

Waiting in Hope

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to God in prayer, calling out for his help as we prepare to hear a message drawn from his word this morning. Father, we are people who are prone to wander.

We're longing to, we're asking, Lord, that you may preserve us, seal us, protect us, so that when we appear before you in your courts above, when we stand before you on the day of judgment, that we may have remained firm in Christ, remained connected, united to him, his righteousness counted towards us, our sins borne by him, so that we may be welcomed into your presence, that we may be counted as clean, as righteous, as holy, that we may be people who belong in the new heavens and the new earth, who belong in the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And so we ask, Lord God, even now, may you preserve us, may you protect us from falling away by the word preached, the word spoken, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to understand, Lord God, so that we remain steadfast and faithful to Christ Jesus.

Preserve us and protect us, O Lord God, and open our eyes to see how wonderful, how beautiful he is. Amen. Amen. All right.

Well, I know it is the new year, and we're all ready to turn a page from a very difficult year, but I want us first to think back a few days to Christmas this year, sort of an unusual Christmas, but many of us receive, gave and received gifts regardless.

[2 : 01] In my family, we still have a few gifts that are lost in the mail. Well, I wouldn't say lost in the mail, but they're in the mail somewhere, and we're trusting that eventually they will reach one another.

But of those gifts you've received, what was your favorite gift? What was your favorite gift that you received this year? Maybe that's something that you can think of immediately offhand.

But then, let me ask you a second question. What was the best packaged gift that you received this year? What gift would you say it just really had the best packaging?

You know, maybe it was covered with shiny foil, that perfect lace bow wrapped around it. It was just this model of, you know, it could have appeared in the front of a catalog how perfectly done this gift was.

Maybe it was a gift bag, and I like gift bags because they're really, you know, they look good and they're really easy to do. And gift bags, you know, maybe it was bursting with all sorts of colorful tissue paper and had a nice car, and it was just neatly ordered and arranged.

[3 : 08] Or maybe, you know, it was a gift, and for some reason, you're the kind of person who really likes glitter, and this thing was covered in glitter, and you're looking forward to spending the next six months picking glitter out of your carpet.

Because that's what happens when you get a gift or a card covered in glitter, is you're stuck with it for the next few months or possibly years. But I want you to picture for yourself, what was the best packaged gift you received?

And I want you to picture yourself opening that gift once again. You got that in your mind. Picture yourself opening this gift once again, you know, looking at the beauty on the outside, looking how wonderful this is, having great expectations, looking forward to seeing what's inside.

But imagine you open this gift, and inside you found nothing at all. It was an empty box, an empty bag, a hollow package.

How do you feel about that? How do you feel about the person who gave it to you? We're beginning a new year.

[4 : 22] We are looking forward with expectation. We are thinking about what our future will be. And we live in a world that is longing for good things, longing for beautiful things, longing for a better year, longing for a better future for ourselves.

But our world, I'll explain in a moment, it's longing for a hollow gift, a beautiful but empty package. And I want to communicate to you this morning that if you're a Christian, if you're a true believer in Jesus Christ, if you truly belong to his church, you have something better to hope for.

You have something much better to hope for than the beautiful but hollow and empty gift that the world is longing for. Let me read about the great hope that we have.

And I'm going to read from Isaiah 9, verses 1 through 7. Isaiah 9, verses 1 through 7. And this is a continuation from last week. We talked about waiting in fear and how we live in a culture that is waiting in fear.

And now we're talking about waiting in hope. And we're talking about waiting in hope, drawing from Isaiah 9, verses 1 through 7. Here are the words given to the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[5 : 45] But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time, he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali.

But in the latter time, he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy.

They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder the rod of his oppressor you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born.

[6 : 58] To us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. This is the word of the Lord. Now, when Isaiah delivered this prophecy, a prophecy given to him from God the Holy Spirit, he was promising many good, many beautiful things to the people of Judah that he was speaking to and in fact to the whole nation of Israel even though it was a divided kingdom.

Last week, we learned about the political, the military dangers that the kingdom of Judah faced. We learned about powerful northern kingdoms that were conspiring against them to conquer them, to lay siege to Jerusalem.

There was a conspiracy to attempt a coup against King Ahaz in Jerusalem. And so out of fear, Ahaz was in turn launching his own conspiracy.

[8 : 30] He was making diplomatic overtures to that great and awful Assyrian empire. He was willing to place Judah underneath Assyrian control in exchange for Assyrian protection.

This, by the way, this horrible mistake was going to bring a horrifying and cruel empire right down the neck of not only Israel, the northern kingdom, but Judah, the southern kingdom.

It was a terrible mistake to trust in, to make this political alliance rather than trusting in the Lord. And on top of all this, there were any number of conspiracy theories, you know, just being bandied about the streets of Jerusalem and the marketplaces and the palace.

trust me on this. You know, if you think 2020 was a bad year, the year that Isaiah is giving this prophecy, that was a really bad year if you were living in Jerusalem.

It was a very bad year to be there. To people who lived in these very dire, very confusing circumstances, Isaiah promises hope.

[9 : 50] He promises hope. And he promises hope not only to Judah and Jerusalem, but he promises hope even to these northern regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, regions that would later be called Galilee.

These regions are about to be overrun by the Assyrian war machine. But he promises that there is, they will be restored in the future to a time of joy.

He assures the people of Israel that darkness is going to be turned to light, contempt will be turned to glory, anguish will be turned to joy, and there will be an end to oppression and war in their land.

And finally, Isaiah concludes by explaining how all of this is going to come about. These are all things that they absolutely longed for, they craved for, they yearned.

And we long for them still today. we long for hope, we long for prosperity, for happiness, for justice. And the world around us shares that longing, the world around us joins us in wishing for these things, whether you're Christian or not, these are things you want.

[11:09] We live in a world that longs for all of the blessings of God's kingdom, all of these blessings of hope, prosperity, happiness, justice. But the world wishes for a kingdom without a king.

The world wishes for a kingdom without a king. It wishes for an empty gift, a hollow gift.

In fact, the people around us want all of the blessings of God's kingdom without the presence of God's king. We are surrounded by people who want all the blessings of God's kingdom without the presence of God's king.

It's like wanting a beautiful gift that is hollow inside. Let me walk you through the four wishes, the four longings, the wishes of the world as this world longs for all the good things that are promised in Isaiah 9, 1 through 5.

the wishes for a kingdom without a king. The first wish of the world, the first thing the world around us is longing for, it is a movement from darkness to light, darkness to light.

[12:23] We all want to move from the darkness of despair, the darkness in which you cannot see, which there seems to be no, you just don't know where you're going, you're stuck, to the light of dawn when the light breaks over the mountains and you can see once again there is a future, the day is coming.

Years like the one that you and I just had, these are years in which we seem to be stuck in darkness. You kind of wonder, is this ever really going to come to an end? When you're trapped in feelings of despair and anxiety and gloom, those feelings, the funny thing about feelings is feelings always feel like they're going to last forever, don't they?

Whether you're happy or joyful, whether you're angry, whether you're sad, despairing, anxious, fearful, whatever you're feeling right now always feels like it's going to last forever, but it never does.

And we seem to be stuck in darkness sometimes. We're beginning to feel how the Lord said the people of Israel would feel in Isaiah 8, verse 22. They will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish, and they will be thrust into thick darkness.

They will be lost in a dark night. They will be lost with no sense of direction. They will not be knowing where they are going. But then, right after this, in chapter 9, verse 1, Isaiah promises that there will be no gloom.

[14:02] There will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. And he explains that this gloom is going to come to an end in verse 2. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. The darkness will be broken when light breaks over the mountains of this northern land of Galilee and the hope of a new day begins.

There will be better times to come. There is a hope and a future. The world will move from darkness to light. Now, our world does long for this movement from darkness to light.

We want to move from a place where we're stuck in despair to a place of hope. here in North America, we have a lot of hope placed on the myth of human progress.

We have this idea, this concept that things are just going to get better and better thanks to, you know, the hard work, thanks to the increasing wisdom, thanks to the scientific progress, thanks to the moral advances of us as a people.

[15:22] Now, here's the problem. That confidence is misplaced. Our world longs for the hope of the kingdom without the promise of the king.

Our world longs for the hope of the kingdom without the promise of the king. The world wants, the world wants this, wants the earth to be filled with light, but wants the light to come from nowhere at all.

We want light to come without the lamp, without the source of light. The world wants a future that is always bursting with hope and promise. But there is no king, it wants no king who will make those promises come true, it wants no king in which to ground that hope.

And so all the world is stuck with is just some sort of, you know, vague and tenuous and easily shaken faith in our fellow human beings. a faith in humanity that is not only tested but proven false

day after day after day as we see what our fellow human beings are capable of, as we see the weakness and foolishness in their thinking, as we see the evil and the violence.

God is the one who promises to move our world from darkness to light. God is the world. But the world wants the hope of the kingdom without the promise of God's king.

[16 : 56] That is the first wish of the world. The second wish is this. The world longs to move from contempt to glory.

The world longs to move from contempt to glory. many people that we know and love exist in a state and a status of contempt.

No one wants to be in contempt. No one wants to be in a place of being poor and weak, of feeling helpless and pathetic. No one wants to be looked down on to be the dregs of society.

No one wants their family to endure the daily humiliation of poverty, of uncertainty, of low social status, of being part of a group that's considered to be lesser and disadvantaged.

So, we love the promise. Everyone loves this idea, this promise in Isaiah chapter 9 verse 1, the promise for a people who are subject to contempt. There will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.

[18 : 11] In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

This region of Galilee, Isaiah says, it is no longer going to be a place of poverty, of defeat, of contempt, the first place in Israel. It was always the first place that got overrun by invading armies. It was always the first place that was just so vulnerable. But instead, this place of contempt is going to be a place that is known for glory.

The Lord promises to move this land from contempt to glory. That is what we long for too. The world longs to be moved from contempt to glory.

And here's the problem. our world wants the prosperity of the kingdom without the majesty of the king. Our world wants all the prosperity of God's kingdom without the majesty of God's king.

[19 : 19] We want status. We want to keep up with the Joneses. Or, you know, just to at least, or even better, you know, maybe we could even get ahead of our neighbors. We want to have a house that looks as good as theirs.

We want a car as nice as theirs. We want smiling children who perform well in school. We want our country to be first and best in the world. We want the American dream.

And this longing for prosperity, it has worked its way into the church. There is a national pride that has worked its way into a church, a claim that God somehow specially favors our land, our country. glory. There is a longing for individual prosperity and glory as we expect that God is right here, right now, going to give us health, wealth, prosperity if only we have enough faith in him or if only we give enough money to the televangelist on TV.

In all these ways, the problem is that we are longing for the genuine prosperity of the kingdom. God's kingdom really is going to bring all of that. We just read about that at the beginning of the service.

[20 : 39] But we long for the prosperity of the kingdom without the majesty of the king. We want the prosperity of the kingdom without the majesty of the king. We want all of the wealth and the glory and the status and we are content to have it without the king returning first, revealing his majesty and glory to the world.

We want the beautiful packaging and not the gift inside that shapes the packaging. God promises to move our world from contempt to glory, but the world wants the prosperity of the kingdom without the majesty of the king.

That is the second wish of the world. The third wish of the world is to move from anguish to joy. From anguish to joy.

Now this really goes without saying, doesn't it? We just want to be happy. Who doesn't want that? Well, everybody else in history has wanted that too.

And so it was in Isaiah's day. Isaiah promised that the people of Judah, they would be moved from the gloom of anguish to this overflowing explosive happiness of verse 3.

[22 : 03] When he says, when Isaiah says to the Lord, you have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

And so Isaiah is thinking, he just thinks of what are just the most joyful events that I can think of? What are just these events that just bring so much happiness to our community?

One was this yearly event of harvest. In their rural, in this rural agricultural world, that time of laughter and feasting as food is brought in from the fields.

As a whole community gathered together, it was their holiday season. It was a time of joy and a time of togetherness for a growing and prospering nation. And then there were moments when the armies of Judah or Israel had gone out into battle and won a great victory.

And they took captive all the spoils of war, all the things that the enemies, their enemies had. And when all the spoils of war could be divided up and brought home and paraded through town and just admired, this is a time of rare but delirious celebration.

[23 : 32] These were good times. The world wants both those yearly rituals, these holiday seasons that bring us comfort. It wants these occasional moments of delirious joy.

Maybe you could think of like a, you know, your sports team winning a championship. Canucks fan, don't know what that's like, but I trust that it happens. But these moments of happiness and joy that the world wants, it wants the happiness of the kingdom without the celebration of the king.

It wants the happiness of the kingdom without us celebrating and rejoicing in our king. It wants to enjoy life. It wants to enjoy good things even when we don't have our king with us.

Even when we don't have our king to celebrate with us. It is a hollow gift that the world longs for.

God promises to move our world from anguish to joy, but the world wants the happiness of the kingdom without the celebration of the king.

That is the third wish of the world. And the fourth wish is this, an end to oppression and war. An end to oppression and war.

[24 : 51] This is what is promised in verses four and five. For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For every boot of the tramping warrior and battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. The people who lived in the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, they know these old stories of the Midianite invaders from centuries before.

They know that those invaders who took over their whole, who took over the valley like locusts and devoured all of their crops, they know that these invaders were utterly broken in a miraculous way by the Lord, broken through his servant Gideon.

And Isaiah promises that the oppressors of his day, in particular the Assyrian oppressors who are coming, these oppressive overlords will also be brought to ruin.

And even the boots and the garments of the warriors who trample their land, who are splashed with the blood of their people, this equipment of war will be good for nothing more than fuel for the fire.

[26 : 24] There's a lot of talk in the world about the evils of oppression, the need for justice, the need to preserve and protect our rights.

On the conservative end of the political spectrum, most of the conversation seems to be fears and anxieties fretting about government oppression and overreach, concern about rights and liberties.

On the progressive, more liberal end of the political spectrum, all the fear, all of the anxiety, all the fretting takes place around the oppression of minorities, the plight of marginalized and disadvantaged people, among many others.

There are many people who are convinced that this world is headed towards a place of justice.

There's an idea that is captured well by the Reverend Theodore Parker in the 1800s.

He once, he made the famous comments that our universe has a moral arc that bends towards justice, that the arc of history bends towards justice.

[27 : 36] That's the direction that history is going to go in. It's just the way things are. But the wish of the world is for the justice of the kingdom without the judgment of the king.

The world wishes for the justice of the kingdom without the judgment of the king. Our world wants justice to be done.

It wants things to be set right. It wants oppression and war to come to an end. But we want it to happen entirely by human action.

And defended entirely by human action. The world doesn't want this to happen by God's anointed king reigning from his throne, delivering his right judgments, exalting the proud and favoring the humble, rewarding the righteous and punishing forever in hell those who persist in evil and reject him as king.

God promises to end oppression and war. But the world we live in wants the justice of the kingdom but without the judgment of the king.

[28 : 56] That is the fourth wish of the world. In all of these things, God is promising to give the world exactly what the world needs and what the world wants.

But God is giving these good things to the world in a way that the world doesn't want it. The world wants healing. It wants all of this help and hope.

But it wants it in its own way. It wants to be in control of how it receives it. It doesn't want the person of the king. But we live in a very personal universe governed by a very personal God.

And God's kingdom is no kingdom at all unless there is a king at its center. And there will be no blessings, no lasting blessings of the kingdom unless God has sent his king.

God is bringing light and glory and joy and deliverance. But he is doing it by giving us his chosen king. All these blessings come through a person, his chosen king.

[30 : 11] God is doing this by giving us his own son, Jesus. Jesus is the Christ. And by that I mean that Jesus is the anointed king who has been given to us by God, the king who rightfully reigns because he has been appointed by God himself.

Jesus was and is fully God. And at the same time, Jesus was born as a man.

Jesus taught and modeled a perfect and sinless life. Jesus laid down his life. Jesus died on a cross and he took the place on that cross of everyone who believes in his name.

So that the judgment that we deserve would fall on Jesus. Jesus. And his obedience and his righteousness would be counted to us because by faith we're connected with him, bound tightly to him, united with him.

God cannot look at anyone who believes in Jesus without also seeing his perfect son and smiling on him. And God did not leave Jesus, his son, in the grave, but he raised him from the dead.

[31 : 26] And so Christ Jesus ascended into heaven where he now reigns with God his father. He now stands in a position where all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.

And what we are looking forward to is this, that he will not merely remain at a distance. He will not be reigning in absentia. But Jesus has promised that he will come again to earth.

That is his promise in Revelation 22, verses 12 to 13, the promise I read earlier this morning.

Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me to repay each one for what he has done.

I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. this is our king.

This is the one who will bring light and glory, who will bring joy and deliverance to our world. Jesus brings these things to our world for the sake of the church, for the sake of all of those who believe in him and long for his return.

[32 : 46] And so, the church, we as Christians, we don't long for an empty gift with beautiful wrapping paper. We don't long for a hollow kingdom that has all these blessings and benefits, but nothing underneath it to sustain and shape those blessings and benefits.

Rather, the church hopes for a kingdom shaped by our king. The church hopes for a kingdom shaped by our king. So, when I say that this kingdom is shaped by our king, what I mean is that not only is our king at the center of this kingdom, but we, the people of this kingdom, we become what we worship.

We become like our king as we come to know him, as we anticipate his return, as we fix our eyes on him. The more we have our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, the more we are just concerned and deeply worried to be, we want so much to become like him.

The more we do that, the more that we realize this truth that a kingdom of light and glory, a kingdom of joy and deliverance, it can only take its shape and only sustain its shape from the king that God has promised.

We cannot have the blessings of the kingdom without the one true king, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Lord, you cannot have the blessings of the kingdom.

[34 : 29] They will not remain for long without the presence of our king. So, who is, what kind of king is this who can shape the kingdom we are longing for?

And I want to introduce you to this king because I want to show you what he is like and what his kingdom is going to be like because the kingdom will conform to the shape of the king.

First, we see in Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 that to us a child is born, to us a son is given. To us a child is born, to us a son is given.

And we see in verse 7 that this son will be set on the throne of David and over his kingdom, on the throne of David and over his kingdom.

In other words, this son is going to be the authorized descendant of the great king David. He comes from the royal line of the king, of King David.

[35 : 34] This son of David that God's people have been longing for. There are many prophecies in the Old Testament promising a son of David.

And in the day of Jesus Christ, that is what they were waiting for, this son of David, this Messiah, this Christ. Before Christmas, BK led us through Matthew chapter 1, through the genealogies that Matthew begins with.

And these genealogies are so important because they showed how Jesus really is descended from David. He really is the legitimate king. And what all this means is that God's kingdom is shaped by an awaited king.

An awaited king, the son of David. This king, he is exactly the king we have all been longing to meet.

A king who meets every need of our sick and broken world. The fact that God's kingdom, which is here today in an incomplete and hidden form, the fact that God's kingdom is shaped by waiting, it's shaped by an awaited king.

[36 : 50] This means that we are a people who are living in tension. A people who are sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. A people who are expecting our ruler, longing for his return.

A people shaped by hope. A people who live as faithful servants, who know that the world as it presently is will not remain this way forever.

A people who look at the resources, the relationships that have been entrusted to us, who look around at the people whom God has put around us and think, God has given me all of this to steward in anticipation of his return.

If you've seen, read the Lord of the Rings books or read or watched the movies, you know about the steward of Gondor waiting for the return of the king. And the steward's job was simply to lead and to govern the kingdom in the king's absence.

But it was never his job to be the king. And yet, he wanted to show the people of Gondor what the king was like. And that is our job too.

[38 : 05] What if we as Christians, rather than trying to, than worrying about the world, trying to make, trying to bring all the blessings of this kingdom to this world and to keep and preserve them, make sure they last forever, rather than trying to completely fix everything in this world?

Or on the other hand, what if we also refrained from just this mindset of it's all going to burn anyway, so who cares what happens to this world? What if we rejected both of those errors and instead looked at the world around us and said, our king is returning.

How can I steward what God has given me? How can I steward it well? How can I care for his creation well? How can I care for the people in my life well? In the spheres of influence God has put me in, how can I live as a servant who is waiting for his master?

We are serving a king who is returning soon. In verse 6, we see that God has given four titles to show what kind of king we are awaiting.

There are four titles given to this king that we are awaiting. This king is given the title, Wonderful Counselor. Wonderful Counselor.

[39 : 23] And this means that we are awaiting a king of extraordinary, miraculous wisdom. We are meant, you know, we can look backwards from this prophecy and we can think of the wise king Solomon.

Solomon, the wisest of the kings of Israel who impressed the ancient world with his brilliant insights into human thinking and motivation.

Many of these insights are preserved in stories from the book of 1 Kings and in some of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. But we are awaiting a greater Solomon, a greater king, with even greater wisdom.

And we see that in Jesus Christ. I think one of the greatest examples of wisdom, there are so many from the life of Christ, but one of my favorites is in Mark chapter 12, when his enemies try to trap him and catch him in his words, as they so often did.

As they often did, and just like here, they comically failed. We read in Mark 12, beginning in verse 13, They sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap him in his talk.

[40 : 40] And they came and said to him, Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God.

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them or should we not? But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, Why put me to the test?

Bring me a denarius and let me look at it. And they brought one, and he said to them, Whose likeness and inscription is this? They said to him, Caesar's.

Jesus said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And to God the things that are God's. And they marveled at him.

Now notice that last concluding sentence, They marveled at him. Jesus responds with such wisdom, vast wisdom, that even his enemies marvel at him.

[41 : 53] Now if we serve a king who is a man of such wisdom, then the king we are awaiting is exactly what our world needs.

I don't know if you've noticed, But we need wisdom. Your life and my life is full of complicated problems, complicated relationships that you just can't figure out.

And that's just you. Think of all the social and political problems in the world around us. That really make you just want to throw up your hands and give up because they seem too big, they seem too complicated, they seem unsolvable.

Maybe there isn't even a good solution at all, you think. But when Jesus Christ returns, He will bring a fully realized kingdom that will be shaped by his wisdom.

It is a kingdom that will be governed wisely, a kingdom that will be governed well. And all the people who look to him, all the people who learn from him, will also be people of wisdom.

[43 : 15] And by the way, that means even in the here and now, even as we are waiting, you and I, we are meant to be a people from a future kingdom. A people who are known for our wisdom.

In how we respond, how we think through, evaluate, respond prudently and wisely to difficult situations, difficult relationships around us.

We are awaiting a wonderful counselor, a wise king. The second title given to our king in Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 is mighty God.

Mighty God. Our king is not only 100% man, our king is also 100% God as well.

Our king contains all the power, all of the potential of the one true God who can do whatever He wills to do. Anything He wants to do, He does.

[44 : 24] David's son, Solomon, he was the most powerful king ever to reign over Jerusalem. But even Solomon was limited in his strength like any other man.

But we have one who is greater than Solomon. Our long expected king. We read again about a moment when Jesus' power is revealed.

There's a moment, many such moments, I think of one from Mark chapter 4 beginning in verse 36 when Jesus is with His disciples in Galilee and He is on a boat in the Sea of Galilee.

And leaving the crowd, they took Him with them in the boat just as He was and other boats were with Him. And a great windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling.

But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? And He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Peace, be still.

[45 : 39] And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. He said to them, Why are you so afraid?

Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?

Jesus is a King who has supreme, fearsome, unlimited power over the natural world, over the spiritual world, over life and death itself.

This is absolutely crucial. It is crucial that our King be all-powerful, be omnipotent. Because if our King is, let's say He's all-wise but He's not all-powerful, well then that means that there are things that our King will wish to do but He just can't do.

He can't get done. There may be problems He knows how to solve but He just can't do it. He might be, you know, like, He might be like that uncle of yours who's convinced that he knows how to solve

all the problems of the world but he's just a guy.

[47 : 05] He can't do anything about it. But when Jesus Christ returns, His kingdom is going to be shaped by divine power. His kingdom will be governed with absolute, sovereign authority.

And all the people who look to this King, all the people who learn from this King, they will also become people of power. even now, even as we wait for our King, you and I are meant to become people of power and what I mean by that is not people who look inward and find the power within you.

I'm not talking about self-empowerment or any of this garbage that the world promises. We know we're weak. But as we look to our King, you and I are meant to become people who are known for this.

We are known for relying on the strength of God given to us in the Holy Spirit. We don't have the ability to do what God has called us to do.

You cannot obey God in your own strength. I know this because I've tried and many of you have tried and it's exhausting. You cannot do it.

[48 : 16] You cannot obey. Not if you rely on the reserves of power within yourself. We want to be people who know and know how to depend on His Holy Spirit.

People who know that God's Spirit can do great things that we cannot do. Whenever we are responding to difficult situations, difficult relationships that God has placed around us, we want to be people who are known for their dependence on His Holy Spirit.

People who know the power of God. because we are awaiting a mighty God, a powerful King. So, we have a wonderful counselor, a wise King.

We have a mighty God, a powerful King. And then a third title is given to our King in Isaiah 9, verse 6. He is called Everlasting Father.

Everlasting Father. Father. What this simply means is that this King is going to be like a father to His people. He's not going to be a distant sovereign who doesn't care about them, who just exploits them and uses them.

[49 : 37] But He's going to be father-like, guiding them, caring for their needs. Now, we want that. But there's a problem with our earthly fathers.

There was a problem with even kings like King Solomon. They all grow old, they all grow frail, and they all pass away. But our King is not like Solomon.

He is not like our earthly fathers. Because not only do they grow old and pass away, but sometimes they change, right? Their character changes over time. Sometimes that's for the better.

Sometimes that's for the worse. Some of you have fathers or perhaps mothers who you look back on and you love who they were, but you grieve over what they've become.

But that is not what our King is like. This father-like King is a permanent King. He is a permanent King. He will remain with us forever, always father-like, always perfect, always unchanging.

[50 : 47] That is why we are reminded in Hebrews 13, verse 8, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

he is the same. This is absolutely crucial because what does it matter if our King is all wise and he is all powerful if in the future maybe he'll lose some of that wisdom, some of that power.

Maybe he'll just pass away altogether. But when Jesus Christ returns, he won't be like Solomon who lost his wisdom and lost his power and then passed away.

The kingdom of Jesus Christ will be shaped by his permanence. It will be governed with unfailing faithfulness. All the people who look to him and learn from him will in turn themselves become people of faithfulness.

And so even now, even as we wait, you and I are meant to become people who are known for our perseverance. We are persevering as we hold fast to God and his promises and trusting him to hold us fast.

[52 : 06] We want to remain steadfast in love whenever we are responding to difficult situations and difficult relationships around us. we want to be reliable just like our rock, Jesus Christ.

We are awaiting an everlasting father, a permanent king. So we have a wonderful counselor, a wise king. We have a mighty God, a powerful king.

We have an everlasting father, a permanent king. And then there is a fourth and final title that is given to our king in Isaiah 9, verse 6.

This king is called Prince of Peace. Prince of Peace. Our king brings peace.

That word peace, shalom, it means more than just an absence of conflict. Many of our homes, many of our nations have an absence of conflict by which we mean we shovel all of our conflicts under the rug.

[53 : 08] Secretly, we're still resentful. Secretly, we're still anxious. But we pretend like we're not. That is not real shalom. That's not real peace. Our king is the prince of real peace.

He is the one who brings real safety, harmony, wholeness, and wellness to a world and to relationships that are wracked by anxiety and conflict.

Isn't that what you want? an end to all this anxiety and conflict that surrounds you? Jesus tells his disciples in John 14, verse 27, Peace, I leave with you.

My peace, I give to you. Not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Jesus is gently showing, telling his disciples, reassuring them that he is the one who brings an end to all their fear. He is the one who brings safety and wholeness and wellness and who restores all things to the way they should be.

[54 : 25] And then he not only spoke of this, but he showed it. He showed how he would free us from being troubled. He showed us the way of humility, a way that pacifies all of the conflict that is among us because we're a people who are seeking status and glory and the good life and we do it at one another's expense.

We read how Jesus shows the way to bring this to an end. There's a moment in his life in Mark chapter 9 where Jesus brings peace to an argument, to conflict among his disciples.

He brings peace to his disciples who are anxious about their relationships with one another and about their status with him. In Mark 9 verse 33 we read, they came to Capernaum and when he was in the house he asked them, what were you discussing on the way?

But they kept silent for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve and he said to them, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.

And he took a child and put him in the midst of them. And taking him in his arms he said to them, whoever receives one such child in my name receives me and whoever receives me receives not me but him who sent me.

[56 : 09] Because we have a king who is all-wise, all-powerful and eternal. His kingdom is going to be shaped by a peace that will never end.

he is the king who opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. And that is how he brings peace.

His kingdom will be governed with peace and all the people who look to him and learn from him will also be known as people of peace. So even now, even as we wait, you and I, we are meant to be people who are known as peacemakers.

Not people who are known for their belligerence, not people who are known for their hot tempers, not people who are known for their quickness to argue and fight. But people who are known as peacemakers as we take the lower place, as we humble ourselves before God, as we learn to surrender our rights, lay down our lives for our brothers.

Because we know that to be last of all and servant of all is the way to be first in God's kingdom. God opposes the proud, but he exalts, he gives grace to the humble, to the lowly.

[57 : 38] We want to seek peace in a gracious manner whenever we are responding to difficult situations and relationships around us because we are awaiting a prince of peace, a peacemaking king.

And so the world wishes for a kingdom without a king, but we, we, his church, we hope for a kingdom shaped by our king.

This is something that is so much better. Rather than an impersonal, depersonalized, nebulous idea of a world that has just all these blessings and benefits and things are good and so on, we have a world shaped, we are longing for a world, for a kingdom shaped around a person, an all powerful, all wise, never changing, peacemaking person, a kingdom shaped by our king.

this is the future we have to look forward to. It is a future that God assures us will come to pass in Isaiah 9 verse 7.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time

forth and forever more.

[59 : 02] the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. And it is that final line that we want to conclude with, that we want to rest on, that we want to meditate on.

It's that final line that ought to encourage us as we are waiting in hope. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. What this means is that we have a God, we serve a God who is eager to give us our king.

He is eager to give us our king. When we pray, come, Lord Jesus, perhaps we pray it with doubt, perhaps we pray it earnestly, perhaps we pray it eagerly, but no matter how much we long for it, no matter with what confidence we pray that prayer, come, Lord Jesus, our God exceeds our eagerness.

He is zealous and eager to answer that prayer. Jesus himself has assured us, as we read earlier, surely I am coming soon.

It will be the joy, it will be the joy of God our Father to send his son again to us. He wants to do it, you know. He will send his son again to us as a peacemaking king, a king of permanence, power, and wisdom.

[60 : 45] It fills our God with joy that he is going to send again, the king that we have been waiting in hope for. It fills our God with joy for his son to receive this kingdom.

It fills our God with joy to one day turn darkness to light, anguish to joy, contempt to glory, and to bring a final end to oppression and war.

Our God wants to give us a gift that is not merely beautifully wrapped, but on the inside is the best thing he could give us, his own heart, his own son.

This is the heart of God the Father, and this is the heart of Jesus Christ, his son, our king. And it is for the sake of Jesus Christ that we are now waiting in hope.

Our God, we have, I confess that I have often underestimated your character. I've thought that I was the one who was eager, the one praying, come Lord Jesus, and praying it to a God who, he'll send his son because he said he would, but doesn't have that same sense of eagerness or desire, but your desire outstrips my own.

[62 : 06] I confess I've been much like the world, and I want many of the blessings and the benefits of your kingdom, but I want all those blessings and benefits on my terms. I want to run my life my own way.

forgive me, Father. What you promise is to send your own son. That's what I need.

That's what we need. We need a person. We need not merely impersonal blessings and benefits. We don't merely need a well-structured society. We don't merely need people around us who are just nice and who do all the right things.

we need a king. We need your son, Jesus Christ. We pray, come Lord Jesus.

And Lord, I ask if there is anyone watching or listening to this who has wanted all the blessings and benefits of your kingdom, but has sought them in vain without your king.

[63 : 15] Lord, may they humble themselves, surrender to your king, put their trust in Jesus Christ, long for his return, and say with us, come Lord Jesus.

And in the here and now, may we live in such a way that people look at us, they see the goodness of our king, they get a sense of what his kingdom really is going to be like, and may they want to join us in becoming a people of the risen king.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.