



LIVING FOR KING & KINGDOM

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Study 1:

STARTING AND ENDING WITH THE KING

Introduction

Mark Sayers in his book, *Disappearing Church*, writes:

“Often as believers we wish for the kingdom, but do not want to acknowledge the authority of the King, for at the heart of kingship is the concept of authority. Authority is the surrendering of autonomy, absolute freedom, and free choice to someone else.”

(Disappearing Church, Mark Sayers, p.80)

Simply put, we want the kingdom without the king. But the gospel proclaims, Jesus is King. We can't have the kingdom without the king – it wouldn't *be* the kingdom without this king.

1. At the start of our series it is helpful to discuss, what does it mean to you that 'Jesus is King'? Or put another way, 'Jesus is Lord.'
2. How do people generally respond to the idea that Jesus is King?

Mark Sayers also helpfully teases out the truth that the ultimate authority in our current culture is the self. (Disappearing Church, Mark Sayers, p.46)

3. How have you seen this expressed in the lives of people around you?
How can it be expressed in your life?



From the Sermon to the Study – starting with the King

On Sunday, we looked at Acts 1, how did Jesus words to his disciples and then his ascension demonstrate that he was the King?

This study will direct us to see that as we look at the Scriptures we should always be starting and ending with Jesus. Jesus is at the centre.

4. Read Luke 24:13-16. After reading, take a look back at what has just happened in the previous verses. What day is this recounting and who are these two men that Jesus appears to?

5. Read Luke 24:17-24. It seems like what has happened was not what they expected. What were these men hoping for?

6. Read Luke 24:25-27. In v.27 and later in v.44, Jesus says something incredible about God's word, the Scriptures. What do these verses and the verses below teach us about Jesus' view of the Old Testament Scriptures?

Matthew 18:4-5; John 10:35; Matthew 5:17

7. Take a look at the following passages. Along with what we've just seen, why do you think it is right to start this series with Jesus and not Genesis?

John 1:1-3, 14 & 18; Hebrews 1:1-3; Acts 13:32-33; Col 1:16



Graeme Goldsworthy writes, 'the Old Testament must be understood in its relationship to the gospel... what went before Christ in the Old Testament, as well as what comes after him, finds its meaning in him.' (According to Plan, p.50) He echoes what Jesus and the Scriptures say, that Jesus gives the Old Testament it's meaning. So, we need the Old Testament to understand what Jesus says about himself and his Kingdom. We are driven back to the Old Testament to look at it through 'Christian eyes.'

8. Is this how you view the Old Testament?

How does this change the way we should read the Old Testament?

All of Scripture points to the fact that Jesus is at the centre; He is King! Here are some important questions to ask as we begin our series.

9. What do you find unexpected about how our King Jesus revealed himself, as well as how he reigns and rules today?

10. What can make it hard for you to find your meaning and purpose in living for King Jesus and His Kingdom?



Prayer

Use the answers to the final two questions and ask God that during this series you might grow in your trust of King Jesus. Remember, Jesus Lordship is clearly displayed in the story of the gospel; gospel meaning 'good news.'

Further Reading

God's Big Picture, Vaughan Roberts (Introduction pg.13-26)

According to Plan, Graeme Goldsworthy. (Chapters 4-7)

Disappearing Church, Mark Sayers. (Chapters 1-3 & 6)

Podcast Suggestion

This Cultural Moment Season 1&2 – Mark Sayers and John Mark Comer



Study 2:

THE PROMISED KINGDOM

Introduction

The Old Testament started out well. In Genesis 1, God made a good creation in which he, humanity and nature all related harmoniously. We saw the pattern of the kingdom. God's people (Adam and Eve) lived in God's place (the garden) under God's rule and blessing (God's word and perfect relationships).

But humans rebelled against God's rule, and as a result creation spiralled into a cycle of sin and punishment. The pattern of the kingdom has been destroyed by sin. Human beings are no longer God's people by nature; we have turned away from him. We no longer live in his place; we have been banished from the garden. And we reject his rule and live as if we ruled the world. God continues to reign but he reigns in judgement. As a result we do not enjoy God's blessing but instead face his curse.

Chapters 4-11 of Genesis chart the spread of sin and death, God's judgement against humanity.

But God was not surprised by man's rebellion. What insight does Paul give us in Ephesians 1:3-14 into the eternal plan of God?

1. **Read Genesis 12:1-9.** God promises a new day for the world as he makes promises to Abraham. What does God promise Abraham in these verses?



2. Compare Genesis 11:4 and Genesis 12:2. What do these verses tell us about humanity and God?

3. In Genesis 15, God repeats his promises as he makes a covenant with Abraham. Read verses 1-6. What new things do we discover about God and Abraham in these verses?

4. In Genesis 17:1-8 God confirms the covenant by repeating his promises. List them under these three headings

People

Land

Blessing

5. How do God's promises to Abraham reflect a return to the good creation of Genesis 1-2?



'God's promises to Abraham are of great importance in the Bible. They are promises to undo the effects of the Fall. They are promises to renovate the world and take life back to the Garden of Eden experience. They are also promises which form the backbone of the rest of the Old Testament. Everything that happens in the Old Testament from Genesis 12 onwards has God's promises to Abraham in view... The tragedy, however, is that... mankind's unfaithfulness keeps working against God's desire to reverse the fall.' (Phil Campbell & Bryson Smith, Full of Promise, Matthias Media, p21)

The New Testament depicts Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfilment of all of God's promises [2 Cor. 1:20]. God's promises to Abraham are no exception. Christ brings into existence a people of God who have a special inheritance that will not fade, and who have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. In so doing, it is Jesus Christ who reverses the Fall and fulfils God's promises to Abraham.

Read Galatians 3:6-14.

The Galatian Christians were being led astray by false teaching that suggests that it is not enough to believe in Christ but that they also need to obey the Jewish law if they are to be right with God. Paul counters this teaching by pointing them to Abraham.

Why are those who have faith in Christ, Abraham's true children?

What does it mean to 'rely on observing the law' verse 10? How might we do that today? Why is it futile?



How is it possible for us to receive God's blessing instead of the curse of judgement?

Read Romans 4. How does Abraham help us better understand how we are saved in Christ?

Prayer:

That despite our sin God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ

Further Reading

God's Big Picture, Vaughan Roberts (Chapters 1-3 pg.27-57)



Study 3:

THE PROPHESIED KINGDOM

Introduction

The promise of the kingdom is only partially fulfilled in Israel's history.

There are four main elements to the promise of the kingdom of God. We saw three of them in the promises to Abraham: people, land and blessing. In this week's sermon we saw the promise of a king (2 Samuel 7).

In Israel's history the people often failed to obey God and they experienced judgement not blessing. The north and the south of the nation were both exiled from the Promised Land. The north to Assyria, the south to Babylon. The kings often failed to rule as good shepherds. The prophets called the nation to repentance.

But the later prophets also looked forward to a better day. When God would do a new thing. When God would bring new hope to a broken people.

At times it seems natural to despair and ask 'if God is dead'. He doesn't seem to care. If he is there then why doesn't he do something? Why is the world in such a mess?

When have you felt this way and why?

1. Lamentations is a book written at the time of the Babylonian Exile (586 BC). **Read Lamentations 1:1-22.** What reasons are given for the Exile?



2. **Read Lamentations 3:19-33.** In the midst of great despair what is the writer's basis for hope?

3. In the midst of despair and hopelessness God send prophets with a message of hope for the people of God. According to these prophets what will happen after the exile?

Jeremiah 29:10-14

Jeremiah 16:14-15

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Ezekiel 34:23-24

Ezekiel 37:21-28

Ezekiel 36:33-36

Isaiah 65:17-25

Isaiah 9:6-7

Isaiah 52:13- 53:12

Isaiah 49:6



The prophetic promises point us to the work of Christ. He ushers in the new covenant through his death on the cross (Lk.22:20). By his death Jesus secures forgiveness of sins and enables a deep relationship with God in which his Spirit transforms and shapes our hearts (Rom8:1-4; Gal.5:16-26) Jesus is the new Davidic king who rules with righteousness and the suffering servant of God. He is our Servant King who was 'pierced for our transgressions' and 'crushed for our iniquities' (Is.53:5)

4. The modern Christian's position is quite similar to that of the exiles in Babylon. We are aliens in a land which is not our ultimate home. How does the promise of our heavenly home help us deal with life? (See Rom.8:18-39; 2 Thess.1:5-10)

5. What words of advice does 1 Peter 2:11-12 have to offer? What specific things can we do to put these verses into practice?

6. Christ is both anointed Messiah and suffering servant of God. How do these two aspects of Christ's role spur us on to greater obedience?



Prayer:

Give thanks for the new covenant instituted by Christ, the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life.

Further Reading

God's Big Picture, Vaughan Roberts (Chapters 4&5 pg.59-110)



Study 4:

THE AUTHORITY OF THE KING

Introduction

During our sermon this week we started in Mark's Gospel where Jesus, the promised and prophesied King, has arrived. He comes proclaiming that '*the kingdom of God has come near*' (Mk 1:15) and called '*come follow me*' (Mk 1:17). As we continue in Mark's Gospel we start to discover more of what this King and His Kingdom looks like. More is revealed as to *why* we should follow this King.

If Jesus could give you anything, what would you ask him for? Why?

How can people view Jesus the King, more like 'Jesus the Genie'?

How can people view Jesus the King simply as 'Jesus the ticket to heaven'?

If you're honest with yourself, how do you view and respond to Jesus these ways?

1. **Read Mark 1:21-34** and answer the following Questions

- i. How does Jesus display his power?
- ii. How do the people and spirits respond to him and what he does?
- iii. Based on these accounts, what *authority* is Jesus displaying?



2. Focus in on the people's response in Mark 1:27.
Why were the people so amazed?

These sorts of healings happen over and over again. By the end of our next account everyone is amazed, it finishes with them saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:12)

2. How do you respond to these stories of Jesus authority? How can they become too second nature or a theoretical lesson and not inspire awe?

In our next account, four men are desperate to get to this healer Jesus. They carry a paralytic; they dig through a roof and lower him down, setting him before Jesus. Given what we have seen of Jesus, what should we expect?

3. **Read Mark 2:1-7.** How does this account differ to the previous healings?
4. What do you think the men wanted from Jesus, when they brought their friend, and what does he give them? (v.5) Do you find this strange?
5. **Read Mark 2:8-12.** Why do the religious leaders respond the way they do? What authority is Jesus claiming?



6. Jesus has the power and authority to give us all that we ask for; he has power over the physical and the spiritual, over sickness and disease and even sin. If you were the paralysed man, and you were *carried* out again with *only* Jesus' words, "your sins are forgiven," how would you feel?

7. Why is the forgiveness of sins so much greater than any other healing? What can cause us to lose sight of the greatest need?

8. Should we expect physical healings and impure spirits being driven out like in our stories today? Why/why not?

9. How does the way Jesus met the physical needs as well as the greatest spiritual need of people remind us of what the kingdom of God is like when the King is present?

How does this point to the kingdom to come?

How does this shape the way God's kingdom people live pointing to the king and the kingdom to come? Think about what might need to change in your attitude, your life and the life of our church.



Prayer:

Thank God for the forgiveness of sins that is offered through Jesus Christ our Lord and King. Pray that we might be a church who seeks to share the good news of the gospel and care for those who are in need. Ask that God might continue to bring his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven through the work of his kingdom people.

Further Reading

God's Big Picture, Vaughan Roberts (Chapter 6 pg.113-127)

King's Cross, Timothy Keller (Introduction & Chapters 1-4, pp.ix-48)



Study 5:

THE KING'S CALL, THE KINGDOM'S GROWTH

Introduction

What is your most pressing hope for the future? What do you long for and dream about most?

Jesus also had a dream for the future, except it was not so much a dream as a plan. He knew it would happen, and the challenge he put before people was to believe that it was going to happen, and to change their lives accordingly.

In chapter 4 of Mark's gospel Jesus begins to explain what the future kingdom will be like, and why only some will enter it.

To understand this section of Mark it is helpful to acquaint ourselves with the Old Testament background that lies behind it. The prophets of the Old Testament had great hopes for the future kingdom that God would establish.

1. Read the following passages in the book of Daniel. What does each passage expect will happen?

Daniel 2:44

Daniel 7:13-14

Daniel 7:17-18, 26-27

Daniel 12:1-4



2. How does this kingdom meet the longings of humanity?

3. Read the following verses. When was the kingdom of God expected?

Daniel 12:1-4; 8-9; 13

Mark 1:14-15

Matthew 12:28

The Old Testament scriptures “promised a future when all the troubles of life – in particular, political enemies and the sinful behaviour of the people – would be done away with. Then God’s people would rule forever in a glorious kingdom in which God himself would have an undefiled and open relationship with his people.

It was all something far off, distant, at the end of time. Most of the Old Testament prophecies were vague about the timing; it would happen ‘on that day’ [the day of judgment] or ‘at the end’. It was certain but it was not yet.

As a prophet, it would not have been at all unusual for Jesus to preach about God’s kingdom. His preaching, however, had a dramatic twist – he said the kingdom was near! The long wait was over. The time was suddenly accelerating, and the climax was approaching. If the kingdom was so near, what would it be like? And how was it going to arrive?” (Peter Bolt & Tony Payne, *News of the Hour, Mark’s Gospel*, Matthias Media, p29-30)



4. **Read Mark 4:1-20.** Jesus has been preaching the 'good news of the kingdom' [Mk.1:14-15]. What does the parable say about the potential responses to the announcement of this news? Discuss how you have seen these responses in real life.

5. **Read Mark 4:21-22.** What does this parable lead you to expect about the kingdom? What does it say about Jesus' ministry?

6. **Read Mark 4:24-25.** What is the promise and the warning of these verses?

7. **Read Mark 4:26-29.** What does this parable lead you to expect? What does it say about the kingdom?

8. **Read Mark 4:30-32.** What does this parable lead you to expect about the kingdom?



“The tree’ image is used in other places in the Bible to stand for a kingdom. In Daniel 4:9-12 and 19-22, a tree is a symbol of a kingdom that exercises world dominion (see also Ezek. 17:22-24). It is a tree that spreads its branches over all. In Mark 4, the largeness of the plant that grows from the mustard seed points to the worldwide spread of the kingdom. As the Old Testament expected, the kingdom of God would involve all kinds of people and not just in Israel – all the nations of the world would be included.’ (Peter Bolt & Tony Payne, News of the Hour, Mark’s Gospel, Matthias Media, p31)

9. Why will some not listen to the message of the kingdom? What is it that they don’t like about it? Is anything keeping you from the kingdom?

Prayer:

That men and women would receive the message of the kingdom, live for king and kingdom and be prepared for the consummation of the kingdom when Christ returns.



Study 6:

THE SHEPHERD KING

Introduction

Human leaders, whether political, religious or social have a sad history of corruption, failure, neglect and self-interest. Israel's leaders in the Old Testament and in Jesus' time were no different. They failed to properly shepherd God's people.

When have you been disappointed by the failure of leaders or your own leadership?

What characteristics do you look for in a leader you can trust?

1. In Mark 4:35- 5:43, we witness Jesus as a powerful loving shepherd. He calms a storm, he drives out demons, he heals a sick woman and he raises a young girl from the dead. What most impresses you about King Jesus in these passages? Why can you trust him?

Immediately following these demonstrations of Jesus' compassion, strength and authority we have passages that tell us about Israel's official leadership – first Herod (6:14-29) and then the Pharisees (7:1-16). And sandwiched between these two passages we again see the power and compassion of Jesus, the true and faithful Shepherd of Israel (6:30-57). The book of Ezekiel highlights the failure of Israel's shepherds and prophesies the coming of the good shepherd.



2. Read Ezekiel 34:1-6

What should the shepherds of Israel have been doing?

What were they doing instead?

What had happened to the sheep because of the failure of the shepherds?

3. Read Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

What did God promise to do for his flock?

Whom would he send?

How do you see Jesus fulfilling this promise?



4. Read Mark 6:14-29

What kind of man was Herod? What are his strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

This flashback to the execution of John the Baptist interrupts the account of Jesus' sending out the Twelve to preach and heal. Why do you suppose Mark recounts it here besides an example of failed leadership?

What happened to John when he preached a message of repentance?

What eventually happened to Jesus?

What then can his followers expect?

5. Skim read Mark 6:30-44. What phrase in this passage reminds us of Ezekiel 34? What should this miracle reveal to the disciples about the identity of Jesus?



6. How is Jesus contrasted with Herod? What does Jesus do that Herod doesn't do?

7. Read Mark 7:1-23.

What problem does Jesus expose in Israel's leaders? See especially vv. 6-8.

What sorts of traditions do we observe today that get in the way of really honouring God?

How does Jesus' view of becoming 'unclean' differ from that of the Pharisees? (vv.14-23)

In what ways do we sometimes emphasize appearance over internal reality?



In Ezekiel 34, God promised to come to his people, to search for the lost, to gather the strays, and to feed them. He also promised to send another 'David', another great shepherd-king who would care for his people. Jesus is here clearly portrayed as God's alternative to the corrupt leadership of Israel. He is the one who has compassion on the scattered sheep.

8. What makes Jesus a leader worth following?

9. What is the proper response to him?

Prayer:

That you would trust in this Shepherd King and seek to live in holy and joyful obedience to him. Pray that Christian leaders would imitate him in showing love and compassion to the sheep.

Further Reading

King's Cross, Timothy Keller (Chapters 5-8, pp.49-94)



Study 7:

FOLLOWING THE GLORIOUS KING

Introduction

Mark 8 is like a pivot point in the gospel of Mark. Peter announced, 'you are the Messiah' (Mark 8:29), 'you are *the* King'. Now that this has been announced, what it means to live for this King and his kingdom becomes more explicit. But, Jesus wasn't the King Peter had expected and he wasn't going to lead in the way he anticipated. As Keller puts it, Jesus has said:

'I'm a King, but a King going to a cross' and 'if you want to follow me, you've got to come to the cross too.' (King's Cross, Timothy Keller p.95)

I have a set of speakers at home, sometimes the cable falls out and I can only hear the music coming from the left or right speaker; what I'm meant to be hearing in stereo I'm not hearing correctly. Sometimes my kids play with the dial and turn it toward the left or the right speaker; so again, what I'm hearing is either over or under-emphasized. The transfiguration and the subsequent story help us to keep the glory and suffering of Jesus in stereo – not overemphasizing one at the expense of the other.

1. What are you more attuned to? Is your 'stereo' set to emphasize the glory or suffering of our King Jesus?
2. How might an overemphasis of one or the other play out in our lives?
3. **Read Mark 9:2-8.** Describe what is happening here, particularly focus on Jesus; what happens to him, what does God say about him and what does this represent? Read Hebrews 1:3 to help.



4. In v.4, Moses and Elijah 'appeared' and then in v.8 they no longer saw anyone 'except Jesus.' Why is it so significant that Moses and Elijah are present and then disappear, leaving only Jesus?

5. **Read Mark 9:9-12.** God has just shown Jesus to be the glorious King who will reign forever and then told them to listen to him! What are his very next words and how do they ensure that his cross and suffering are in view?

6. Jesus is the glorious king who suffered on his way to glory. His people will follow in his way. How can we be quick to focus on the splendid glory and forget the suffering glory of our King and his people?

Most of us, if given the choice, would choose the glorious mountain over the suffering hill, every time. Imagine, basking in the wonder and the glory upon the mountain with Jesus, Moses and Elijah – as a Jew, doesn't get much better. But, Jesus came down into the valley – a valley that has a shadow of death looming and desperate disciples struggling and failing.



7. **Read Mark 9:17-26.** How is 'the valley' a stark contrast to what has just happened on 'the mountain'?

8. How do you resonate with the father's cry?
What is comforting and confronting about Jesus initial response to the fathers unbelief? (v.22b-23)

9. **Read Mark 9:27-29.** Jesus raises the boy to life! But there is a lesson here for the disciples. What is the lesson?

*There is a note on v.29 some manuscripts have Jesus response being 'prayer *and fasting*' further describing a dependence upon his power. You might want to think about/discuss fasting as a Christian discipline and practice too.

10. It seemed the disciples had forgotten what is required for effective kingdom life and ministry. How do we fall into a personal or patterned dependence rather than faithful prayer driven dependence on Jesus?



We are more like the disciples in the valley than Peter, James and John on the mountain. But, we know the glorious king and the glorious kingdom to come! Given our passage today our application should be to spend time in deep prayer together.

Prayer:

Take time to pray using the **ACTs** model. This should help you apply the 'stereo' view and give opportunity to cry out for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done.

Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving

Focus on Jesus being the glorious and suffering King, remembering both his splendid glory and his suffering glory.

Supplication

Seek to pray with the right attitude, one completely dependent on God. Ask him for what you and others need. Come before him like the father in the story *but* with the knowledge of who you've just proclaimed him to be.

Further Reading

King's Cross, Timothy Keller (Chapters 9-10, pp.95-122)



Study 8:

GREATNESS IN THE KINGDOM

Introduction

How does our society define leadership and greatness?

Name a leader that you have found inspirational? What made them stand out for you?

1. **Read Mark 10: 32-34.** In this section Jesus predicts his death for a third time. Given that he is the shepherd King who came from heaven what does his imminent suffering and death teach us about authentic leadership and greatness? (see also Phil.2:1-11)
2. **Read Mark 10:35-45.** Given what Jesus has just said in vv.32-34, what is ironic about James and John's request in vv.35-37?

What seems to motivate James and John's request?

Why do you think they go about asking the way they do?



3. What does Jesus mean by the cup he is to drink and the baptism he is to be baptised with in vv.38-39?

4. How does Jesus' response to the two apostles in vv.39-40 say about their future?

5. When the other ten apostles hear about this status request from James and John, they become indignant with them. What does this show about their own hopes and aspirations?

Power battles between leaders often lead to disharmony, division and frustration.

Where have you seen this type of conflict disrupt God's good work?

What can you do to promote unity and humility in such situations?



6. In vv.41-45 Jesus calls the Twelve together and gives them clear instructions on authentic Christian leadership. What are the key things he says?

How is his life an example to imitate?

How can your life better confirm to Jesus' view of greatness?

7. Leadership is costly.
How have others paid the cost to bless you?

What has it cost you to serve others?

Why is it worth it?

8. We are all blessed with gifts and talents even if it is not leadership.
Where will you serve God in 2020? What are you trusting God to do in these ministries?



Prayer:

That we would be humble servants of Christ and his people recognising that greatness in the kingdom is found through serving.

Further Reading

King's Cross, Timothy Keller (Chapters 11-12, pp.123-152)



Additional Notes:



