

It used to be that sports teams could be called, “Indians” or “Chiefs” or “Seminoles” like at FSU. I’m pretty sure that the teams were not named after Native Americans because they had a negative point of view; these names were meant to conjure ideas of strength or nobility. Nowadays, times have changed, and it is viewed as cultural appropriation to name a team like that and is a “no-no.” We have been forced by the prevailing culture to redefine strength or novel nobility in different terms. When I was in High School, there was a team whose mascot was an artichoke! Somehow, that doesn't really communicate anything! Besides, why were they not sensitive about offending the vegetables?

I wanted to take a couple of weeks to do these sermons on God as a King, because it is difficult for us to properly appreciate what the Bible is getting to in describing God as a king. We have many cultural ideas that undermine this image. But we do not have the option of changing the Bible. As always, the Bible calls us to understand the truth and to change our minds!

This sermon is similar to last week’s; I don't feel that we are done with this.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

The book of Matthew depicts the early life of Jesus, then when Jesus succeeded in overcoming Satan's temptations, he started his public ministry.

Matthew 4:17 (ESV)

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus knew that the people were not ready for what was coming. They needed a repentance, a change of mind about what was coming. What was coming was going to be different than what they expected, way different!

Whenever we make a wrong turn in going to our destination, the GPS recalculates a new path to get us to our destination. But the repentance that Jesus speaks about is not merely a change in direction, but it is meant to be a **reorientation of our hope. It is a change of the direction of the heart!**

C.S. Lewis says, "The most progressive man is the one the realizes that he is going the wrong direction and turns around first."

Repentance is meant to be a constant, every day, re-orientation of our hearts to God's purposes as a King and Lord.

The Bible speaks about God being a great king. It is probably the most used metaphor of who God is in relation to his creation; that he rules and reigns. John Frame, a well known theologian, formerly at RTS here in Oviedo, says, "The idea of King is synonymous with the idea of Lord." He has said many things more profound than that, but I need to quote him.

But now, God's Kingdom has come to earth in a new, different way, and we still need to get ready!

We are going to be starting something new at Pursuit Church as we venture into the book of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament. It is one of the first four books called "Gospels" or good news about the life and teaching of Jesus Christ the great king.

OUR CONDITION

Personally, the image of the king is difficult for me, and if for me, and it probably is difficult for you too. I am sorry that my sample size is only one, but that is all I have to go on sometimes. I have difficulty with this metaphor because of the ideas of kingship that I have.

If we think of a kid's Bible, we might imagine a sort of Cartoony character with a purple robe, and a crown, sitting on the throne. I can't imagine sitting on an uncomfortable throne all day, just like I can't imagine playing a harp in heaven.

If we think about modern kings, we also can have negative images. We like the images of a royal wedding and the extreme pomp that goes with it like Prince Harry's and Megan's wedding, or the wedding of Princess Diana and Prince Charles. But these are just celebrities only richer.

If we think of actual modern kings, we might think of a coup or take over by force where the new king rules by fear and oppression; there is corruption,

privilege, and exploitation. They may not even go by the name king they might be called, “President” or “Premier” or even “General,” but if they have complete autocratic power they are a king in the classic sense.

And so, our image of a king is burdened with all sorts of negative portrayals that we should try not to bring into the book of Matthew.

But no matter our image of what king is, the scripture portrays God and Christ as a ruling King. We are not allowed to abandon the image and turn to something else. We need to understand what the Bible is communicating to us and instead change our minds.

Jeanine, my wife, has asked me, “What do you mean by saying that the Bible uses the word king as a metaphor? Are you saying that he really is not a king?”

This picture of God as a king is what God is using to communicate who he is through an understandable image. Earthly kings are only a representation of God as a king. The Bible says that he is, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” To a king he is a king, to a Lord he is the Lord. Whatever God is, he certainly exceeds the metaphor! He is more than we can think or imagine!

God chooses the metaphor to communicate certain truths to us. We need to understand how the metaphor functions and what it is saying to us.

PROPOSITION

How does the image of God as a king function in scripture?

The image of a king functions to communicate several attributes of God that are intensely significant to our lives.

This morning we are going to go through Psalm 145, rather quickly, and as we go through it, let’s let our hearts rejoice in what God is communicating to us through King David, who wrote the Psalm. You may notice that it seems backwards what I said. I said, “what God is communicating through King David who wrote the Psalm” - Not what David is teaching us about God. The Bible is God’s word. He speaks through the various authors, and he had you in mind when he wrote it.

Let's look at Psalm 145. The reason I want to look at Psalm 145 is that, as I have been saying the Bible speaks of God as a King in many places. This is one of them. But also, it speaks of the many aspects of God and his nature.

You should have a copy of Psalm 145 in your hand, if you do not, raise your hand. I have left the subtitles with a blank in them – to give you something to do, fill them in, as I speak...

Again, the image of a king functions to communicate several attributes of God that are intensely significant to our lives.

In verse 1-7 of Psalm 145, we see God's greatness as a King.

GOD'S GREATNESS

¹I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

²Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

³Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

God's greatness can have no other effect than lead us to worship when we really look at him. David is confident of his salvation. He knows that he will be in heaven with God for eternity. He knows that this is God's doing. We cannot save ourselves as it says in

Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The psalm continues,

⁴One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

⁵On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

⁶They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

Every generation needs to learn about God. We are having such problems today because parents have not gone to church and they have not dragged their kids to church. Thank you, parents, for dragging your kids to church. We know it is not always easy, but you are educating the next generation. You are “commending God’s works to the next generation” – and of course you do this while you are teaching them at home too.

[If here ... Remember that I had the privilege of baptizing Sofia Romero?]

One generation will commend your works to another. Parents should be the primary way that a child comes to faith, but Jesus our King also has commanded us to take the gospel to every nation.

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

David says in verse 5, that he will “mediate” on the splendor of your majesty. King David meditates on the majesty of his King!

The works of God speak to us in one of three ways: through nature, what we have experienced, and through what one generation commends or tells to the next generation. This includes the history of God delivering Israel, that David would have known and is recorded in the Bible.

David meditates on God’s majesty of his person, and also his wonderful works in nature and history (or the Bible.)

We need like David to meditate on God’s majesty. This is one way that we “repent” and re-orient ourselves to God. It should happen “every day” as it says in verse 2, *Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.*

GOD'S GOODNESS

The psalm continues,

⁷They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

When we say that God is good, we mean that there is no evil in him. Every thought of his is continually good. In the book of James in the New Testament it says this,

James 1:13 (ESV)

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

James 1:17 (ESV)

¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Verse 8,

⁸The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

This is amazing given how evil people are. We are all evil, yet God remains good. If he gave us what we all deserved this world would be a smoldering, apocalyptic desolation. But God is good to all his creation.

¹⁰All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

When David says, "all your saints shall bless you" in verse 9, he means every believer. These are not saints in the Catholic church sense – some sort of perfect super-person that God will have sitting next to him in heaven. These are ordinary believers. The Bible says that each one of us believers are priests to our God. In Christ, we are all saints – that is how the apostle Paul refers to believers in all the churches, as "saints."

Sometimes we need to repent of our attitude toward God. We forget that he is always good; Always. Re-orient your mind by thanking God that he is always good and does good to you.

GOD'S GLORY

¹¹They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,

¹²to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

David is speaking of the glory of God's kingdom. David was looking forward by faith to see what he should not have been able to see, and that is what Jesus would say, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Though that Kingdom is now here, because of the Gospel and our being reconciled to God through faith, we also look forward to the Kingdom being in full effect.

Early in the 20th century, Gerhardus Vos at Princeton, stated the "already and not yet" paradigm that you might have heard of. The Kingdom of God is "already" here and also "not yet" because it is not fully manifest. One day, God will re-create the heavens and earth, the new creation and his kingdom will be fully manifest.

GOD'S GOVERNMENT

Verse 13 says,

¹³Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.

¹⁴The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.

¹⁵The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

¹⁶You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

Though these verses sound similar to God's goodness, they speak of the government of a King. These are the means that God uses to bless and provide for his people. Any government should be seeking the welfare of its people. God's righteousness is also brought to bear in his government. God as a King gives the law. God's law is also good in every way. We see the beauty of it and rejoice in it, but we are also afraid of it. Why? Because we cannot live it.

The people of God in the Old Testament were always swearing their allegiance to God and to follow his laws, but they also always failed. God brought judgment in the nation of Israel and had it invaded by both the Assyrians in 722 B.C., and also the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Some people returned from the Babylonian captivity according to prophecy and reestablished the Kingdom that Jesus would live in, yet most did not return.

We both love God's law and fear it because we cannot live it.

Psalm 119:33–35 (ESV)

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end.

³⁴Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. ³⁵Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

The Apostle Paul shared the dilemma that God's law presents to us.

Romans 7:21–25 (ESV)

²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

God's righteousness as King is expressed in his righteous law. It is good, and we delight in it, but in our flesh, we cannot carry it out. Fortunately, God also gives

us a new heart when we put our trust in Jesus and forgives our sin and also gives us a new power, the Holy Spirit living in us!

We need to constantly repent of sin, confessing its wrongness, believing that we are forgiven through Christ and asking the Holy Spirit to once again fill us and enable us to live his righteous law.

GOD'S GRACE

Grace is a New Testament word, but not a New Testament concept. The Old Testament believers knew that they lived by God's grace too. They just did not know of the wonderful work of Jesus dying a cross for their sins. Verse 18,

¹⁸The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

¹⁹He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.

²⁰The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

²¹My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

God saves those who call upon him. Jesus, when he came spoke of the favorable year of the Lord coming. He healed and forgave. God's disposition toward every sinner is that they would be saved and not destroyed. That is why God offers the gospel to us.

John 3:16–18 (ESV)

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Romans 10:9–13 (ESV)

⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

The Lord is near to all who call on him in truth.

The main repentance that God calls us to is the issue of living independently of God. When we acknowledge our sin and call out to God in truth, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible says that God “saves us.” Not just out of our current trouble, but out of damnation and destruction forever in Hell!

Jesus died to win a victory over the enemies that we could not defeat: Sin and Death.

Colossians 2:13–15 (ESV)

¹³And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

CONCLUSION

Jesus came saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”

The image of a king functions to communicate several attributes of God that are intensely significant to our lives.

- We need to repent or re-orienting ourselves to God by meditating each day on his majesty as our King and our Lord.
- We repent or re-orient ourselves by confronting our bad attitudes of not thinking that God is good.
- We need each day to repent or re-orient our lives, confessing our sin and asking the gentle, patient Holy Spirit to guide us and empower us once again!
- We repent or re-orient most of all when we call on the name of the Lord to save us. He hears our cry and sees our faith in Jesus the King and gives us eternal life as a free gift.

Verse 21,

²¹My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

Amen? Amen!

Please pray with me.