



Theme: Jesus, Kindness, and the Kingdom of God
“Healing for the Unwanted and the Unloved”

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, May 21-22, 2022, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. – Luke 5:16

VIDEO Sermon Starter

Joe had been away from his family for two weeks, traveling for work, and sat down for dinner at a café utterly exhausted. The waitress asked him, “What would you like?”

After looking at the menu, he looked up and said, “I would love the lasagna and a few kind words.”

The waitress returned soon with his order, placed it in front of him, and turned to leave. Joe asked, “What about my few kind words?”

She leaned down to his ear and whispered, “Don’t eat the lasagna.”

Today we begin a new sermon of series focusing on one of the major teachings of Jesus and how it can change our lives daily. When it comes to the teachings of Jesus nearly everyone recognizes him as a great teacher. Muslims call Jesus a great prophet and believe that what

he had to say is very important. Most Jews recognize Jesus as a great rabbi. Even Hindus recognize Jesus as a great moral teacher. Gandhi had a portrait of Jesus which hung on his wall his entire life and he based his teachings on nonviolence around the teachings of Jesus. When I speak to atheists or agnostics most of them will say something like this. **“I don’t believe in God, I am not sure there is a God, but I believe Jesus was a great moral teacher.”**

So, what did Jesus teach? What was it that he spoke about which was so profound? What was the primary message of Jesus? Most scholars of the New Testament recognize that the central focus of Jesus’ teaching, preaching and life was on the Kingdom of God. Not only did Jesus teach about the Kingdom of God, but he EMBODIED it and LIVED it daily, and he invites us to do the same.

Let’s look at several places where we discover this central focus of Jesus’ teaching. If you have your Bible, then turn to Mark 1:14 – 15. Here we find Mark’s summation of Jesus’ ministry.

BIBLE

Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, where he preached God’s good news. “The time promised by God has come at last!” he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent and believe the good news!”

In Luke 4:43 we hear these words.

BIBLE

“I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent.”

Jesus makes it clear when he says, “This is why I was sent, to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God.” Luke gives us a summation of why Jesus came in chapter 8:1.

BIBLE

Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God.

More than 100 times in the Gospels we find Jesus saying similar things. He illustrates the kingdom when he says, **“The kingdom of God is like...”** and he proceeds to give us parables or stories about what God’s Kingdom will be like, and then he DOES things that give us a glimpse into this Kingdom. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us the ethics of the Kingdom of God when he sums it up with the Golden Rule in Mathew 7.

BIBLE

¹² **“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.**

He speaks about the judgment day that will come when the Kingdom of God is fulfilled on earth as it is in heaven. He invites us to pray...

BIBLE

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We find this idea of the Kingdom of God to be the central focus of the preaching and teaching and healing ministry of Jesus. When he **healed people, it was to demonstrate what the Kingdom of God** is like and how the Kingdom on earth will be like the Kingdom of heaven. **Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross paints a picture of who the King** is and what it means to be a part of this Kingdom of God that he is proclaiming.

In order to truly understand this idea of the Kingdom of God, or as Matthew calls it, the Kingdom of Heaven, we must grapple with the idea of a king. For us in America that can be challenging because we don’t have kings. We are a republic, and we have a president who is elected and not a king, despite what some politicians would like us to

believe! We have the US Constitution that gives us checks and balances so no one person or branch of government has all the power.

But in ancient times, when kings ruled, they did not rule as constitutional monarchs. They ruled with absolute power. They ruled with absolute power over a kingdom or a realm. **Everything within their Kingdom or realm belonged to them.** All allegiance was paid to them as King, and they could do whatever they wanted with whatever was in the kingdom. They were charged with the **welfare of their subjects**, although not all took that seriously and **instead abused** that power.

We know that in ancient times, as well as modern times, there have been **good kings and bad kings**. Sometimes those good kings became the stuff of legends like **King Arthur**. There were kings who took seriously the welfare of their people. They did not see themselves as being the recipients of the welfare of the people but saw themselves as being charged with the welfare of their people. **They sought to do justice and to love kindness.** They tried to see that their people were care for. They saw themselves as **servants and not as dictators**.

But there weren't many of those kinds of Kings. When **King David was at his best**, he was a king like this. There were a handful of Kings in ancient Israel like kings Hezekiah and Josiah, but most of them fell short and were selfish as they ruled the kingdom of Israel. Usually, **Kings would struggle with their power**. We find it both in ancient times and in modern day that **Lord Acton's** dictum rings true.

SLIDE **"Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."**

We saw this in the lives of most Kings as they came to look at their people as existing for the Kings benefit as opposed to the other way around. Many times, Kings would rule harshly over their people. They would abuse and oppress their people and the ancient kings of Israel often lead their people away from God instead of towards God. **They didn't often act as the shepherds** that God intended for them to

be.

When the **Israelites tried to understand God** in their day and age, one of the titles they gave to God was “King.” **God was seen as the highest authority**, not just in the land, but in all of creation. Only God could rightly claim to be King over all things. God created all things and because God created and sustained everything God rightly deserves our allegiance and our willingness to go and do what he tells us to do. To this day my Jewish friends pronounce their blessings beginning, **“Blessed are you oh God, King of the universe.”**

The writer of the Psalms would say the same things as we read repeatedly things like Psalm 10:16.

BIBLE The Lord is King for ever and ever!

BIBLE The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad!

All of these pointed to the idea of God as King. For the Israelites, God was their only King for a period of hundreds of years. The **foundational story of the Old Testament is found in Exodus** where God delivers the Israelites from slavery in Egypt through his servant Moses. Moses leads them through the wilderness and finally to the edge of the Promised Land, where Joshua then takes them. During this period of time the **Israelites hailed God as their King**. All the other nations had earthly kings of Israel had God as King.

For more than 300 years God appointed Judges who were like prophets and ruled over the people of Israel, but God was always their King. **The Judge would guide them in the ways of God—judges like Sampson and Deborah and the Gideon**. This continued until **1 Samuel 8**. If you have your Bible, you turn to that place in the Old Testament because it is a pivotal story in the Old Testament. Something changes here and from this time forward, throughout the rest of the Old Testament all the way until the end of the book of Malachi, we find the result of what happened because what happens in this story.

Here we find Samuel as an old man. **Samuel is the last of the judges.** This is the 11th century before Christ and Samuel has been leading the people his entire life. Finally in verses 4-5 we find the change that is coming.

BIBLE

Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel. “Look,” they told him, “You are old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have.”

This broke Samuel’s heart. **This was going to be the end of the people recognizing God as their King.** They wanted an earthly king—one with flesh that they could see and touch, who could lead them and fight their battles for them. They wanted the security of an earthly king and Samuel felt like he had disappointed God. Samuel felt it was a judgment upon his role as leader of the Israelites. But God spoke tenderly and kindly to Samuel, speaking these words in verse 7 and following.

BIBLE

“Do everything they say to you,” the Lord replied, “for it is me they are rejecting, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer.”

In this passage we find the people rejecting God as their King and wishing for an earthly king like the other nations had around them. God then tells Samuel to warn them about what will happen if they have an earthly king. Samuel goes back to the elders and people, and he says in verse 11-18 and following:

BIBLE

“This is how a king will reign over you,” Samuel said. “The king will draft your son and assign them to his chariots and his charioteers, making them run before his chariots. Some will be

generals and captains in his army, some will be forced to plow in his fields and harvest his crops, and some will make his weapons and carry equipment. The King will take your daughters from you and force them to cook and bake and make perfumes for him. He will take away the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his own officials. He will take a 10th of your grain and your grape harvest and distribute it among his officers and attendants. He will take your male and female slaves and demand the finest of your cattle and donkeys for his own use. He will demand a 10th of your flocks, and you will be as slaves. When that day comes, you will beg for relief from this King you are demanding, but the Lord will not help you.”

The elders were persistent, and they were determined to have a king over them.

BIBLE

22 then the Lord replied, “Do as they say, and give them a king.”

The rest of 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles and the rest of the history books and prophetic books in the Old Testament are the stories of what happened when those Kings took over. There were a handful of them which were good Kings who followed God’s ways and shepherded his people. But most of them forgot this responsibility and ruled harshly. They abused their power and took from the people.

When God finally removed his hedge of protection over the kingdoms of Israel and Judah other Kings came which were more powerful than the kings of Israel and Judah. Egypt came from the south. Assyria came from the North and East. Babylonia came next and they were followed by the Persians. The use of foreign Kings then ruled over the Israelites and put them into slavery and sent them into exile.

Eventually, God delivered his people and brought them back to his homeland. When new leaders arose, they also forgot who they were

and that they were called to serve God and lead the people with justice and righteousness. For 1000 years of biblical history, you can summarize this relationship of the King to the people and how it failed. This brings us to the king who was ruling over the land when Jesus was born.

GRAPHIC King Herod the Great

Herod was half Jewish and half Idumaeon and while he was a practicing Jew, most Jews did not like him because he was Rome's puppet and he symbolized Rome's power and authority over Israel. He ruled for 34 years, from 37 BC to 4 BC which is the year that Christ was born. Herod the Great sought to reconstruct Jerusalem, and if you go to the Holy Land, you can still see some of the things that he built.

GRAPHIC Western Wall

This is the retaining wall at the Temple Mount. You might recognize this as the Western Wall or the "Wailing Wall."

GRAPHIC Teaching Steps

These are the "teaching steps" on the back side where the Temple had risen above. Today, the Muslim shrine, "the Dome of the Rock," sits atop these walls. Those large stones that you see were placed Herod.

GRAPHIC Masada

GRAPHIC Masada Model

This is a model of Masada. This is a panoramic view where you can look over Masada. Hanging off the side of the mountain is the palace that Herod had built. This was his Winter Palace, and you can see the Dead Sea in the background. It was a magnificent structure.

GRAPHIC Caesarea Maritima Ruins

GRAHIC Caesarea Maritima Model

Next, we see Caesarea Maritima, which is a harbor that Herod constructed along with the theater and an entire town that he built.

There is a palace which overlooks the Mediterranean Sea and just the ruins are magnificent to this day. All of these were a part of heritage building projects. The image shows one of the statues which may give us a picture of what he looked like as a young man.

GRAPHIC Herod the Great Statue

In addition to his great building projects, Herod was also paranoid and ruled over his people harshly. He had no problem spilling the blood of Jews. He even was willing to spill the blood of his family members. He was so afraid that someone was going to usurp his throne that he had **his first wife put to death. He had three of his sons killed** for fear that they were going to turn on him and take over his throne.

You might recall the story in Matthew's Gospel about the wise men. **The Magi asked, "Where is he who is born 'King of the Jews'?"** Herod was not born King of the Jews but was born **Idumaeen**. He became terrified and wanted to know where the child was born. When he found out the child was born somewhere around Bethlehem you might recall that Matthew tells us that King Herod the Great had all the children slaughtered in and around the town of Bethlehem to avoid having someone rise up and take his throne. This is why Jesus and his family had to flee to Egypt so they would not be put to death. At his core, Herod the Great seemed very insecure and fashioned himself as the Messiah. He was like all the other kings. He ruled harshly over the people to bring them to their knees. I always imagine this was because of his very human internal doubts about his worth.

SLIDE The Kingdom of God

With this as the backdrop we can begin to understand the significance of Jesus' teaching as he began his public ministry by saying to the people, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." **The kingdom of God has come near—not the kingdom of Herod, nor the kingdom of Caesar.** The Kingdom of God is what has come near, and the people flocked to hear Jesus and what he was saying. They had an idea of what

Jesus meant but what he meant was far different than what they expected.

All of Jesus' ministry was about unpacking the phrase, "the Kingdom of God." Jesus came to reveal who God is as King—God's nature and his character. Jesus came to show us a God of compassion and mercy—a benevolent God and King who cares for his subjects and loves his subjects and is willing to suffer for his own people.

Jesus came to show us the laws of the kingdom of God and what it means to be citizens of the kingdom. Jesus talked about what it means to love God and to love our neighbor in his ethical teachings. We discover the nature of the kingdom of God in the parables of Jesus. Ultimately, Jesus laid down his life for his people. This is the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed.

I want you to be aware of the three senses in which Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God. As Christians we need to know what Jesus meant by using the phrase, "the Kingdom of God."

SLIDE The Kingdom of God as a present reality

There is a truth that Jesus proclaims with this idea of the Kingdom of God that **God reigns already**. This is not just about something that will happen in the future. This is something which is **true today**. The entire universe belongs to God and God rules and reigns over it. While there is a rebellion on this little planet with **people turning away from the King and seeking to be the king themselves**, that doesn't take away from the fact that **God is still king**. With a word God could eliminate the rebellion, but he chooses not to. God is King. We can either acknowledge this truth or pretend it is not so but is true whether we recognize it or not. God is King of the universe today.

Christians believe that God sent Jesus Christ and that he came to proclaim to people the Kingdom of God. He came to remind people of what they may have forgotten—that God is always the sovereign ruler of the universe. We either submit to God's kingship or we live in

rebellion to his rule. God gives us free will and so the choice is ours.

When we live as citizens of the kingdom, we find that life goes better for us. We can find what we were made for when we yield to the one who rules over all things. Once again, the writer of the Psalms says, **“The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad!”** The idea is that we will find gladness and joy when we understand that God is our King. There is a peace that comes from this knowledge and awareness. There is a sense that all is okay in the end because God is King.

As Christians we live as **citizens of two kingdoms**. This was true for those to whom Jesus preached as well. They were subjects of the Roman Empire, and they were citizens of the Kingdom of God. As subjects of the Roman Empire, they had to obey the laws of the land until those laws conflicted with the laws of the Kingdom of God. But they always worked remember that their primary allegiance was to God as King. Caesar would die and there would be a new Caesar. Eventually Rome would be destroyed, but the Kingdom of God was unshakable, and it was our destiny. Ultimately, all of us would end up in the Kingdom of God—in that place where we see God’s kingdom fully realized.

You are citizens of the United States of America, but you were also subjects of the Kingdom of God. Your highest allegiance is always to the Kingdom of God. How long will the United States last? It might last for hundreds or even thousands of years, but it won’t last forever. There is one unshakable kingdom. **There is one King of Kings and Lord of Lords and pleasing him and doing his will is the highest and greatest responsibility that we have as human beings.**

Every morning I say something to God like, **“You are my King. I belong to you. Help me honor you today and live for you and do your will.”** And pretty much every night before I go to bed, I must admit that **I did not live up to that prayer** and I ask God to help me do a better job tomorrow. I ask for forgiveness, and my highest allegiance belongs to

the King of Kings.

There are moments where the kingdoms come into conflict with one another. We don't often feel it here in the United States and probably not often enough. We see it occasionally and we certainly have witnessed it throughout history.

I think of **Nazi Germany** where there was a conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom represented by Adolf Hitler. Unfortunately, the church forgot that its highest allegiance was to the Kingdom of God. The pulpits were largely silent during the Holocaust. Most pastors were not preaching that what was happening was wrong or that followers of Jesus should stand against the evil. 6 million people died during the reign of terror in which the church quietly went along with the state. When kingdoms came into conflict the church forgot that its highest allegiance was to God.

You saw the same thing in **South Africa during apartheid** when the official state church adopted and sanctioned the policies of the state. They were silent instead of standing up and saying, "**This is not how the Kingdom of God works. This is not God's will for human beings.**" Once again, most pulpits were silent as pastors forgot to paint a picture of what the Kingdom of God really looks like. Instead, they went along with the idea that certain people were more favored by God, and some were less human than others. This is not the Kingdom of God, and it was forgotten when the two kingdoms came into conflict.

During the **Civil War** in our own country many refused to stand up and say that the kingdom of God does not have people who are enslaved. During the civil rights movement Dr. Martin Luther King was calling our nation through his sermons to look more like the Kingdom of God. When **Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964** in Oslo his speech that day **ended with a reference to the Kingdom of God** and the hope that the kingdom of God would come on this earth as it is in heaven. He called people to be a part of working towards that kingdom

vision.

In addition to this idea, we recognize as citizens of the kingdom of God that **we are not afraid of what happens in the earthly kingdoms**. If you allow yourself, there is a lot to be afraid of in this world. **We live in a time of much fear and anxiety**. There are talk shows on television, radio and the Internet which are constantly barraging us with commentary to make us afraid. We are constantly hearing about things that are designed to make us afraid of our world.

I am not suggesting that there are not serious issues we need to address. Terrorism, health care reform, and issues related to global warming and the environment, and the economy, all should be discussed and taken seriously. But **I am not going to be afraid as I live my life, because I recognize that there is an unshakable kingdom**, and I am a part of that kingdom. Whatever happens here on earth I am called to be a citizen of God's kingdom and I am called to make this earth look more like the kingdom of God. But my life does not solely depend on what happens here on earth.

Our political parties have a wonderful way of making us afraid, especially with whichever party is NOT in office. They want to convince us that the world, or at least our country, is going to hell in a handbasket. Several years ago, it was the Democrats. This last year it was many Republican candidates, and I am sure now that if Republicans take a majority in Congress that we would hear again from Democrats. Whichever party is not in control seems to try and make us afraid of things in our world and believe that if only their party were in charge, then things would be better.

Fear takes over the lives of so many, **but when we recognize that God is King, we are not afraid**. I love politics and I enjoy reading, studying and being involved in politics. But **I don't believe that the kingdom of God rises, or falls based upon the Democrats or the Republicans being in office**. Both are right in some places, and both are

wrong in other places. No set of policies in this kingdom will ever be perfect and we would be wise to remember that **God is King no matter who is President or in charge of Congress.** I'm not afraid regardless of who wins the next presidential election.

Jesus said to his own people in his day, "There is so much to be afraid of, but I am going to ask you **not to worry about what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will wear.** God knows what you need all those things. Instead, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything else will fall into place as well."

SLIDE Seek first the Kingdom of God

You don't have to be afraid. You recognize that there are problems that we face, and you roll up your sleeves and say, "**I want to do something about this and be Jesus Christ to the world.**" But we don't live in fear because we know who is "the King of Kings" and "the Lord of Lords." He is the King of the unshakable kingdom.

SLIDE The Kingdom of God is a vision of what life could be like on Earth

That leads us to the second sense of the kingdom of God for Jesus and that is a vision of what the world could be. The world as it should be is the picture of the kingdom of God that Jesus paid for us. The world as it is—is the kingdom of the earth. The gap between these two is the place where we get to work. We are to be mindful of this gap. We are to focus on these things and say, "**How can we help this world look more like the Kingdom of God?**"

When Jesus came preaching about the kingdom of God, he was not only talking about God's current reign but also saying, "**This is what it would look like if God truly reigned** in this kingdom, and you participated in it." Then he would demonstrate it by acts of love and compassion and healing. He called his disciples to be building his kingdom. He said that when we find people who are sick, we should bring healing. Most of the hospitals in the United States were founded

by Christians who said, “The kingdom of God looks like a place where the sick get care and are made well. We are going to care for them in our hospitals.”

It’s one of the reasons very first thing Jesus does after he calls the disciples to follow him in Luke’s gospel is heal a man with leprosy in chapter 5.

BIBLE

¹² In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed. “Lord,” he said, “if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean.”

¹³ Jesus reached out and touched him. “I am willing,” he said. “Be healed!” And instantly the leprosy disappeared.

The first public schools in Colorado were started by Methodists in the Denver area. The first public schools in most cities in United States were started by Christians who said, “Our children need a safe place to learn. They need someone to teach them in the kingdom of God looks like a place where children know how to read and write and learn about that kingdom.”

When it comes to most mission projects in our city and throughout our nation and throughout our world, they often come from Christians who say, **“the kingdom of God looks like a place where people have something to eat and something to drink and something to wear.”** Shelters and soup kitchens and clothing banks were started all over this country by people of faith who said that this is what it means to live in the kingdom of God. We have got to close the gap between the kingdom that we live in and the kingdom of God.

This is what Jesus came preaching and teaching. He taught his disciples to **love their enemies** and to pray for those who persecuted them. He taught them to **bless people who curse you**. He taught them

to **bear good fruit and to do good works** so that others might see the kingdom of God in them. He taught that when you see someone in need you stop, and **you help because that is what the kingdom of God looks like**. All of these were pictures of the kingdom of God and Jesus saying, “The **world ought to look like this**. It doesn’t yet and if it is going to happen it will be because people like you are willing to be my presence in the world.”

Sometimes it becomes **too easy for us as Christians to see our faith as simply a personal relationship with God**. We focus on how much Jesus loves us and we forget that he also loves the rest of the world. We forget that God has a purpose and a plan for his world. We forget that this is God’s kingdom, and we are called to help create the kingdom of God as he intended it to be. Sometimes we just stop looking and we get a defeatist attitude and say, “**Well, the world just looks the way it is. It is just that way and we can’t do anything.**”

Jesus says, “**No, that is not right. You can do something.**”

On Friday morning, I had the privilege of doing the devotion for the clinic in Guatemala that we have sent 16 medical teams to serve and train in. The clinic is in a region that has very little medical care and provides some of the only options for healing for many miles. COVID appears to have really subsided in San Lucas as they have not had any admissions in several weeks. But they now have a surge of kids admitted with viral infections, norovirus. They are also experiencing an increase of Hepatitis cases in children in Guatemala. Rainy season has started, and Malaria and dengue will be on the rise. Moving from one crisis to another is always a challenge for hospital workers?

GRAPHIC Clinic in San Lucas 1

GRAPHIC Clinic in San Lucas 2

GRAPHIC Clinic in San Lucas 3

SLIDE The Kingdom of God is a vision of what life could be like on

Earth

WE are invited to be part of God's Kingdom here and now. I received this video about some of the relief effort you have made possible with your offering in terms of hospitals in Ukraine serving refugees. One of the persons highlighted in this video is Dan from here in Durango.

VIDEO Ukraine Relief

Do you see what the kingdom of God looks like? Do you see why it was the Good News of the Kingdom of God? Do you see how the world changes when people submit their lives to the kingdom of God and what it might look like?

We don't have to go to Guatemala or Africa to help the vision of the kingdom of God become a reality. All we need is to look at the people around us and realize there are people who feel hopeless and unloved and unwanted. All of us work with people or live near people who need a tender word or someone to come along side of them and say, "I care about you, and I know things are tough, but I'm going to be there for you."

I remind you that Jesus offered healing to someone that no one saw or cared about, a leper. He reaches out and touches that person, so they know they are known and loved by God. But notice what happens next in this story in Luke 5.

BIBLE

¹⁴ Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, "Go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."

¹⁵ But despite Jesus' instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be

healed of their diseases. ¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.

The Kingdom of God is not just about going and telling everyone, but about living what God has done in our lives. People serve in Guatemala and Ukraine and in Durango because of what God had done in their hearts. Notice that Jesus leaves to go pray by himself, reminding us that the Kingdom of God begins in our hearts, and then moves its way outward. Following Jesus is about being quiet and listening for God who tells us who we are and whose we are, reminding us we are citizens of God's Kingdom. That helps us begin to **SEE that the Kingdom of God will come in its fullest in the future.**

SLIDE The Kingdom of God as a future reality

Jesus proclaims that the day will come where the kingdoms of this earth will become the kingdom of our God. In the Gospels, Jesus preaches about a Judgment Day. He says that a day will come when the rebellion ends. Darkness will be cast out and only light will be left. In that day, the kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven. There will be a new heaven and a new earth.

On that judgment day the King will come and sit upon his throne. He will separate the nations as a **shepherd separates the sheep from the goats**. He will say to the sheep, "Enter into your rest for I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was sick and in prison and you visited me. I was naked and you gave me something to wear."

He will say to some, "**I gave you talents and you used them to further my kingdom. Well done good and faithful servants.**" He says that in that day it will be like a party. He will invite everyone to the party, but some will refuse to come, and they'll give all kinds of excuses about why they don't want to come. Others will come from the highways and byways, and they will be welcomed into the kingdom of God.

The writer of the book of Revelation paints a picture for us of that final future kingdom towards which all of us are marching in life. It is the kingdom we enter when we finally passed from this life to the next. He says these words in Revelation 21: 1-5.

BIBLE

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!”

Jesus came preaching, “the Kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is among you. **The kingdom of God is within you.** God is King, let the earth be glad!” We are God’s subjects. We are to live as God’s people. We pray that God’s kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven. Then then roll up your sleeves and live as people of hope, working for the kingdom, knowing that one day God’s kingdom will come on earth is in heaven.

This was the central message of Jesus, who with the Father is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Is what he meant when he told us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This is what he intended when we read on the end of that prayer, **“For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”**

Would you bow with me in prayer? I would like to invite you to

pray and simply know God as your King. I will just say a phrase and if you want to you can use that one or your own words to pray something like this:

SLIDE **Prayer**

God you are my King... I entrust my life to you... Help me to seek to serve you—to honor you and to do your work in this world. Help me to see the world as you see it oh God. Help me to get involved in working that it might be that way. God, help me to trust, even when I am afraid, that you are my King, and your Kingdom is unshakable. In your holy name, amen.

May 14-15 Order

1. Ely welcomes people and says, **“Today we look at how we are wanted and loved by God and how we can claim that and live that.”**
2. Two Songs
3. Jeff welcomes and invites people to wave and be seated.
4. Announcements by Jeff (Check News Section on Website)
 - a. QR code for guests
 - b. Jeanette’s Celebration
 - c. Family Worship Weekend and Graduation next weekend.
5. Invite congregation to prepare their hearts for the message.
6. Sermon
7. Prayer
8. Two Songs
9. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
10. Offering SLIDE and Focus (Early Learning Center)
11. Care Ministers (If any are present)
12. Prayers and Closing Thoughts
 - a. Prayer quilt for ...
 - b. New Members
13. Closing Prayer