

King

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Preacher: Jonathan Smith

- [0 : 0 0] Now please stand up. Now please take a seat. Now you can stand up. No, I'm kidding. How does it feel?
- How does it feel to have someone like me, some young upstart, standing up about 10 feet above you, telling you to stand up and sit down and expecting you to obey? It's annoying, isn't it?
- If you're like me, you feel like doing the opposite of whatever I tell you to do. You're a contrarian if you're anything like me. And in fact, just by virtue of being Australian, you've got a measure of the contrarian in you.
- Even the most militant monarchist in Australia has a problem with authority. I was reading a book the other day about Australian culture, mapping the history of white Australia and just the profound sense of anti-authoritarianism.
- Anti-authoritarianism. You can write that down. I didn't. That we have in this country. In contrast to our brothers and sisters in England and in the US, we have a problem with authority.
- [1 : 1 6] So today, when the big idea is Jesus as King, Jesus as authority over all things and all peoples, when the big idea is that Jesus created all things for himself, you might prickle.
- You might push back. You might want to rebel. So we need to pray and ask that God would soften our hearts to hear his word.
- Let's do that. Dear Father in heaven, thank you so much for your word. Without it, we'd be lost. Without it, we would be rebelling. Without it, we would be building our own kingdoms for our own glory.
- And so I pray now that you would align us with your word, align our hearts with your heart. I pray that we would leave here less concerned about ourselves, our comforts, our kingdoms, and more zealous to live for the kingdom of Jesus.
- I pray it in his name. Amen. We've got a lot to do. It's a big passage. There's so much in it. So I want you to pick up your Bible. If you've put it down, go to Colossians chapter one, and we're going to start at verse three to six.
- [2 : 2 8] I'll read it for us. See what God says. It says, Paul says, in our prayers for you, we always thank God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.
- You have heard of this hope before in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you, just as is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world. So it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.
- A bit of context for this. In Colossae, Paul had established a church and it was doing okay, but he's writing to them now with Timothy by his side, encouraging them because they're like so many of the early churches.

There had been some false teachers who had infiltrated that church. They were trying to add things to the gospel, trying to add rules and regulations, trying to elevate spirits and angels up to the level of Jesus' authority.

And so Paul's writing to encourage those who are standing firm in the faith. And what he does here in the opening verses is mark out three things that are clear marks of genuine Christianity.

[3 : 51] Wherever you go in the world and wherever there has been churches in history, these three things mark out genuine Christians. These three things are faith, love and hope.

Paul talks about them in 1 Corinthians 13, 13. He says, these three remain, faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love. Three things that mark out true Christians everywhere.

Faith, love and hope. Verse 4, he says, we have heard of your faith. Your faith in Christ Jesus. We've heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints.

Faith in Christ, love for the saints. And verse 5, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Faith in Jesus Christ, love for the saints, hope in eternal life.

Three things that mark out Christians of every stripe in every nation. And so he sees this in a church that's starting to drift a little bit and he wants to encourage it.

[5 : 05] He's heard of their faith, their hope and their love and he thanks God for it. So that's Paul's context. My context is exactly the same.

I look out on a church that is under threat. The church around the world is under threat from false teaching and weird theology and just shifting, shifting orthodoxy.

And I look out at people gathered here today and I see faith and hope and love and I want to commend it and encourage it.

Four years here, I've seen so many examples of these three key things. Faith in Christ, love for the saints, hope in heaven. Examples are coming to mind now as I speak to you and I won't mention names, but first of all, with faith, just seeing people come to faith for the first time, seeing that miracle of God.

One of the greatest miracles you'll ever see is seeing someone transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Seeing someone's heart renewed and restored and redeemed.

[6 : 14] I've seen that here. The people have come into this community not knowing Jesus and have met Jesus in his word and in his people and have been changed forever.

It's encouraging. Talk about love for the saints. I've seen that on so many occasions as well. Normally, it's most intense when someone's undergoing suffering, isn't it?

Love of the saints and I think particularly of people who have lost loved ones in my time here and seeing the church pull together and gather around those people.

The love for the saints that's expressed in those times. Deep love and empathy. Faith in Jesus. Love for the saints and great hope in heaven.

I never begrudge the opportunity to go to someone who is dying or is very sick.

[7 : 24] Some of the greatest learning I've done hasn't been at my desk. It's been at someone's bed. Learning how to cope with the reality of death.

The process of dying. It's scary to know that you're going to die. But to see the hope that Christians maintain in that season, in that final season of life, the hope, the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

It's encouraging. Faith in Christ, love for the saints, hope in heaven. These three things I want to encourage in you.

So with that in mind, let's go. This is the big idea. Jesus Christ is king over all things. First going to look at Jesus being king of creation.

Follow with me verse 15 to 17. Paul says, He, Jesus, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created.

[8 : 42] Things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers, all things have been created through him and for him.

He himself is before all things and in him all things hold together. Unequivocal. Jesus is king of creation.

All things were created in him, through him and for him. in him, through him and for him.

Other translations will say by him. By him, in him, he's the agent. In him, through him, for him. I think it's easy for us to come to terms with Jesus as creator, that Jesus was active in creation, he was the agent of creation, he created all things, but what does it mean that they were created for him?

All things were created for him. It means that all things were created to worship Jesus, all things were created to bring honour and glory to him.

[10 : 02] All things. I remember being pretty indignant with God early on as a kid because he had allowed spiders to survive the flood.

Don't often doubt God's judgment, but on this one, spiders, spiders, spiders just make me angry and sick and annoyed and I woke up the other morning with a huntsman on my chest, just looking at me, making fun of me.

I hate spiders. It's a bit of therapy for me. I hate spiders. Why did God allow, he could have got rid of every spider in the flood, right, just go on.

This says God created, Jesus created spiders for him to bring glory to him, to worship him.

All of creation exists to bring glory to Jesus, even spiders and there are worse things in creation than spiders. There are principalities and powers evil spirits and demons that exist to bring glory to Jesus.

[11 : 39] Take a look, verse 16, he says, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers, all things have been created through him and for him. He'll use the same phraseology in chapter 2 and chapter 6.

all things including powers of darkness, demons, the devil himself, created through him and for him.

Not that Jesus created the evil. The Bible makes it clear that these evil spirits, these fallen angels, chose to depart from worship to Jesus to pursue evil.

but they were created by him, through him and for him. And even in their present state of evil, he is sovereign over them, he rules over them, he is king over them and they exist for his glory.

Both spiders and evil spirits exist to bring Jesus glory. See, Jesus is both the goal, sorry, the giver and the goal of creation.

[12 : 52] He is both the giver and the goal. He is the giver and the goal. He created it and it exists to honor him.

Jesus is king over creation. Let's take a look at Jesus, king over redemption. Verse 18 to 20, follow with me. He says, Jesus is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might have come to have first place in everything.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

A couple of things to notice. First of all, Jesus rules the church. Verse 18, he is the head of the body, the church. Paul's using this body metaphor again.

Remember, we're all members of the body. We have different functions. We make it up. We are the church, as I said earlier on, but Jesus is the head. There's only one head and it's Jesus.

[14 : 06] He is king. He is lord. He is ruler of the church. Jesus rules the church. It's easy when you have strong leadership in the church to think that maybe the senior pastor is the head of the church.

Maybe the archbishop is the head of the church. Maybe the pope is the head of the church. None of them is the head of the church. They are mere slaves to the real head, Jesus.

He is the ruler of the church. Jesus rules the church. He also rescues the church. Verse 20, Through him, through Jesus, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

The one who rules the church also rescues the church. The king over the church also becomes the sacrifice for the church. Jesus is the king over creation.

Jesus is the king over redemption. He's both the giver and the goal of creation, and he's the giver and the goal of redemption. God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that whoever believes in him may not perish, may have eternal life.

[15 : 33] Jesus came to give us forgiveness of sins absolutely, but that's secondary to this truth. Jesus came and died so that he might be the first in all things, so that he might have first place in all things, so that he might be worshipped forever for his grace and mercy.

The primary reason why Jesus came to die was so that he would be worshipped as our saviour king, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

Jesus is king over creation, he's king over redemption, he's worthy of your worship, your devotion, your life, your love, your all. Standing here now, I just feel burdened by the fact that so many of us struggle to come to terms with this, that we are not the most important person in the universe, that our needs are not the most important needs in the universe, that our kingdoms are not the most important kingdoms, that it's actually all about Jesus.

For some of us, even our picture of heaven has everything to do with our own experience and not of the honour and glory that we'll give to Jesus. You exist because of him and you exist for him and you have this life that's over in a flash, that paves the way to an eternity, billions of trillions of years that go on forever of worship to him.

And so many of us are so consumed with that and we've taken our eyes off eternity.

[17 : 45] and the challenge for us, I think, particularly us who are so wealthy and so comfortable, the challenge for us is to make that focused on that, to make the heartbeat an echo of eternity, a preparation for eternal life and worship of Jesus.

Jesus. Are you with me? This is my struggle. Every day we fight a battle against our own kingdom to focus on his kingdom, against our own glory to focus on his glory, worship of self to the worship of Jesus.

He is king. So my parting words to you, this is the last time I'll speak to you from this pulpit. My parting words are Paul's at the end of this passage, verse 21 to 23.

He says, And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he is now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven.

I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel. Paul's burden for his church and my burden for this church is that we don't shift, that we persevere, that we maintain the course.

[19 : 43] Paul says that you will be presented holy and blameless and irreproachable before him because of Jesus' death. You have been made right with God, reconciled.

There is peace in the relationship. You are not guilty. You will stand before the judge and be acquitted and be welcomed. you have been adopted by God, provided that you continue in faith, provided that you do not shift.

So my plea to you and to myself is that we would not shift from faith in Jesus. when I was a teenager I started learning to fish.

And I mean like proper fishing, fly fishing. And I used to just go and sit by a river and drop a bait in and then I met a Scotsman who told me that I had to repent of being an Englishman and embrace my Scottish heritage.

And so he invested years in me, taking me away to a river to fly fish. There was no sitting down, I was just walking all day for k's and k's up a river fly fishing.

[21 : 06] It's a certain art to fly fishing that he taught me over the years. And we used to go to the same place each time, to the Goulburn River, and we would walk literally all day.

And every time I went with him, which was on many occasions we had passed two houses on a section of the river that's a flood plain. A lot of paddocks around that are flood plain, so it hasn't flooded for years.

But there were two houses. One was really old and one was really new. And in the ten or so years that I was with him, one of the houses stayed the same and one of the houses changed.

The old house stayed exactly the same. The whole time we were there just looked older. The new house shifted and shifted until by the time he died and I stopped going, the mud was up to the middle of the door frame and just sunk into the flood plain.

And I asked him once why this was and he said, the foundations, laddie, foundations. The old house has good foundations and metres away, the new house was sunk and useless.

[22 : 33] I think Paul has in his mind as he says this, as he says, do not shift. I think he's got Jesus' words from Matthew 7, you know them, verse 24 to 27, he says, everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

The rain fell, the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

The rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell and great was its fall. Paul's fear is that some of the people in his church will experience a great fall, an eternal fall away from grace.

grace. And my fear is that if we take our eyes off Jesus for too long, we'll do the same.

So let me encourage you as we finish, fix your eyes on the king. all of life is about him.

[23 : 54] All of eternal life is about him. You were created by him, through him, for him. Fix your eyes on Jesus and I'll see you in heaven.

Let's pray. Dear Father, thank you so much once again for your grace to us. Thank you so much for your son, though he is the king of heaven, became the servant of all.

Though he created us, he came to rescue us. Father, we look forward to that day where we will stand before him blameless, because he's reconciled us to you.

Father, I pray for us now that your spirit would be at work in our hearts, every one of our hearts, to grant us perseverance in the faith, for those who are here today who are wavering, who are starting to question their first love, I pray that you would strengthen them and use this church to encourage them.

For those who are here who don't yet know Jesus, I pray that you would transfer them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, the kingdom of the sun that you love.

[25 : 14] We pray all these things through Jesus, and for Jesus. Amen.