who has since left and wants to come back but isn't ready to give up the things she needs to give up.

[28 : 14] Lord, we pray that you would continue to call her to a place of wholeness and to a place of relationship with you. And Father God, we also lift before you Dan and Fran Gow and the Seeds of Hope Ministry.

Lord, in your mercy. Lord, in your mercy. This morning, Lord, we lift the ANIC parishes that are facing legal action before you.

Lord, we especially pray for St. Matthias, for the Church of the Good Shepherd, for St. Matthias and St. Luke, and for ourselves. Lord, we pray for the lawyers and the judges in the coming court case. give them your words to speak. And Lord, we pray that your will would be done and that your glory would be made known.

We thank you, Lord, that our possessions are really yours, that our pursuits are really yours, and that we are your people.

[29 : 31] Lord, we would be to keep our priorities straight in this time and to love and worship you. Lord, in your mercy.

Father God, we also lift before you the leadership of this Church. We pray that you would strengthen them, that you would embolden them, that you would help them to have perseverance and to have hearts in the way.

We pray that you are in the ways of prayer. Help them not to be caught in any way trying to please people, but to please you. We also pray for people of this parish in need, for Paul, Gail, Jill, Ben, Harold, Rowena, Lee, and Ron.

And Lord, in the silence, we also pray for the people who are on our hearts. Lord, in your mercy.

Father God, may we abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that we may approve what is excellent and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

[31 : 03] Amen.