

Pulling Back The Curtain On The Kingdom

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[0 : 0 0] Well, today you're going to hear a sermon probably unlike anywhere else you're going to hear a sermon today. Because I'm not preaching necessarily an Easter sermon, although every Sunday is Resurrection Day.

! It's why we gather on Sundays to commemorate the resurrection. But we're just continuing on in our series in the Gospel of Luke today. And actually, it's a good day for this because if you're new, if you're not a regular part of our church, today is good in the sense that we're going to peel behind the curtain a little bit and get a little bit of a glimpse of what Christianity is all about, some of its claims.

And then that, I think, will help us to go forward in terms of our understanding of what it is we believe, why we believe it, why we live the way that we do, the choices that we make.

And I want to start off with some bait-and-switch stories. Do you guys have any bait-and-switch stories? You know, like if it's a retail outlet or a car dealership, like they advertise a certain car, might be a certain set of golf clubs or a certain fishing pole or whatever it is, and you get to the store and the one that they advertise isn't available, but the one that's closest to it, here it is, but the price of it is a whole lot different than what they were advertising.

Bait-and-switch can happen in a lot of different ways. Walmart recently has been sued more than once, a few times, mostly locally but sometimes recently on a more national level for doing this.

[1 : 5 5] They would have prices on their shelves for items, and then when you get to the register, when you slide them over the reader, the prices are a few cents higher.

Usually not enough to cause you any kind of drastic alarm, but it's enough that they rack up quite a few dollars over a period of time on each store, and they're known for doing it, and actually they argue against these lawsuits saying that it's up to the people to make sure that they keep track of what the price on the shelf is so that when you go and check out, you can verify it against your receipt and then call them on it and get a refund in response.

So it's a way for them to make extra money by this false advertising of prices on shelves, and so they know they do it. They've been busted for doing it.

They continue to do it because it makes it very profitable for them. It can happen when you're looking for work. One guy was looking for work as a delivery driver, as how it was presented.

He said he was going to be delivering appliances according to the advertisement. When he went for the interview, it turned out to be a group interview, and it was more door-to-door sales of vacuum cleaners.

[3 : 2 5] And so he would eventually be delivering a pair. I don't know if a vacuum cleaner is an appliance, but there you go. Now, it can happen also in churches, in religious settings, which is unfortunate.

One guy was promised, I will go out with you if you come to my church, because if you come to my church and you get saved or you change your life or whatever, then I will date you.

And that's not a good plan. Ladies, if any of you have that kind of as your strategy, rethink that. Another one, churches with gyms will say something like, hey, come and play pickup basketball with us.

And it turns out that what was pickup basketball was more like a Bible study with some pickup basketball along with it. And so if you're going to invite somebody to do something like that, make sure you invite them up front and tell them what's actually happening.

Don't let them come thinking, hey, it's going to be a fun time of basketball. And, oh, I got ambushed by a Bible study. Now, nothing wrong with a Bible study. People may or may not want to come for a Bible study, but let them make the decision.

[4 : 46] Don't try to do that. Now, may it never be said of Jesus that he would ever use that kind of a tactic when sharing the gospel that he was preaching during the three years of ministry here on earth.

Actually, he did the opposite of that. He told us up front, made sure we knew up front, that following him, being a disciple of Jesus, was going to be something that would cost you.

It might even cost you your life, that you would have to carry a cross. It was a cross-carrying message. And carrying a cross, people in that day understood what that meant.

A cross was a symbol of an instrument of putting someone to death. And so when Jesus said, you must carry your cross and follow me, they understood what that meant.

And so he wasn't preaching, hey, everything's going to be fine and dandy if you just follow me and I'm going to answer all your prayers and I'm going to bless you in this incredible way. And no, Jesus said that's not how this works.

[5 : 58] And so he would tell us that we would have to lose our life in order to gain it. And that's what we're going to start to see in our passage that we're looking at today.

Luke chapter 6, beginning in verse 12. And we'll start with an introduction to the original 12 apostles and then we'll get into the message that he is teaching that has become to be known, the Sermon on the Mount, mostly from Matthew chapter 5.

This is Luke's version of it, which is much shorter. Matthew's gospel is three chapters for the Sermon on the Mount. Luke is 29 verses, so it's quite a bit shorter.

And these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. Now, we're going to talk a little bit more about this particular subject as we make our way through our notes.

But let me say right off the bat, tough assignment, right? He continued all night in prayer. But this was common for Jesus, to wake up early in the morning and go off to pray or to stay up all night and to pray.

[7 : 11] And that's something that as believers, can we do that? We're going to talk about that as we make our way through. And when day came, he had a particular agenda as he was praying.

He called his disciples and chose from them 12 whom he named apostles. Now, we're going to talk about this too. What's the difference between disciples and apostles?

Because he called his disciples together, of which there were quite a few, anywhere from 70 to several hundred people who regularly followed Jesus.

And from that group, he chose specifically 12 to become apostles. Again, we'll talk about what that means. You'll see that on your notes. And here are the 12 that he chose.

Why 12? We really aren't told that, other than perhaps it matches the 12 tribes of Israel from the Old Testament. But that's really the only thing that we have to relate it to.

[8 : 11] So the first one, and the first few names are the names we would recognize. Simon, whom he named Peter. So Peter is the first. Andrew, his brother.

James and John, they were partners with Peter and Andrew in fishing business. And then Philip and Bartholomew, who the Gospel of John refers to him as Nathaniel.

Then Matthew, the tax collector. Thomas, what do we know Thomas for? Yeah, Doubting Thomas. Thomas, how would you like to have that moniker with you for all of eternity, basically?

And then we have the people that we have their names, but we really don't know much else about them. A different James, the son of Alphaeus.

And Simon, this is a different Simon, not Simon Peter, but this is Simon who was called the Zealot, which was kind of like a political party back in the day. They were the ones who were trying to raise an insurrection against Rome to free Israel from Rome's power.

[9 : 19] And they were pretty good with weapons. And interesting, when you put Matthew, the tax collector, who worked for Rome, with Simon the Zealot, who wanted to kill him.

I don't know if they bunked at night or how that worked. I'm sure they had to work through their issues there. So Judas, the first guy named Judas, the son of James.

And then another Judas, this one Iscariot, who also becomes famous later on as he becomes a traitor, the one who betrayed Jesus.

So we have these 12 that were chosen. But I want to come back to this idea here on your notes. What's the difference between disciple and apostle?

From the many disciples, Jesus chose 12 apostles. Well, on your notes, you have some words and some place for you to write definitions.

[10 : 20] Next to disciple, just put follower or learner. That's all a disciple is. It's not even a religious word. It's funny that a lot of times because a word shows up, a translated English word shows up in our text in the scriptures, we all of a sudden assume it's got a religious meaning to it.

And there is no religious connotation to the idea of disciple. You can be a disciple of anybody. Anybody that you follow kind of as a mentor, you are a follower or a learner of that person.

So that could have been a whole lot of people. People who traveled with Jesus in that large group would have considered themselves as disciples of Jesus.

You can have people who are good disciples, people who are not so good disciples, people who are faithful, some who are not. But disciple is just someone who follows another person kind of as a mentor or as a teacher.

Now, the word apostle is a bit different. It means a sent one or a messenger. And the way that it's used in the New Testament particularly has to do with the office of apostles.

[11 : 37] Apostles had to be specific people, people who were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus. And usually a particular ministry followed their work.

They were able to perform signs and wonders and miraculous things as a way to verify their office. That they were who they said they were.

So if today someone comes along and every time you might come along and see this from time to time, particularly if you like to watch religious TV, somebody who comes along and says, well, my name is Apostle So-and-So.

And you've got to be very careful when you see someone who wants to wear the name Apostle. Matter of fact, I wouldn't tell you to be careful. I would tell you to run. Because that's not a moniker.

That's not a name that's available to us today. Someone who wants to say that I am so high and lifted up above everyone else that I am considered an Apostle.

[12 : 40] I consider myself an Apostle. That means I have a stamp of approval on me and my ministry that you guys don't have. And so where I am as an Apostle more spiritual than you are.

And that's not a claim that preachers or teachers can make. There is nothing more spiritual about somebody who gets up and teaches in front of a group of people than anyone else.

We're all on the same level spiritually. I've just been given this gift of being able to teach. Some of you have gifts of teaching and you have other spiritual gifts that you use to help in the building up of the body of Christ.

We all have different callings. But we're all alike in terms of our standing before the Lord. The only authority that I have in any way doesn't come from my office per se.

It comes from the Word of God itself. As a pastor is faithful to teach, to proclaim the Word of God, that's where the authority comes from. Not in anything residing in me or any pastor or teacher who could say something like that.

[13 : 55] Now, some would say that the word apostle, the gift of apostleship is still active today in the sense of being messengers or sent ones. Missionaries, perhaps, having the gift of apostleship because they're going cross-culturally to another place.

They're being sent there by God and by a local congregation to proclaim the message of God. And in that sense, I can go along with that idea of someone having the gift of apostleship in that way, but not in the way that was presented here in the New Testament, the office of apostle.

Now, from this passage, we're going to learn a few things about what it means to be a disciple. Following him, learning from him.

And here's the first thing that we're going to talk about. Like Jesus, verse 12, he went up to a mountainside to pray all night. We need to learn from Jesus to pray before major life events and decisions and not after.

He went to the mountain to pray because of this decision that he needed to make about his disciples, about who he would choose as apostles.

[15 : 14] And we see that throughout the Gospels. Beginning of the Gospels, toward the end, the night before he was betrayed, he went to the garden and he brought with him his apostles.

And then he pulled aside even more by himself and prayed into the night. And so my issue here, I got a couple issues here.

Number one, oftentimes I don't find myself praying before decisions. I pray after. And usually prayers like that are something like, Oh, Lord, please help me.

I made a mess of my life. Oh, why don't we pray beforehand instead of after? That's one of the things.

And then the other thing having to do with praying all night. As I'm reading this and as I'm preparing for this message, I'm thinking, Rich, can you really present this message?

[16 : 10] Can you teach about prayer like this? Because are you the kind of a person who can pray all night like this? And I have to say, no, I'm a hypocrite when it comes to that kind of a thing.

Because I'm pretty much not built this way. I'm not, you know, there have been times where I would dedicate myself to times of prayer.

And I would last for a good 30, 40 seconds. And my mind just starts to wander. And I don't know if any of you can deal with that.

And so this prayer, this dedicated time of prayer is not something that you approach casually. It is something that it's fervent and it takes hard work to keep bringing my mind back on track.

In fact, the other part of this is, what am I praying about for all of this time? What am I doing with this? And so, you know, if you're a good Christian, right, you've got a list of prayers, people that you're praying for and things that are happening in their lives and you want to be faithful to pray for them.

[17 : 23] But how long does that take? Because, you know, if, like, praying for my dad to be healed from cancer, you know, it's my dad.

I'm really concerned and I'm praying for him. But once I'm prayed for him for like 30 seconds, I'm done. I mean, how often can I, do you find yourself trying to restate the same thing in your prayers over and over?

How many different ways can you say, oh, Lord, please save my dad. Please heal my dad, right? How often can you do that? How long can you do that before it's like, okay, I've said that and now I'm going to say it again and then I'm going to say it again in a different way.

And, Lord, did you check my use of synonyms and language there? Because was that pretty cool that I was able to use a different word there, a different phrase, a different way of saying it? No, God's not impressed with my prayers like that.

So I have found myself, and people are built differently. People do things differently. For me, it's easier for me if I'm active. Active. Not when I'm down and out and quiet.

[18 : 38] If I pull myself away in the middle of the night to pray like Jesus, I can sleep sitting up. I don't know about it. Have you ever fallen asleep while you prayed?

Don't feel guilty about that. But if I'm active, if I'm walking, if I'm doing something, and I let the noise go, I can focus more.

But I find myself not necessarily praying over my lists when that happens. I may certainly pray for you if you have something that's going on in your life that you've asked prayer for.

I may pray for you at the beginning of that time. But I've got to tell you, after that, it's about just spending time with him. It's about just being in his presence and recognizing, man, how good he is to me.

How faithful. How broken. Oftentimes, this is what I struggle with in my prayer time. How broken of a man I am. I struggle with that.

[19 : 51] And something that helps me, there's two things that I do in prayer time that help me. One is music. I will often listen to music. And it's not necessarily traditional worship music.

But it's Christian music often that will remind me. If you ask my kids, they'll tell you all about dad's music. They know what it is. They know what it sounds like. I'll come into the office sometimes during the week and I'll bother Tom with my songs.

And sometimes, occasionally, he'll see me get all emotional about a song, how it hits me. And it's God using those lyrics basically to break me.

To get me to the place where I recognize how broken of a person I am, how messed up I am. Even at, I'm 61 years old and I've been a Christian since I was 17.

I don't know how many years that is. And someone's doing the math right now. And, you know, I'm still so messed up in my head.

[20 : 59] The things that I can think of. The things where my mind goes at times. Just the fact that my mind wanders when I'm trying to focus on him. I struggle with that. And the Lord reminds me, it's okay.

Yes, you're broken. Yes, you're messed up. You're like everyone else. And then at that point, it's easy to rest in his grace and his goodness.

Certainly, the second thing for me is the Word of God. If you're reading the Word of God and you're not praying, I would say you're doing it wrong. Because the Word of God is meant to be a conversation.

For me to pray back to him what I'm reading, what I'm learning, what's hitting me. Sometimes I'll read a passage of Scripture and something hits me that's even unrelated to the Scripture.

So what? The Holy Spirit can do what he wants in my life. And just allow that time. Lord, I'm here for it.

[22 : 07] And so don't beat yourself over the head if you're not spending all night in prayer like Jesus did. But pray before and after.

But don't wait until just after to pray. The second thing here is, why did Jesus choose the 12 that he chose? Well, I would say this phrase has something to do with it.

The past obedience is an indicator of future usefulness. In other words, what he was already observing in the 12, I would say he recognized as, this is what I can do.

Now, I've got a problem with that statement. All right? You guys kind of understand that. Like if you're running a business and you've hired somebody and you see how well they work, you see how well they adapt, you see how well they respond to other employees, and you recognize this is a person that we can promote in the company and we can give them more responsibility.

Do you always get that right? Not always. Let me ask you, did Jesus get the 12 right? We know the one was Judas. So when he prayed about the 12, was that like an affirmative?

[23 : 21] Yeah, I think Judas is going to turn out great. We don't get that. We don't understand the dynamic of what went into Jesus choosing Judas, Iscariot in particular, because of the incredible betrayal that went on after that.

And Jesus knew that. We don't understand the dynamic of what Jesus understood ahead of time. And how did he know? And how much did he know?

And he's divine and he's human. And our minds can't compute with that. We know that Jesus knows Judas is going to betray him.

And yet, he still faithfully teaches, prays for, washes the feet of Judas.

Spends all of this incredible, intimate time with him as the other 12. How does that work? That's a good question.

[24 : 28] We don't have a good answer for that. We don't have answers for everything. Here's another thing about discipleship, and I would say real discipleship. It's going to have an impact on your life.

It's going to have an impact on your worldview, how you think about the world around you. It's going to have an impact on your wealth. One of the interesting things that we discover, even as we read our passage today, is that Jesus didn't care if you had lots of money or you had no money.

Because you can find everything in between in our world today. It's not about what you have or don't have. It's how you think about it. It's your attitude towards it.

Are you selfish? Are you dependent upon? Do you need more and more of it for yourself? Or are you willing to view your wealth and your status as something that God can use for his glory for eternity?

That's what matters. Some of the richest people the world has ever known are characters in our Old Testament, right? Solomon, probably the richest man the world has ever seen. Abraham was a wealthy man.

[25 : 37] Job was a wealthy man. You see that. People who were kings, obviously, were people of wealth. Even in New Testament, you have people who were people of means who financed Paul's ministry, for example.

Lydia, seller of purple, very rare cloth. That color was very expensive, very rare. And using her wealth then to finance Paul's ministry.

The homes that they met in. For the first 200 years of Christianity, they met in people's homes. They weren't meeting in poor people's homes. Okay? Okay? They weren't big enough.

Only the rich people, people of means, had homes big enough where they could host a number of people to form a church. Our view of fame.

Our view of relationships. How we treat. How we view each other. And it's true of every kind of dynamic. Our view of how we handle sexuality.

[26 : 44] Our view of how we handle finances. Our view of how we handle politics. Our view of how we handle... All of this is impacted by our relationship with Christ.

By deciding, okay, I'm going to be a disciple of, a learner of, a follower of Jesus. Now, that's going to have an impact on every other area of my life.

Now, before we get to number four on your notes, I want to read the rest of this passage and show you what this looks like. So, he came down with the twelve and stood on a level place.

Kind of think of like a plateau on the mountain. And with a great crowd of his disciples. So, there's one group. A great crowd of his disciples. His followers. People who have dedicated.

They're like got sleeping bag in hand and they're following Jesus around. Okay? And then there was a great multitude of people. These are just onlookers. People who are interested.

[27 : 42] People who are curious. Who are coming to see. And there's hundreds, maybe thousands of them at this point. They're coming from all Judea. That's the whole country. Jerusalem, the big city.

The seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. Who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. So, this is massive now in its scope.

In terms of how many people are coming along. Some would have considered themselves disciples. Some are just curious onlookers. Trying to see what's happening. Trying to be involved.

And those who were troubled with unclean spirits. So, demon filled people were coming and were being cured. People with diseases. The crowd sought to touch him, it says.

For power came out from him and healed them. What's that last word? All. There were no calls for, do you have enough faith?

[28 : 39] There was no calls for, hey, give an offering first. There was no, none of this. Anyone who was coming who was seeking Jesus to hear him teach, and in particular for healing, because they had an unclean spirit, or whatever it was, they were coming and they were finding their needs met in that way.

And again, as we've said before, this ministry of Jesus, this healing and miracles, was meant to serve as an indicator that, yes, here's what Jesus is saying.

It's true. How do we know it's true? Because I can do this. I can forgive sins. Only God can do that. Well, yes. But can I also say, rise, take up your mat and walk?

Or heal your blindness? Or raise someone from the dead? Or feed 5,000 people. All of these miraculous things that he was doing as a way to verify he is who he says he is.

And everyone who was coming was finding this. Now, what's interesting is Luke, as he writes this, Luke is a medical doctor again. He's writing this for his friend Theophilus, and he's writing all of this down to kind of keep an arrangement of all of these details of the life of Jesus.

[30 : 03] And he's talking about people coming from Judea and Jerusalem and Tyre and Sidon. And what's interesting is that when he writes this, this is about 20 years after Jesus had been crucified and risen from the dead.

And all of these people who came, and notice the crowd size is huge, probably, again, in the thousands. And no one is coming back after Luke writes and saying, oh, no, no, no, no.

What Luke said here is false. There's no record on account anywhere of any of the four gospel writers of the book of Acts of anyone coming along and saying, yeah, what they wrote there, it's a bunch of lies, and it's not true, and it's just legend.

And there weren't testimony of that. Not credible. But so many people saw what Jesus did, saw with their own eyes, saw what Jesus did.

So many people saw the resurrected Jesus. Over 500 people were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus who could stand up in court and raise their right hand and say, yes, Jesus stood in front of us.

[31 : 16] And we saw him. And we saw him eat. And we saw him travel. We saw him hug. All of these things. And so that's a part of this story.

And then he goes on to teach. Again, as we said a few weeks ago, the primary reason his ministry is going on, to teach, to teach. He lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said, blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Jesus, as we have said, Jesus, his ministry, his teaching is all about proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. The kingdom of God is at hand.

The kingdom of God actually is Jesus himself standing right in front of them. If they would have accepted him, the kingdom would have come in that moment. But, of course, they rejected him.

But this is his offer to them. Yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are the poor. Now, it's interesting. Luke just says poor. Matthew says poor in spirit.

[32 : 22] What's the difference? I'm not sure. Why does Luke seem to focus on the physical where Matthew focuses on the spiritual? That's a good question.

And, again, we don't have a good answer for it. But all in all, whether you're financially poor or whether you're spiritually poor or you're both, trusting in Christ is still the best way to live your life.

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. He's offering them this kingdom. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

In the kingdom, you're going to be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for in the kingdom you will laugh in the kingdom. Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.

Jesus was offering this kind of life that was a life of persecution. Not a life of, oh, everything's peachy and rosy and everything's coming my way and I'm going to have health and wealth and prosperity and all this.

[33 : 30] No, no, no. Jesus said that's not the life of a disciple. It's going to be hard. No bait and switch here. Rejoice for in that day and leap for joy in that day.

For behold, your reward is great in heaven. For so their fathers did to the prophets. Just as they persecuting you, they did that to the prophets in the Old Testament.

But woe to you who are rich. So now we have, you know, these few beatitudes or blessings. Now we've got some woes, the flip side of this.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. You're rich, you're comfortable in this life. Great. You've received your reward for that. That's in the here and now.

Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. In the next life. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

[34 : 33] Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for their fathers did to the false prophets. And so understand this.

Discipleship will always cost you something today. It's going to cost you today to be a follower of Christ.

But it certainly provides future reward. Future reward in his coming kingdom. It's coming.

It's future tense. Now, this is where if you, like, you know, turn on Christian, quote unquote, Christian TV and follow some of the folks that are on TV like that.

The prosperity, gospel people, you know, the health, wealth, preachers that you see on TV. They get something right and they get something wrong.

[35 : 38] The thing that they get right is that, yes, there's coming a time when you're going to be wealthy beyond your wildest imagination. There's coming a time when you have the kind of health where you'll never get sick.

You'll never grow old. And you won't die. And everything's going to go your way. What they get wrong is they're saying that today is the time for that. And that's clearly not what Jesus taught.

And so they're able to kind of farm out and pick out certain verses here and there that talk about that future blessing and talk about how it's for today. And so they have to live it themselves to kind of be an example.

And so they fleece people for their money, live an exorbitant lifestyle, and then preach this message to masses of people who are giving sometimes their last bank account, whatever they have left to give.

They give it to these, I would call them charlatans. Beware. Run from that kind of teaching. Now, it's coming.

[36 : 52] You know, if I were going to preach a health and wealth and prosperity gospel kind of a message, woo-hoo, some of you might get upset until you heard the part where it's coming.

That's what the kingdom is about. That's what heaven, eternity is about. It's not about today. Today, it's going to cost you something.

Today, it's going to be hard. Now, here's what I want you to notice about this Sermon on the Mount and this preaching of the kingdom in terms of where we are at today.

So, we have today an invitation to Christ's coming kingdom. In this sermon, I'm talking about the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is describing what would be the ultimate fulfillment of his second coming.

Now, it could have been the ultimate fulfillment of him standing right there in the moment and during the gospels if they had accepted him, if they hadn't rejected him and crucified him.

[37 : 58] The offer of the kingdom was real to them, but they rejected him. And so, now it's all about Jesus coming again, the second coming, what we know as the millennial kingdom.

If you hear sermons or read books about the second coming of Jesus, you know that term, the millennial kingdom, this rule of Christ on earth when he comes again.

That's a very real thing. It's going to happen. The scriptures make it clear. And when the scriptures talk about prophecy of Jesus coming, we know it's accurate.

We know it's going to happen because it did the first time. God's going to fulfill his promise. And so, just as Jesus invited the crowd that day, then, to become citizens of his kingdom.

But they went on and crucified him. He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven. And now he's coming again. But just as the offer was made to those people that to be citizens of the kingdom, then, he invites us today, you and I, to make our reservations by faith.

[39 : 20] It is by faith we put our trust in Jesus Christ for what he has done for us to pay the penalty for our sin. And when we do that, we make reservations, if you will.

I mean, it's a tacky way of saying it, perhaps, but it's just a way of understanding that future kingdom that's coming. We've got reservations, and it's coming.

And not only that, all this message that he preaches in the Sermon on the Mount about what it's going to be like in the kingdom, we get to start living that today.

So the application of the Sermon on the Mount is still for us to apply so that when we look at people, we're to treat them with love and with grace, and we're to consider that when I get angry with someone, that's the same as murder.

I can start thinking like a disciple in the kingdom even though I'm not there yet. I'm already a citizen of that kingdom.

[40 : 23] And he calls us to live as citizens of that kingdom. So when we come down now to these last couple points having to do with application, how do we start living this out?

Well, one is to plan your life with God's kingdom in mind, not your own. That's huge. We're not here today to build our own kingdoms.

We're here to fill his kingdom, to live a life in such a way that so honors him, so pleases him, that people would recognize, would hear this message of the gospel, that they too would respond and become future citizens of that kingdom.

That's why we're here. So decisions that I make ought to be based on his kingdom, not my own. In particular, when it comes to finances, that we need to make decisions based on eternity, things that will matter for eternity, not simply on the promotion or the enjoyment of your, my finances.

Now, again, nothing wrong. If you're a person of means and you have a nice home and nice vehicles and you have a bank account, all that's wonderful.

[41 : 55] That's not the issue. Enjoy that. It's blessing from God. Whether you have means or not, you might be here today and you're like, well, you know, I barely got two bucks to rub together in my pocket and, and, you know, I'm living from paycheck to paycheck.

That, you know, that's fine too. It's, it's your attitude toward your finances that God cares about. Are you willing to be open? Are you willing to share? Are you willing to, to allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct in terms of what to do with your finances so that it's not just about you?

It's not just about your own selfish desires for more and for stuff. That's, that's what matters. And it shouldn't be, and it, and, and the scriptures don't call for it to be prescribed that the government or someone else should come in and direct and say, no, you've got to give this much here and you've got to give this much here.

And that's not what it's about. It's about you following the leading of the Lord to do that. You put all this together. And what's interesting is you read through the Sermon on the Mount.

We've just got a little taste of it today. A little start of it is, is this, this truth that you have on your notes for the true disciple.

[43 : 19] And I have to put the word true there. The true disciple, the one who is a follower of Christ, who's made the decision to trust him and is following Christ with their life for that person.

This world is as close to hell as you will ever get. Think about that. Because when this life is over and you're heaven bound, that's even further, right?

That's further. But the flip is also true. For the non-believer, for the one who has heard the gospel and rejected the gospel, this world is as close to heaven as you will ever get.

And you have a decision to make. Am I going to continue in my unbelief?

Or will I come to the place of recognizing that Jesus Christ truly did come, live a sinless life, willing to go to the cross to pay the penalty for my sin, and rose again from the dead?

[44 : 39] Verifying it's all true. It's all real. And can I then, by faith, put my trust in him?

Lord, I trust you with my life. There is no plan B. You're my only hope. My only hope is Jesus, is Jesus Christ.

Romans 10.9 says it this way. If that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, that last highlighted phrase, you, what's it?

Will be. Will be. Not might be, not maybe. You will be. It's a simple matter of faith. That's how you, tacky way of saying it, book your reservation.

That's how you set your life in his kingdom. And you may not, you may not be there physically now, but there's coming a day when you will be.

[45 : 46] He's coming again. And if you die before he comes, you'll be with him in heaven. And that's the fruition of all this that Jesus is promising to you.

Will you trust him? Will you trust him with your life? Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for your grace and your goodness.

The fact that you would come into this world that you created. And that you would take on human flesh.

Be both God and man at the same time. That you would come. And willingly submit yourself to the torture and the pain.

of all that went into the cross. And more than anything else, Lord, the idea that you would take our place, pay the penalty for our sin in your own body.

[47 : 06] As Paul wrote in Corinthians, Lord, that you would become sin for us.

and you conquered sin and you conquered death. You rose again from the dead.

God, because of this blessed truth that we celebrate on this day and every day of our lives. We have a hope.

We have a future. We know. We know. We know. We can know. That we are saved. And we belong to you.

Lord, thank you for this blessed truth. Thank you for this promise that we know you will fulfill. Lord, thank you that your love for us is so great that you made all of that possible for us.

[48 : 18] For those who don't know you as Lord and Savior yet, I pray that today they would recognize I pray you would recognize your need of Jesus as your Savior and submit yourself to him.

Trust him with your life. Lord, we love you. We praise you.

We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen. Amen.