

## Sermon Transcript from March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Jesus: The King Comes with His Kingdom Pastor Alex Rettmann, Bridgetown Church

So, like Gerald said, we're in the middle of this Year of Biblical Literacy. We're taking the entire year to try to become Biblically literate people. We want to know what the Scriptures are about; we want to know how they impact our lives. And, within this year, we've been doing these mini-series' to help you understand what the Bible is all about. So, currently, we're about halfway through a mini-series on the story of the Bible. We believe that the Bible tells one really long but united story, and we want you to know what it is. So, when we opened up the series, Josh Porter, if you remember, talked about the Kingdom beginning. That God creates this Kingdom and He dwells there with people. He gives humans a job to create culture within this Kingdom.

Then John Mark followed that up with talking about the fall. That the Kingdom, or, at this point, Adam and Eve, would rather have human autonomy than relationship with their Creator. The Kingdom rebels against the King. Chapter 3 of the story is the story of Israel, and Dave Lomas did a great job last week talking about how God does not just put His creation at arms length, but He actually wants to use His creation to redeem His creation. So, He invites Israel into the story and the Kingdom begins again.

So, this week, the next chapter in that story is "The King Brings the Kingdom." So, tonight, we're going to talk about Jesus. So, Gospel of Mark 1:14 says this, **"After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'"**

In political science – and maybe if you've studied this before you know about this theory – there's kind of this theory that there is a hard world and there is a soft world. These are very different from each other. Most of us, when we grew up as kids, we lived in what would be called the soft world, because the adults around us and in our lives programmed our world to appear friendly and kind. I think of my wife who is a nanny. She nannies these three boys. And I'll ask her, "Okay, so what did you do today? Tell me about your day?"

And she's like, "Well, we went to the zoo and, after hanging out at the zoo for a little while, we went and we got hot chocolate. And then, after getting hot chocolate, we went to the children's museum."

I'm like, "Wait, you went to two in one day?"

Now, I have heard it that it has been done by some very rare form of nanny out there: the trifecta. The zoo, the children's museum and OMSI. It's happened. I've heard of it. Yeah. So, my wife's entire job, she exists to her employer to make the world for these boys appear friendly, kind and, most importantly, fun. Her whole job, she gets a paycheck to make sure that these boys have a good day. But, at some point, all of us – and many of you guys are in the middle of this. This happens normally around 18-25 years old. We transfer from the soft world into the hard world.

I have a story about Airbnb. I'm going to share it. If you were here last week, Airbnb is getting the worst name at this church, and my apologies to them, but it's tough. So, when my wife and I booked our honeymoon a couple years back, we book our honeymoon and we think, "Airbnb in Bali. Yes. That's going to be awesome. We're adventurers. We're totally hip. We're young."

The problem is all of y'all who are like, you know, "hashtag adventure," that's just not me. I don't want to do that. I'd rather read a book or watch a movie or I'll go on a walk in Washington Park and I'm like, "That was an adventure."

So, we show up in Bali like 16 hours of flying later and we get to our house and – we didn't know this because Airbnb doesn't say, "Oh, by the way, it comes with this nice Hindu temple next door." There's a Hindu temple next door. And it wouldn't be that big of a deal. Like, it's not too big of a deal. Except for the fact that we had an actual demonic encounter like three nights in. So, I'll never forget. Like, this is our honeymoon. We're like three nights into marriage and there's a demon shaking the doors and banging on the doors. I wake up and it's like 3am and I'm like, [gasping], this is the most scared I have ever been in my entire life and I'm like, "I

am in Bali. I am responsible for this woman."

If it was a bunch of my guys, we could take this dude on who's out there, but this is my wife and she's scrappy, but – she is, actually, incredibly scrappy. So, I'm terrified. No only that, there's cockroaches everywhere that are like singing us to sleep. The sheets are wet. The air conditioner is kind of broken. You know, at some point you transfer into this world where you go, "This is the world that I live in."

In my news app this week, I was looking through it. Here's just some headlines from the news this week:

Osama bin Laden's will was released Tuesday to the tune of 29 million dollars, all of which he asked in his will to be used for jihad. The EPA is, yet again, trying to pull another pesticide from the market. Refugees in New York say that the school district is blocking them from going to school.

Welcome to the U.S.

And the U.N. is going to vote on new sanctions against North Korea. All of these things in our world are happening within the context of a nation trying to decide who's going to lead us within the presidential race. We live, as human beings, in the hard world. And, commonly, when people find themselves in that hard world, especially when it's chaotic, they long for a strong leader. Give us someone who can lead us through the muck. Someone who's unwavering in their dedication to a direction. We want strength.

And this isn't a new desire. This is actually something that's deep and ancient. Dave did a great job last week talking about how the primary theme in the story of Israel was that they were to receive the blessing of Yahweh and that they were to give that blessing away. And, before Israel had a king, they had men. The ones that you're reading about right now in the Bible. Like Moses and Joshua, who would lead, but ultimately they were led by Yahweh.

But, if you know the story of Israel, they don't want to live like this. At one point, they even reject God as their King and they ask for a human ruler; a strong leader. And it's not too hard to blame them to be honest. You know? They've gone from exile to freedom to another exile. We don't really understand that word "exile." It would be like going from slavery to you're liberated and you're free to, "Sorry, you're enslaved again."

It would be exhausting. As we get closer in history to the time of Jesus, they're released from their latest captivity from the Babylonians. As you can imagine, some of them begin making their way back to their desolate and ruined city, Jerusalem. And the only modern image that might come close to capturing what the state of Israel was like right before the time of Jesus is that of a refugee family. Many families in Israel could have looked something like this. These are Syrian refugees. The photo was probably taken within the last couple years. I want you to just pause for a moment and I want you to think about what the stories of these people could be. The people that they've lost, the friends and family that they've seen killed or starved to death. The home that they left behind that's probably broken down. The bank account that's drained. The economy that just isn't there anymore. This is their reality.

Sometimes, when we see a photo or we read stories in the Bible, we fail to realize that these people are the same as us. They, too, are filled with passions. They, too, are filled with desires, with fears and with hopes. So, you can imagine this intense tension in which the people of Israel are living in. Their world has proven to be incredibly hard and they want a strong leader. They want a champion. Someone who will lead the charge against their newest oppressors, the Romans.

And, lo and behold, here comes Jesus. Right? He comes onto the scene and what does He say? "The time has come. The Kingdom of God has come near."

Can you imagine what that would feel hearing that? The Kingdom is coming back. Repent and believe the good news. Now, immediately, if you were an Israelite, you would think of Daniel 2, because Daniel 2 is that prophetic moment that they say there's a Messiah who's coming for you. He's going to restore the kingdom of Israel. He's going to get rid of the bad guys. So you think, "The kingdom is coming."

But then Jesus says, "Repent." And who is He saying repent to? Not the bad guys. Not the Romans. He's saying it to the Israelites. Repent. What? In Jesus, God is not stomping

the bad guys so Israel can live well. He's calling Israel to repent and to join in the kingdom project. So, what does this mean? Well, firstly, I think that the message of Jesus when He says, "The Kingdom of God has come, repent and believe the good news," I think firstly is that there's a new way to live. Another way to translate "repent and believe" is "give up your agenda and trust me for mine."

So, Jesus spends the bulk of His time with humanity showing us His agenda. And what is He doing? He's calling Israel to repent, to reconnect with their creator, to live into the covenant. He's healing people. We have stories of Him actually healing people. He's forgiving people and saying, "Your sins are no more. You're free."

And, for a people who are longing for a kingdom, He's sharing subversive stories about the kingdom, showing them just how different it is than the one that they currently live in. He says things like this: "The Kingdom of God is like getting a day's wage for only an hour of work. The Kingdom of God is like finding buried treasure in a field that everybody has forgotten. The Kingdom of God is like a camel climbing through the eye of a needle; it seems impossible, but with God it's possible. The Kingdom is here. It's in your midst. But, it's also coming."

These metaphors, these stories, are little shimmering windows that show us what we never thought possible in our world. Forgiveness, blessing, placing value on those who are deemed worthless and getting our motives purified. One of my favorite poets, if not my favorite poet, Christian Wiman, says this:

"Christ speaks in stories as a way of preparing His followers to stake their lives on a story. Because existence is not a puzzle to be solved, but a narrative to be inherited and undergone and transformed, person by person."

These stories, they're not just niceties, they're a way of planting an entirely new culture on earth. They're the seminal refrains that will change reality forever. Jesus' agenda is one that changes the heart, it changes your body, your physicality. It's a renovation of humanity that finds its root in returning humanity back to covenant with the Creator.

Now, we get that and we see the Kingdom and we talk a lot about this at this church about the Kingdom of God. And, to be honest, it's all super nice. The Kingdom sounds great. It makes a ton of sense. It's awesome. But, hang on. Just because you tell stories about something, does that make it come true? For the Kingdom to take root, there must be a King.

So, secondly, I think what Jesus is saying is there's a new way to live and that Jesus is the King over this Kingdom. You see, the world cannot simply be changed by a new teaching and Jesus knows this. So, instead of going after the Romans, instead of gathering the Israelites to Him and saying, "Alright. Here's our new warfare strategy. If you flank that way and you cut that way..." – He doesn't do any of that. We never see Him doing that. Jesus goes after what is really stepping on humanity's throat. Sin, death and the king of this world, Satan.

For a kingdom of forgiveness to begin, the brokenness of humanity has to be dealt with and the king of this world must be disposed of. This is what we have seen from the beginning and you all remember this. Remember Genesis 3? What happens in Genesis 3? Adam and Eve. What do they choose? "We would rather have autonomy. We would rather decide what is good and what is evil than have relationship with you."

They sin against God. That's the core of their sin. They sin against Him. And what does God do? He doesn't go, "Oh my gosh. I am so offended by the way that you have behaved. You have broken my good creation. You've ruined everything."

No. He comes near and He whispers these prophetic words over them. He says, "One day, though you have found yourself in the situation you're in, one day there will be a man who is bruised by the enemy, who's wounded by the enemy, but He will crush the head of the serpent and begin to reverse the curse forever."

And this is the problem that Jews have with Jesus, is it not? See, every good Israelite, they know anyone who hangs on a cross is cursed by God. It says so in the Torah. Like, case closed. They look at Jesus. "He was hanged on a cross. He must be cursed by

God."

But, what they never understood, what they could just never imagine was just how far their God was willing to go for them. Jesus' message to us is that He has become a curse, that we might be a blessing. Restoring us to the calling that God has had on humanity since His conversation with Abraham in Genesis 12. Now, normally, Jesus is a King, you know, and normally, at a king's coronation, a herald will proclaim who this man is, why he's great, he'll sit upon some exalted throne and a crown will be placed on his head. I want to show you a photo. This is the coronation of Napoleon. I want to point a couple of things out to you. You can see there's this woman who's kneeling on the steps, and we can imagine she's probably either the wife of Napoleon or some romantic interest. She's showing how this guy's great. "I give my life to this guy."

Then you see this guy in the back. He's got this grey hat and he's got this scepter, right? He's kind of right there. He's in gold. We can imagine that's probably the pope, I would imagine, who is agreeing and saying, "This is very good." And where's Napoleon? He's right there. And who's crowning Napoleon? Himself. Napoleon crowns himself. Historically, we know that Napoleon crowned himself. Take that in. Now, how different is Jesus? I want to show you another photo. This is a painting of Jesus and there is no honor, there's a crown of thorns. Insults and spit instead of praise, and a cross instead of a throne. And yet, the great irony of all of this is that Jesus Himself said this: "If the Son of Man be lifted up, He will draw all people to Himself."

That is why the coronation of Jesus as king over all the world is paradoxically His exaltation on the cross. Jesus becomes a King, not in the self-absorbed way of Napoleon, but because He's the only one who's willing to give everything to break the curse of Satan and employ us into the kingdom of blessing. Now, obviously, if you know the story of Israel, they reject this wounded healer. They reject Jesus. The idea of a king who dies, it never crossed the minds of the Israelites. A problem for an Israelite is that they just simply don't want to forgive. They just simply don't need stories. They don't want parables, and they certainly don't want a king who isn't going to fight Rome.

In one of the most profoundly ironic moments in the Gospel, we find out that they would rather have this terrorist named Barabbas released to them instead of Jesus. Because at least he's willing to do something against the oppressors. But, to be honest, I don't think that we can simply point, as we sit here thousands of years later and you open up these stories and we read about them, we can't, as 21st century people, just point the finger at Israel and say, "Oh, they got it so wrong." Because, in a sense, I think that we choose ourselves over Jesus all the time when our lives are filled with any level of uncertainty. When we lose trust in Jesus, we simply elect a new king over our lives with the hopes that maybe this new kingdom, we'll enjoy it a little bit more than Jesus' Kingdom.

It could be a job offer that's going to release you from the horrors of your current workplace. A new kingdom. Or a political party or a candidate who's finally going to get it right. America is going to get right again. It could be a pastor or a new church who you finally think, "Oh, finally I'm going to go to this place and they're going to really take care of me, because that last place? They didn't get it."

That's not going to be Bridgetown. Sorry guys. Or a new love interest, right? Someone who promises fidelity, unlike the last guy. The danger is that we, too, will miss Jesus and His Kingdom if we have the wrong idea of who the Kingdom should be and what the Kingdom should be like. So, I think the question for us tonight is, "How do we receive the King and His Kingdom?"

How do we receive the King and His Kingdom? So, two thoughts tonight. Two takeaways tonight. First is this: we reject any other king but Jesus. We actively reject any other king but Jesus. If you know me well, chances are pretty good that, in our conversations that we've had, Kurt Vonnegut has probably been brought up at least like one time. I love Kurt Vonnegut and, if you haven't read Kurt Vonnegut, you totally should. He's vulgar, he's rude, he's crass, he's funny and he just tells the truth. He tells the truth so well. And, here's a quote I love by him. He says this:

"Some of you may know that I'm neither Christian nor Jewish nor Buddhist nor a conventionally religious person of any sort. I am a humanist, which means, in part, that I've tried to behave decently without any expectation of rewards or punishments after I'm dead. I, myself, have written, 'If it weren't for the message of mercy and pity in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, I wouldn't want to be a human being. I would just as soon be a rattlesnake.'"

Alright. I love that guy. But, he illustrates so – he talks about rattlesnakes a lot, if you ever read his books, actually. He just illustrates so perfectly this idea that we can have the teachings of Jesus without His Lordship. Because, if Jesus is simply a teacher, we can take or leave whatever He says and we get to be king. We can take it or leave it. We love to call the shots. We love to decide where we're going to go, who we're going to go with, what we're going to buy and everything else. The dominate metaphor for the way that all of us in this room – whether you know it or not – for the way in which we see our lives is that of a project or projects. Project me. I want to purchase these jeans because of the way that they're going to make my project look. I want to play this sport because of what it says about me. I want to date this person because they're attractive and funny and, as I continue to build myself, I'm going to need somebody like that at my side. I want to drive this car or live in this neighborhood because, in the end, it's all about building project me.

And it's hard because, if you've been around the church for any length of time, you've probably seen how the Gospel that we often preach with our lives as Christians is one that says, "Jesus came to help your project."

We think, you know, when we talk about the prosperity gospel, we think that it's something that is preached by people on TV, not by us. But I think we need to check ourselves. Mark Sayers, he says this:

"We subtly imbibe the implicit prosperity gospel through consumerism and advertising."

I think we call get that.

"But, also through viewing the lives of other Christians who seem to lead amazing, meaningful, pleasure-filled lives. We only have to scroll through our Instagram feeds to find pastors, believing musicians, artists, authors and activists who seem to live incredible lives. These people seem to have the best of both worlds. They follow Jesus and get to travel, live in cool neighborhoods, hang with really interesting people and have an incredible marriage or rock the single life and connect with the most amazing people. We do not recognize the way in which the implicit prosperity gospel affects us until our unspoken expectations are not met. We understand that God would ask people in the two-thirds world to give up things, but our heresy hidden under the surface is our belief that God would not ask me to deny myself."

That sums up our church. That is the way in which all of us live. We say, "Oh, you should follow Jesus." But, in reality, what are we just doing? "You should follow Jesus. It's awesome. Look what it affords us."

But, if Jesus is king, then Jesus asks everyone to do the exact same thing. To rid ourselves of project me. To dump it. To get rid of it. Here's how it's going for me. I feel like I share something along these lines every time I preach and this dude one time came up to me after preaching and he said, "Hey, listen. If you want to be a better preacher, you're going to need some better stories."

I'm like, "Okay. Alright, bud. Thanks. Looking forward to your sermon next week."

But, I don't know. I wrestle with this. It's probably because I'm 25 and I'm young, but I really care what people think about me. Look, I'm saying this to a room full of people, you dress the way – look at how you're dressed. You care what people think about you, too. But, you know, I really do care what people think about me and it's one of those things that I'm just wrestling with because I feel like this is what God is telling me. He's saying, "Alex, you can't put people's opinions of you higher than my opinion of you. You just can't do that. Because, when you do that, what you're in effect doing is you're taking me off the throne and you're saying that these people matter more to you than I do. My opinion of you has to matter more. And I see you as a son, and there's nothing that you could do that would give you a better position in my house. You're my son and I love you."

And yet, time and time again, I wake up and I go, "Oh, I hope this person likes me. I hope they're not mad at me." I don't know. Maybe you've been there. I wrestle with this. In a church with this many people, when I stand up here, I don't know more than half of you, and you have an opinion formed about me and, you know what? Sometimes I go home and I go to sleep and I go, "I bet there's somebody at that church who doesn't like me. There's probably someone."

You know, this is my deep issues. I'm bringing these before the Lord because you know what He says? He says, "I have to be king over your life and when you let other people

be king over your life or you become the king over your life, I don't get to be."

There is only room for one king, and we must, as followers of Jesus, reject the desire to be like Napoleon. We will not crown ourselves. And that is an active thing that we participate in. Secondly, we join the project of the kingdom. We join the project of the kingdom. The truth is that making Jesus your King, when you do that, it will not bring you back into the soft world. Instead, Jesus will teach you how to live redemptively in the world that you have. So, how do we live? How should we live? What do we learn from Jesus? Well, I think firstly we model our lives after Rabbi Jesus. We become His disciples.

One of my favorite quotes about the brokenness of this world comes from a philosopher named Cornelius Plantinga. He says this:

"All shots are return fire."

The idea that he's getting at is that it is incredibly difficult to find out who hit who first and who swore at who first and who shot first. Humanity lives in this perpetual cycle of hitting back. About a year ago, I went to Israel with Bethany and with Gerald. It was awesome. But, we went with this conservative lobbyist group from Washington D.C., and their whole goal was like, "Hey, guys. Israel is awesome. They're the best. Check out Israel. Eat their food. Enjoy their culture. And, you know what? Israel's lives would be a lot better if it wasn't for those pesky Palestinians. You know, they're always doing weird things and they're always ruining things. So, gosh, you know? You guys, when you go home, you should vote in ways that are pro-Israel."

So I was like, we got this early on in the trip. We're like, "Huh?"

Because, when you go to Israel, I remember having lunch with a couple of Palestinian guys and having lunch with some Israeli guys, and here's what you get: "Well, we hate them because they own our water supply and they own our electricity. We hate them because they come over here on busses and they blow up our kids. We hate them because they come and they pull people out of their beds and they arrest them and we don't see them again. We hate them because they're constantly launching bombs at us."

Back and forth, back and forth. And everybody wants to have an opinion. Israel or Palestine? "Oh, you love Israel? How could any liberal-minded person who actually cares about humanity love Israel?"

"Oh, you love Palestine? Do you not realize that they're all terrorists?"

And here's the reality: all shots are return fire. There's a perpetual cycle of hitting back. But, for us to be members of the Kingdom of God, we must live like Him. And on the cross we see our King would rather be hit and forgive than to get back at someone. He would rather overcome evil with good. Because, when that happens, the cycle breaks. When someone forgives, the cycle breaks. So, as disciples to a rabbi, we mimic Christ in overcoming evil with good. This is the engine of the Kingdom of God. This is how it actually works. This is how it actually goes.

I want to show you guys a picture. Some of you right off the bat know who that is, and some of you are probably angry that I'm even showing his picture in a church. Some of you don't know who this is or you need your memory jogged. About a year ago – this is Dylan Roof – he walked into a church in Charleston, South Carolina, primarily a black church, and he sat down with them while they prayed, while they read from the Scriptures and, after a period of time, he pulled out a gun and he shot them and he killed many of them.

It's just horrific. Later on, we go to find that he is a proclaimed white supremacist and, what is wrong in the world in his mind, is people who are black. Roxanne Gay, who is a New York Times columnist, she wrote this piece for the New York Times called, "Why I can't forgive Dylann Roof."

This is what she says in it. She says, "My lack of forgiveness serves as a reminder that there are some acts that are so terrible we should recognize them as such. We should recognize them as beyond forgiving."

Probably a sentiment that was shared by many. But, I don't know if you know this, the way that the story actually played out. But, the families of the slain actually went and visited him in prison. They said, "No. We want to meet him."



They go to this prison, they visit with him, and this is what they say:

One of them said, "I will never be able to hold her again, but I forgive you," a daughter of one victim said.

"We have no room for hating, so we have to forgive," said the sister of another.

"I pray God on your soul."

That is chilling. Why is that chilling? Why do you feel the way that you do right now? That is the feeling that you get when you see the Kingdom of God actually work. Now, some of you may say, "Oh my gosh. How impractical. How unrealistic. How could you do that? They must have just been doing that for publicity. Like, I agree with the first lady. I agree with Roxanne."

And your alarm is appropriate. If you are not alarmed when you take a hard look at Jesus and His demands on your life, then you must not be taking Him seriously. See, the only way that we can actually forgive, that we can break the cycle, that we can give our lives back to the will of God is because our King, ultimately what He promises us, is mending. It's mending. That one day God will judge what is wrong in this world in finality and He will restore what has been marred.

Paul reflects on this in 1 Corinthians. He says, **"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."**

There's more to come.

**"For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."**

Another one of my favorite authors, Francis Spufford, he says this:

"I don't care about heaven. I want, I need the promise of mending. 'Mended' is not the same thing as 'never broken.' We're not being promised that it will be as if the bad stuff never happened. It's amnesty that's being offered, not amnesia. Hope, not pretense."

The absolute most amazing part of the story of Jesus is that He promises us what no prophet, no religion, no god has ever dared to promise before: that all will be made right. That all of this that we're living in, this incredibly hard world, that it will be mended. We won't escape the world as though we're leaving some elementary step in humanity's eternal journey as we get onto our celestial kingdom. No, mm mm. That is not the story of the Scriptures. Jesus is coming back to judge and He's coming back to mend the world that we have.

Reflecting on the hard world and what the Kingdom of God does to is, this Eastern Orthodox theologian named David Bentley Hart, this is what he says. It's a long quote, but I'd really encourage you to pay attention.

"As for comfort, when we seek it, I can imagine none greater than the happy knowledge that when I see the death of a child I do not see the face of God, but the face of His enemy. It is not a faith that would necessarily satisfy everyone, but neither is it one in which arguments can defeat: for it has set us free from optimism, and taught us hope instead. We can rejoice that we are saved not through the immanent mechanisms of history and nature, but by grace; that God will not unite all of history's many strands into one great synthesis, but will judge much of history false and damnable; that He will not simply reveal the sublime logic of fallen nature, but will strike off the fetters in which creation languishes; and that, rather than showing us how the tears of a small girl suffering in the dark were necessary for the building of the Kingdom, He will instead raise her up and wipe away all tears from her eyes—and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, for the former things will have passed away, and He that sits upon the throne will say, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

There's a story in the book of Joshua that maybe you read this morning about Achan. As read this story about Achan, it's a sad story. I mean, this guy, obviously enticed by the treasure of Jericho, steals it. When God said to put it in His temple, he takes it for himself

out of personal gain. And, when he's found it, you know, he fully confesses. I was thinking about Achan, man. He fully confesses. He says, "This is my sin, this is what I've done. I've disobeyed Yahweh."

He knows what he's done. But, God is a judge and God judges this man and He says, "No. Stone him and burn him to death. Him and his family."

So, they take him to this place called the Valley of Achor; the Valley of Trouble is what that translates to. And they kill him for what he did. There's a lot of stories in the Old Testament like that that are disturbing. But, what we have witnessed tonight in Jesus is that that judge who judged Achan, He has not remained simply a judge, but He has also become the justifier. He is the one who is willing to get His hands dirty, to enter into our story, to take on the baggage, to live in the hard world, to become a curse that we might be a blessing. He takes within Himself the penalty that we are due that we might be a blessing and members of His Kingdom.

Do you see the love? Do you see this God? So, the question I think that stands before each of you tonight is, "What part of 'project me' do you need to get rid of?"

Where is 'project me' still playing into your life? Where are you still on the throne? Secondly, what part of the project of the Kingdom of God do you need to take up? Have you embraced the King and His forgiveness and His love for you? Maybe you're sitting here and you haven't. Man, it is forgiveness that is offered to you. It is Him taking on penalty that you might be free. That's what's offered.

Have you repented and believed? You know, this is one of those things. We think that we repent and then we believe and then we're in the Kingdom. But no. Life in the Kingdom is a continual repenting and believing. Me repenting of – God, I repent that I value other people's opinion more than Yours and I believe that You matter more and that You are my King. It's continual. But I think one really practical way to end is by just simply asking the question: who do you need to forgive tonight?

You have been forgiven, you have been pardoned. Who do you need to forgive? Right now there's a face that's coming into your mind. Right now. There's someone. There's a name. It could've been somebody that you're like, "I thought I already forgave them."

Forgiveness is this thing that practice it. Every day I wake up, I'm choosing to forgive that person. Who do you need to forgive? Let's go ahead and stand together. The worship team's going to come up. We're just going to take – I believe that God's been speaking to you throughout this message as we open the Scriptures and you talk about His Son, Jesus, through all of this. But, as we ask those questions, what part of your project do you need to drop? What part of His project do you need to pick up? Who do you need to forgive? Have you really realized the grace that God has for you? Are you living in that? That He would rather have pain afflicted to Him than to you?

I just want to create some space for a moment just to be quiet. So, let's do that. You can sit if you want to. You can hold your hands open. You can do whatever you need to do. But, we're just going to be quiet for a little bit. Holy Spirit, I just ask that You would speak to us.