

Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 (6) - The Reigning Christ

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] We're going to sing firstly tonight from Psalm 138. Psalm 138, that's on page 431, and verses 1 to 5.

Thee will I praise with all my heart. I will sing praise to thee before the gods, and worship will toward thy sanctuary. I'll praise thy name even for thy truth and kindness of thy love, for thou thy word has magnified all thy great name above. Psalm 138, these verses 1 to 5.

Thee will I praise with all my heart. Before the gods and worship will toward thy sanctuary. I'll praise thy name even for thy truth and kindness of thy love, for thou thy word has magnified all thy great name above. Thou didst me answer in the day when I to thee did cry.

And thou, my fainting soul, with strength didst strengthen inwardly.

[2 : 09] All kings upon the earth that are shall give thee praise, O Lord.

When I say from thy mouth shall hear thy truth and faithful word.

Ye in the righteous ways of God, with gladness they shall sing.

For great's the glory of the Lord, who doth for ever be.

Now we're going to join together once again in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord in prayer. Lord, our gracious God, we know that these words we have been singing concerning you are true, that you have not brought us to any other conclusion, but that this is your truth when you speak about yourself through the word.

[3 : 39] We thank you tonight, Lord, that you have reminded us once again of the greatness that belongs to you. The greatness that belongs to you as it belongs to no other. The greatness by which we find ourselves in your presence, exclaiming that you alone are God and worthy of our worship.

And we thank you, Lord, for this occasion once again when we are able to come before you to worship you. Help us at all times to count it our great privilege to come into your presence, to be together as a people, a worshiping people, a people seeking the Lord while he is to be found and calling upon him while he is near.

And we ask tonight, Lord, that you would meet with us. Your promise is that you will draw near to those who draw near to you. We pray that this may be our very experience this evening.

You know each one of us here. You know us collectively. You know the very thoughts of our minds. You know the anxieties of our hearts. You know all the things that trouble us and the things that give us to be glad.

And we bless you, Lord, that in regard to all of these and every aspect of our experience, that you minister to your people that grace which daily keeps them and daily guides them and daily feeds them.

[5 : 01] And we ask that tonight your grace will indeed be evident to ourselves. Lord, we thank you that as we are in your presence, so you assure us that you take such an interest in your people as to provide for them through the gospel.

We give thanks for the fellowship of your people, for the fellowship that your people are, as they come together to be a people, together brought by the Lord himself to be a people noticed in the world, a people whose testimony it is that the Lord is their God and that you are indeed the one to whom they are answerable and also the one they seek to commend to the world around them.

We ask, Lord, your blessing even more than we can ask or think to do for us and to do for us abundantly through your Holy Spirit. We thank you that as we wait upon you, your promise is that your Holy Spirit will take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

And we thank you for all the times that this has happened previously in our experience. But we pray that it will be our experience once again. And to that end, O Lord, open up your word for us, we pray.

Open up our minds to receive it. Take away from us all that might resist your own call upon us through the gospel. And come once again, we pray, to melt our hearts and to bring us into that proper, willing and loving subjection of our lives to you.

[6 : 38] We pray for your blessing, O Lord, for all the gatherings of your people, wherever they are in the world tonight. We know that you have a people in such different circumstances to ours.

We pray for them as we pray for ourselves. We pray for your church worldwide. We pray for all, O Lord, who confess you and seek to have that confession made known in the presence of the world, even the presence of a hostile world from time to time.

And we pray that you would bless every effort made, Lord, by your people to spread the gospel abroad, to testify to you and to bring the message of Christ, crucified and risen from the dead before a lost world.

We ask your blessing, Lord, to be with all tonight who are engaged in different types of activities that support your cause. We pray for those of our own number who are involved locally with such things.

We pray, Lord, for Road to Recovery, for David and his leadership of that group, and for all who receive benefit from it. We pray for street pastors.

[7 : 49] We ask, Lord, for them as they go about from week to week and meet with various people and seek to bring them help practically and at times spiritually too. We pray for them.

We pray for their safety. We pray that you would keep them, Lord, from week to week. And we ask that you would help them as they go about such an important task in our community.

We pray that you would bless those who care for others in their illness. We pray for our hospitals and for our care homes. We thank you for that provision that is made for us there.

We pray for those tonight, Lord, who are ill, those who belong to us as families or in the congregation here and who are at this time confined through illness. We pray for those receiving treatment, those anticipating such in days to come.

We pray for those who have been through surgery and those anticipating that too. We pray, O Lord, for them and all the fears that might accompany such times and experience in their own lives.

[8 : 52] We ask, Lord, that even if the fears are still there, that you would give to them the calmness of heart that would come to trust in you and know you and know your presence with them.

We ask, too, again for our children and pray that you would bless them at this time and bless all those who are parents, grandparents. We think especially, Lord, of parents who belong to us whose concern for their children is that they be protected from the evil of various types that are in the world, protected from a kind of suggested proposals that come to them, O Lord, from different quarters that would seek to lead them away from your truth and from walking in the ways of the Lord.

Remember them here in this congregation itself, O Lord, and bless to them the teaching they receive in their homes, in the church and Sunday school, and other ways in which your own word is set before them.

We pray that you would bless all the efforts made and all who make the effort to teach our children, our young people, the things of the gospel. We ask for our schools that you would bless them, too, all whom we know of our own number, our teachers there and head teachers.

We pray your blessing for them, O Lord, in difficult times. We ask that you bless the Education Authority and all others, Lord, who are involved in the well-being of our young people.

[10 : 21] Lord, protect us, we pray, from the ways of the evil one and grant that we may overcome him with your truth and with the power of your truth. Remember, too, we pray at this time our nation, and, Lord, we ask that you would give us direction, that you would give us to know your guidance at this time and your blessing.

Restore to us, we pray, the years the locusts have eaten, as your prophet said long ago. So, we pray that all that has happened, Lord, over many years in taking the power of the gospel to be reduced so much in our midst, that that would be pleasing to you, Lord, to restore.

Hear the prayers of your people in that regard. Establish your kingdom, we pray, throughout the world, that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Grant us now your blessing as we wait upon you here, pardoning all our sin for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Amen. Let's continue to praise God. We're singing this time in Psalm 87. Psalm number 87. Again, it's in the Scottish Psalter, page 342.

This is a psalm, a short psalm, that speaks of God's favor of his people, of his church. His church is represented here by Zion and Zion's gates, and the great and glorious future that belongs to God's people.

[11 : 50] Upon the hills of holiness he his foundation sets. God, more than Jacob's dwellings, all delights in Zion's gates. Things glorious are said of thee, thou city of the Lord.

Rahab and Babel, I, to those that know me, will record. And so on. These verses of Psalm 87, to God's praise. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Psalm 87, to all the hills of holiness. On the hills of holiness he his foundation sets.

God, more than Jacob's dwellings, all delights in Zion's gates.

Things glorious are said of thee, thou city of the Lord.

[13 : 03] Rehob and Abel, I to those that know me will record.

Behold him, Titus, and with it the Lamb of Palestine.

And likewise, Ethiopia, this man was born there.

And it of Zion shall be said, this man and that man there was born.

And he that is most high himself shall establish her.

[14 : 21] When God the people writes, he'll count that this man born was there.

There be that sing and play and all my well springs in the air.

Now we have two readings of Scripture this evening. First of all, in the book of the Revelation, chapter 19. Read the passage there from verse 11 down to verse 21 to the end of the chapter.

And then we'll turn to 1 Corinthians 15, where we've had some studies for a time. And reading verses 20 to 28. So firstly, it's in Revelation, chapter 19, and from verse 11.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

[15 : 36] His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems. And he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God.

And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

And he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet, who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and who worshipped his image.

[17 : 07] These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns will suffer, and the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

And some verses now from 1 Corinthians 15. I will read verses 20 to 28. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order.

Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For God has put all things in subjection under his feet.

[18 : 24] But when it says all things are put in subjection, it is plain that he is accepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Amen. May God bless to us reading those two passages of his word. Before we turn to 1 Corinthians 15, let's sing once again.

This time in Psalm 110. And sing Psalms version, Psalm 110, verses 1 to 5. This is one of the great messianic psalms.

Psalms to do with the Messiah, with the Savior, with the Lord. Quoted in the New Testament.

Quoted even by the Lord himself. The Lord said to my Lord, sit here at my right hand, until I make your foes a stool on which your feet may stand.

The Lord will make your reign extend from Zion's hill. With royal power you'll rule among those who oppose your will. When you display your power, your people flock to you.

[19 : 45] At dawn arrayed in holiness, your youth will come like dew. Unchangeably the Lord with solemn purpose swore, just like Melchizedek, you are a priest forevermore.

The Lord's at your right hand. There he will ever stay. He on his day of wrath will crush the kings who bar his way.

These five verses, in Psalm 110, the Lord said to my Lord, The Lord said to my Lord, sit here at my right hand, until I make your foes a stool on which your feet may stand.

The Lord will make your reign extend from Zion's hill.

With royal power you'll rule among those who oppose your will.

[21 : 14] When you display your power, your people flock to you.

At dawn and haine in holiness, your youth will come like truth.

Unchangeably the Lord with solemn purpose swore, just like Melchizedek, you are a priest forevermore.

The Lord's at your right hand. There he will ever stay.

He on his day of wrath will crush the kings who bar his way.

[22 : 37] Please turn with me now to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We'll begin reading at verse 22.

We're looking tonight at verses 24 to 28 especially. We can begin reading at verse 22. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

But each in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. And so on to the end of verse 28.

In recent days, I've been noticing, in social media especially, when anticipating the coronation of King Charles III, as he'll be, a number of people keep putting up posts saying, he's not my king.

[23 : 50] Of course, they have every freedom to do that. I don't know if they're people of independence mind or whatever it is that brings them to say that. But as we anticipate this coronation coming, people have such a view of it as says, well, he's not my king.

It's a personal opinion. It's a personal decision. It's something that they have chosen. They're not going to acknowledge him as king for themselves personally.

And they have freedom to do that. Of course, they're entitled in a personal freedom way to think that and to say that. But that doesn't mean that what they're really saying makes the kingship of Charles no longer relevant or inapplicable.

They may very well choose to say, he's not my king, but in a political sense, he is the king of the nation. He is the king over the nation.

And so, while people have the freedom to say that of him, that does not displace the fact that politically he's going to be crowned as the king of the United Kingdom.

[25 : 07] That is something that still remains in place despite people maybe saying, well, he's not my king. And there's something like that in the way that people think about Jesus.

The way they think about Jesus Christ as the king, as he's mentioned here and spoken of in Scripture, as we read, for example, in Revelation chapter 19, as we read the Gospels and find the inscription that was placed over him at the crucifixion.

This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Jesus, as a king, brings that reaction on the part of some people, on many people, sadly, who will say, well, he's not my king.

People who don't want to have Jesus rule over them. People who want to just be free of anything to do with Christ, with God, with this idea that somehow or other there is an authority greater than themselves or greater than in this earthly life.

And so you'll find that this is the same, really essentially, that they say of Jesus and of his kingship. Many are adamant saying, well, he's not my king and he never will be my king.

[26 : 22] And that's how things are going to be until the king returns. That's how it's going to be until the end of the age. There will still be some people that say, well, he's not my king and he's not going to be my king.

But he is the king. And as he will come at that last day, as we'll see here briefly tonight, every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

We can say as often as we like in this world, well, he's not my king. But every single person saying that, as well as those who say he is my king, are going to come when the Lord appears to bow in his presence and acknowledge that even if it is not willingly on their part, he is the king.

He is the Lord. And that's the situation that you find here in these verses in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 23 to 28, describes the situation as it is now and will be until the Lord returns.

And then when the Lord returns, certain things then fall into place. So let's look at these verses in regard to Christ. And this is a passage that's dense.

[27 : 45] It's a passage that's got difficulties in it, but we don't shirk the difficulty and there's nothing wrong with saying, even as preachers of the gospel, well, there are one or two things that I don't quite understand and can't get to the depths of.

We're dealing with God's Word. We're dealing with God. We're dealing with the Lordship of Christ. We're dealing with the reign of Christ. We're dealing with the greatness of Christ. You can't fit that into a mere human mind like ours.

But we can still come and fall in His presence and say that He is indeed our King. So first of all, how is this connected with the resurrection?

We've been looking through the passages we've gone through this chapter at how Paul is demonstrating the reality of such a thing as resurrection, beginning with the resurrection of Jesus Himself and arguing that if Jesus is not risen, then there is no hope for mankind.

There's no hope for us. We're still in our sins. But of course, He's now saying that He is, of course, in verse 20, but in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead.

[28 : 53] And following on from that, we've seen last time how He spoke about Him as the firstfruits and the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep, those who are Christians who are no longer in this world.

So resurrection is spoken of here as in a particular order. You see what He's saying in verse 23? This shall also happen, He says, but each in his own order.

Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Now He's talking here about an ordered series of events to do with resurrection, to do with the conquering of death, which is what resurrection is on the part of God's people, on the part of Christ Himself.

What He's saying here is that each in his own turn, Christ the firstfruits. That's already taken place. Jesus has been raised from the dead. Jesus is no longer, in terms of His body, it's no longer in the grave, in the sepulcher.

He rose triumphantly on the third day, and since then been exalted to heaven. His resurrection is first in that order.

[30 : 06] And He talks about it here again as firstfruits, similar to the same as He's mentioned in verse 20. Remember, we mentioned then that firstfruits really means, going back to Leviticus 21, the firstfruits of the harvest.

Israel were ordered by God to take the firstfruits of the harvest, to bring that into the house of God, to wave that before the Lord because it was dedicated to Him.

In other words, it was saying, the whole harvest actually belongs to You, O Lord, but You have given us the privilege of having that harvest to ourselves. Here are the firstfruits. We're offering that to You.

Remember, we said that the firstfruits are really a sample of the harvest that was to follow. And indeed, the firstfruits indicated that the harvest was certain to follow.

If there's a firstfruits, obviously there's a harvest there, and if the firstfruits are evident and brought into the house of God, it follows that the harvest is going to follow it.

[31 : 04] And that's what He's saying with the resurrection. The firstfruits, Jesus the firstfruits, in His resurrection, well, that's taken place. And because that's taken place, the rest of the harvest, the resurrection of God's people to everlasting life, that is made certain.

That is guaranteed because they are connected to Jesus. They are actually, this is actually a pledge. The fact that He has risen from the dead is God's pledge that God's people will rise from the dead and share together in that eternal life.

If Jesus has been raised from the dead as He has been, as Paul is saying, then it follows that there is a resurrection for God's people to eternal life.

You cannot think of Jesus being raised from the dead without having connected to that inseparably the resurrection of His saved people, the resurrection of His whole redeemed church.

And you notice here the language that's used is at His coming. That's the first thing. He says, Christ the firstfruits. Then at His coming, those who belong to Christ.

[32 : 20] In other words, that's what's still waiting to take place. It is made certain by the fact that He is risen from the dead, but it will take place at His coming.

When He comes, when He returns to this world, then this will take place. Those who belong to Christ will be raised from the dead.

And that word coming, that is coming, it's an important word. It's a word which in the ordinary sense of usage was often used of an emperor or a king.

Think about the emperor or the Roman emperor at the time of Paul himself. Well, if the emperor or somebody of that high rank was coming to a place, this is the kind of word they would use.

It's a word that really means here is an arrival that's filled with splendor, that's got some significance about it more than most. And the word that's used here as Paul uses that word, it's not just, it's not used for an emperor or for a king in the normal sense, it's used here of Jesus.

[33 : 29] At His coming, at His arrival, at His glorious appearance, those who belong to Him will actually be raised from the dead.

And we spoke about the coronation of King Charles. We still don't know exactly what that's going to involve in terms of ceremony, but I'm sure it'll have its own grandeur even if it's scaled back compared to previous times.

It'll still have its own pomp and ceremony and grandeur and all the regalia of kingly office will be on display. And it'll be a grand occasion and people will actually admire, and mostly will admire, the magnificence of it.

But even if you multiply that a thousand times, it's still just a pale shadow of glory compared to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because when He arrives, it just won't be a few people noticing or a few hundred or thousand people actually watching it. It'll be the whole earth. It'll be the whole universe.

[34 : 37] It'll be the whole creation involved in this dynamic event. An event unlike any other that went before, apart from perhaps His death and resurrection.

Because it's the creation being brought to its final conclusion, and it's God's people raised from the dead at His arrival, and it's Christ displayed in all the magnificence of His risen glory, of His glorified splendor, of what He is as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

And there is to be a splendor and a greatness and a grandeur of that arrival that is just unparalleled. You cannot really find anything adequate to picture it, to give an illustration of it.

And you and I will be there. Even if it's a thousand and more years from now, you and I will be there. You and I will be witnesses of it.

You and I will be taken into the event because that event will embrace all humankind. The question, of course, is, and we'll see it later on as well, what will your relationship be to the King?

[35 : 57] Will you be invited to the marriage supper, to the reception of the Lamb? Will you be among those that are welcomed into the banquet? Will you be outside?

Will you not have a personal relationship with this grand, wonderful, glorious King? Well, this is one of the great questions that were posed by the likes of Revelation in the chapter that we read.

They're a very graphic description. But this is the King in His glory. So, resurrection in a particular order comes to its climax, if you like, with the arrival of the King.

When He Himself will come, then they will be, those who belong to Him, will rise at His coming. And then He says, then comes the end when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power, for He must reign until He has put all His enemies under

His feet.

Now, what is He talking, what is He talking about here when He says, then comes the end? The end of what? Or what is meant by the word end in that context?

[37 : 14] Then comes the end. It's obviously something related to the arrival of Christ or as soon as Christ has arrived and the King has come, then comes the end.

And the end here really means the end of this present age. The end of things as we know it in the world as it is and has been since the fall of man.

The end in the sense in which a new age will come at His coming, at His arrival. You remember how 2 Peter puts it, the new heavens and the new earth for which God's people are eagerly waiting and anticipating which will be following the resurrection or associated with the resurrection.

Remember there in chapter 3 of Peter how he's dealing with those who are scoffing at this idea that Jesus is returning. And all of this, all these years have gone by, they're saying, and yet, where is the promise of His coming?

All things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. We've stopped believing in the coming of Jesus. This passage is saying that was in the Apostles' day. Even more so is it the case now.

[38 : 27] But he says, do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is one day. God doesn't measure His diary by years in our way of calculation.

God has His own plan. And however many years it may be in our calculation of things, as far as God is concerned, He knows the exact moment in the history of this world when the King will arrive, when He will come.

But he goes on to say, the day of the Lord will come like a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

But according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

[39 : 40] See, that's the culmination of redemption. That's the end point of God's redemption when God's people are raised to share together with Christ the glories of the kingdom, the glories of Christ's reign in heaven.

And this is what history itself is developing towards. We think of history as we look out over the history of mankind, the history of the world, as far as we're able to do that.

Where is history heading? Where is history taking us? Well, some people will say, well, you can never be sure about that. How can you actually know what's going to happen next year? Never mind in X number of years, a hundred, a thousand years, whatever it might be.

Well, the Lord is saying, you should know where history, as a Christian, you should know where history is heading. It's heading to the return of Christ. It's heading towards the coming of the King. It's heading towards the final establishment and consummation of the kingdom of God in Christ. That's where it's heading.

[40 : 56] That's where time is heading to that definite point, the end, when the King will arrive in His glory. But that's also not just the terminus of history, it's the terminus of your Christian hope, isn't it?

Because every single person that has the Christian hope is hoping towards that final end of things that the Bible describes. Your hope is not something uncertain.

You might complain that it's not as strong as you would like it to be, but it's a positive hope because it's looking towards this final conclusion of things at the return of Christ when the dead will be raised, when the Lord's people will be raised, at His coming.

Your hope is towards His coming. Romans chapter 8, these great words that Paul wrote there to the Romans.

And verses 19 to 25 especially, where he says, For the creation is waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and

obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

[42 : 18] And so on. It goes on, speaking about ourselves, groaning, having the first fruit of the Spirit, having the Spirit of God as the first fruits in us that guarantees the harvest of eternal life in its fullness at His coming and subsequent to His coming.

And that's the terminus. The terminus of your Christian hope is the same terminus as the terminus of history tied inseparably to the coming of Christ.

Do you have that hope? Are you hoping for the best in this sense? Is your hope and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, this King of kings and Lord of lords?

Surely your hope is not anchored in something less than that, something uncertain, something belonging to this world, something belonging to the philosophies of this world, something belonging to your own imagination, to your own reckoning, something belonging to those who will bring you a sense of history without God involved.

The Christian hope, this hope that the apostle speaks of, is a positive thing, a hope that looks forward to the King's coming, to the arrival of the great King of kings and Lord of lords.

[43 : 46] And then he says, then comes the end, we've mentioned the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power, for he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. What are we to make of this? Well, he's speaking here about the reign of Christ, and that's a reign that's presently underway.

And has been ever since he rose from the dead, and especially since he ascended to glory. He's saying here that he delivers the kingdom to God the Father.

Think about Jesus and the mission the Father gave him as he was sent into this world and came willingly as the servant of the Father. As you find himself speaking of it often, especially in John's Gospel.

If you think about all that Jesus came to do was in terms of establishing a kingdom, a kingdom of God where God reigns and where his people will be his willing subjects forevermore.

[44 : 58] It's to establish that kingdom that Christ came. And that involves all that he did while he was in this world. It involves his death on the cross, his obedience to the Father, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to glory, and it will involve also his return, his coming, as this passage puts it.

And all of that being involved, that is how the kingdom will be established, will be finalized, will be consummated. And when it reaches that end, when it reaches that point, when everything about the kingdom is finally ready and finished, and there's nothing else to do, when all his enemies, as he puts it here, he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

Every rule, every authority, every power, including that of death. When that is the case, you can just, if we can imagine it this way, speaking with all reverence here, you could say, Jesus is saying to the Father, the Son, saying to the Father, Father, you sent me into this world of human beings, I took human nature to myself.

I died on the cross, I rose from the dead, I am ascended to glory, I am sitting at the right hand of God, and then I have come back to the world to be the judge of the world.

Father, here is the kingdom that you sent me to accomplish. I deliver it now to you. I am giving it to you because I have finished it.

[46 : 31] It's accomplished. It's done. And because it's done, I'm handing it to you as the one who sent me into the world to accomplish it.

I've been your servant, I've reigned in heaven towards the accomplishment of all things, the conquering of all our enemies.

Every rule, every authority, every power. But he says, he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. You see what that is saying? Jesus is reigning from heaven tonight.

He's reigning despite the fact that you look out in the world and think that it's just chaos and think that people actually have it in themselves to reign instead of what we present as God in the gospel. That reign of Jesus is presently taking place. Every single person in here that's been converted to Christ and by Christ, by the Spirit of God, is itself another building block, if you like, in the kingdom of God.

[47 : 38] There is another bit of evidence really for us that Christ is reigning. That Christ's reign includes the bringing in of His people. Every single time someone comes to know the Lord savingly,

there is the Lord's reign in evidence.

It's taking place. It's adding to the number of the saved. Here you are tonight as a Christian and you're happy to acknowledge, surely, I know you are, that you haven't converted yourself, that you haven't made yourself a new creation, and you're happy to confess that He has chosen you and He has changed you and He has brought you and He has drawn you and He has changed your life and He has turned your life around and that itself is a demonstration of His reign.

Because without the reign of Christ, nothing of that would take place. how can you possibly think of those who are spiritually dead like you and I are ourselves, coming to have life, coming to know of eternal life being given to us?

It's Christ's reign, you see. It's Christ from His throne above. It's Christ the King that's brought about that change in your life. And it reaches its finale at the return of Christ.

He says here, the last enemy that shall be destroyed will be destroyed to be destroyed is death. Here he is talking about every rule, every authority, every power.

[49 : 19] For Him must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. You might think tonight that in Eastern Europe Putin is undisputedly in charge. He's not. He's under the reign of Christ.

Christ. You might think that all other things that have happened in the history of the world have demonstrated that somehow God is not in control. That's not the case. He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

And that's what will take place finally and demonstrably at His coming. It reaches its finale at the resurrection of God's people, at the return of Christ.

You see how this chapter ends? You might think it's a long way away yet before we reach the end, but anyway, this is how it finishes. He says, when this perishable, verse 54, puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on the mortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory? O death or O grave, where is your sting? What is that saying to us? It's saying to us that this has not yet fully been revealed.

[50 : 36] The saying, death is swallowed up in victory, it still awaits fulfillment in its totality. Why is that? Because it's not fulfilled in its totality until the last believer is raised from the dead.

then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. The victory in principle is already accomplished. Jesus has done that.

But the final demonstration of that victory, when all of God's redeemed people will be raised from the dead to be with Him, well, that's still in the future. The D-Day of redemption has taken place, to use a World War II analogy.

But victory in Europe day followed after that, sometime after that. D-Day wasn't the end, although it was the final or main principle of victory.

And so it is with the Lord. He has died. He's risen from the dead. He's reigning from heaven. He's bringing His people to know Himself. He's actually progressing the work and the growth of the kingdom.

[51 : 46] And when He comes, that'll be it. Then comes the end. And when that comes, and He delivers up the kingdom to the Father, He'll be saying, Lord, Father, here is the result of all that I accomplished, of all that I came to do.

And then there's one other thing. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all. All these are difficult words, words that we can't have confidence that any particular view, and there are many views of what these words mean, that any view is superior to the other.

But I think the best I've seen in looking at how to try and bring out the meaning of these verses is good old Matthew Henry. Because this is what Matthew Henry says about these final verses in this passage from verse 28 there.

Upon His ascension, Jesus had power given Him to govern and protect His church against all its enemies, and in the end destroy them and complete the salvation of all who believe in Him.

[53 : 15] This is not a power appertaining to Godhead as such, but power given and limited to this special purpose. And although He who has it is God, yet inasmuch as He in this whole dispensation acts not as God but as mediator, He may properly be said to have this power given to Him.

Jesus as mediator. He may reign as God with power unlimited, and yet may reign as mediator with a power delegated and limited to these particular purposes.

That's to say, bringing His people in and completing the kingdom. The Redeemer must reign, He went on to say, until His enemies be destroyed, and the salvation of His church and people accomplished.

And when this end is attained, then He will deliver up the power which He had only for this purpose, though He may continue to reign over His glorified church in heaven.

And in this sense, it can be said that He shall reign forever and ever. Well, that's maybe something you'd find difficult just by just having it read out.

[54 : 31] But what Henry was saying was that Jesus, as the mediator between God and His people, was given certain powers to accomplish these things.

And once He has accomplished them, which will be at His return once it's finished at that point, He will hand the kingdom to the Father and continue to reign over His people to all eternity.

But that power was given for a specific purpose as the mediator of His people. Well, what are we going to make of this? It's a passage full of rich theology but difficult things.

I hope you've been able to follow the main gist of it, at least, because it really is all to do with Christ. It's all to do with Jesus. Yes, it's about the resurrection of God's people. Yes, it's about hope for the future connected to that resurrection and the resurrection of Christ.

Yes, it's all that. But it's really about Jesus. And if you take nothing else from that this evening but this fact that Jesus as the King is the King that you need and the King you must have in your place, then you have benefited from this half hour.

[55 : 48] What practical use can we make of it all? Well, two things. Christ is reigning now. As you look out over that world and I look out over that world tonight, with all its chaotic scenes, with the war, with the devastation, with everything that you see that puts people's lives into turmoil, with everything that's happened, even the natural order of things, you might with others be tempted to reach that conclusion.

This is just disorganized chaos. And if God exists, then He has lost control. Friends, Jesus is reigning. And He must reign and will reign till He has put all His enemies under His feet.

I cannot explain to you tonight how all of this is fitted together in the plan of God. I can't explain to you tonight why God leaves such things as they are, whether it be a time of war or famine or loss of life or devastation or earthquake.

I can't say to you tonight, here is my reason and I know it's sure and true as to why this is the case and why God has left it this way for this particular time. That's in the King's hand.

That's the King's prerogative. Don't doubt Him just because you don't understand His ways in their totality. Jesus is reigning.

[57 : 13] This is what it's saying. He must reign until, yes, but all His enemies are under His feet. And remember that too, friend. When personally you are perplexed, when you have troubles individual to yourself, when you have difficulties and struggles even in your faith, when you may feel at times depressed, when you're hurting inside, when you think you can't share that with anyone else, when you are anxious over your own life or anxious over the lives of loved ones connected with you, or anxious even as you look out over the world, when you look into yourself and have all of this from time to time that you detect in your own thoughts and in your processes of your mind and emotions, never forget that Jesus is reigning.

Never forget that all the details of your experience come under His reign. Everything that's been in your life, that is in your life, that will be in your life, none of that is outside of the throne of heaven. None of that is outside of the prerogative of Christ. None of that is outside of the grasp of the King of kings and Lord of lords. None of that is outside the purpose of God in placing these things in His providence in your life.

It's not as you would have organized it or I would have organized it. It's not as we would have purposed it. It's not fitted together as we might think best. But He's the King.

He's the Lord. He's the sovereign. And He's the one who is reigning. And there are no defects in His reign.

[59 : 07] That's the first point. Christ is reigning now. And finally, second point, by way of practical application, not only is Christ reigning now, but Christ is available now.

This reigning Christ, this Christ who is on the throne of the universal, ready, this mediator, this glorious person, He is available now.

You're here tonight and you haven't yet given your life to Him. You haven't yet surrendered everything by way of your heart's resistance to Jesus and the claims of His kingship.

You're still holding back from giving your life to Him. You're still saying, well, I'd love to do that, but there's just one thing or this thing or other I'm not sure about yet.

Whatever is in your resistance to the kingship of Christ over your life, give it to Him. because not only is He reigning, not only is He available, but as the available reigning King, He's calling to you through the Gospel.

[60 : 22] And He's calling to you through the Gospel to take Him as He is, to take Him at His word, to take Him as your King, to take Him as your Savior, to take Him as the one who will always look after you on into eternity.

We began by saying there's so many that are presently saying, well, He's not my King. And I hope there's no one here tonight who will leave this building and be saying that about Jesus.

No one. Why would there be? But rather that you'll be like the psalmist in Psalm 105, that's 145, in the Scottish Psalter version of it.

O Lord, You are my God and King. Thee will I magnify and bless. I will Thee bless and gladly sing unto Thy holy name always.

Lord, You are my God and King. May God bless His word to us.

[61 : 43] Lord our God, we give thanks that as Your word reveals Your kingship to us, that we are constrained by Your Spirit to come to bow in Your presence.

We thank You for the beauty of Your kingship. We thank You, Lord, for the comprehensiveness of Your kingship, for the way that You are reigning over all things, and for the way that the prospect of Your appearance fills Your people with awe and yet with gladness, that there will be a point coming in the history of the world when everything will be put right and when the King himself will show that He is the King.

O grant, O Lord, that we yearn towards that day with faith, with trust, with confidence in You as our Savior King. Be with us now, we pray, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Let's conclude by singing now to God's praise in Psalm 22, Psalm 22, verses 27 to 31.

Significant at this great psalm which deals so much in the first part of it with sufferings that are associated with the Lord, where the Lord found Himself, indeed, in the words of the psalm at the beginning, in terms of His forsakenness.

[63 : 05] Yet we come at the end of this psalm to see the triumph of the King, the triumph of the Lord over all of creation. From verse 27, the whole earth will remember Him and turn towards the Lord their God.

all peoples will bow down to Him, the nations of the world abroad. On page 27, verses 27 to 31. Amen. Amen.

The whole earth will remember Him and turn towards the Lord their God.

All peoples will bow down to Him, the nations of the world abroad.

and over nations He is King, the rich of all the earth will peace and worship with an offering.

[64 : 42] All those whose destiny will humbly kneel before His throne.

They cannot keep themselves alive for they depend on Him alone.

Posterity will serve the Lord. a generation still to come will tell our people yet on board the righteous acts that He has done.

I'll go to the main door after the benediction. Lord our God, we pray that You would bless us now as we anticipate a time of fellowship.

We pray that You would bless what is prepared for our bodily needs. We thank You for all who have provided them for us. We pray for Muriel as she comes once again to speak of her work in Cambodia and her anticipation of returning.

[66 : 18] Lord, we pray that all of her preparations will go smoothly for her. We pray that You would continue to watch over her and protect her and use her. And we ask that as we hear tonight of her work there that as our prayers go with her so also may our prayers continue to remember her before You.

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen.