

## INTRODUCTION

[Video: <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-41718144/thai-king-funeral-the-royal-pyre-built-over-a-year>]

A funeral for a dead king cost over \$90 million. Their devotion to their king is admirable, but is all of that money and time worth it?

We can ask the same question about things we live for: in the end, are they worthy of all the attention we give them?

The last of our core values is the Kingdom of God. The end goal of all we do is expanding His Kingdom. “Kingdom” can be a vague word. Simple definition is: **God’s Reign**. Everything God rules over. Right now before Jesus returns, it’s mainly a spiritual Kingdom – made up of hearts of all believers. When Jesus returns, it’ll be a literal Kingdom.

Until then, our mission is to expand His Kingdom. That is going to be our mentality as a church. We’ll make decisions based on: “What’s best for the Kingdom?” We’ll make Christian life about “living for the kingdom.”

But is it worth it? That’s the question we have to ask about the things we live for. Is the Kingdom of God worth living for? That’s what Jesus gets into in Matthew 13:44-46. Why is the Kingdom worth living for? There are three reasons I want to point out from the life and words of Jesus.

### I. THE KINGDOM’S KING

#### A. Sovereign King

Let’s start with who the King is. First off, he’s a King! He rules and has authority. On Palm Sunday, Jesus rides into Jerusalem, and John describes the scene in John 12:12-15. It’s the fulfillment of many prophecies that not only would Jesus come, but he would come as a KING. He would die, but then he would *reign*.

And his entrance into Jerusalem tells us that when he enters our lives, he enters first and foremost, as a ruling King.

We need to keep that straight. General ethos of our culture is that authority is bad and can’t be trusted. But if Jesus is not King, Lord, and Master, then he’s not Jesus at all. That’s who he is. He’s many things to us, but His main place in our lives is that of KING.

It’s sad that that’s often the last place we give him. We like him as our comforter and provider. We like him as our friend (there was a popular shirt a few years ago that said “Jesus is my homeboy”). But when it comes to him being King, we feel like it’s too extreme.

We need to be careful there because then we're starting to tell Jesus who He is. We're telling him: *"Jesus, this is what I need from you. This is who I want you to be."* We're not worshipping the Jesus of the Bible then. Turns out we're worshipping ourselves. We do not get to tell Jesus who He is. He tells us who He is. And He tells us: *"I am King."*

## B. Servant King

But he's a different kind of King. That's what separates him from all human rulers. In the scene in Matthew 27:28-31, there are a couple of ironies. One is that though the people were mocking Jesus, they were inadvertently proclaiming the truth. But the greater irony was that the King was on a cross.

Many people have a problem with Bible's teaching on roles in marriage. Husband is called to lead; wife to submit, but some object: *"Why does he get to lead and wife has to submit?"* It can sound unfair until we understand what leadership is in the Kingdom of God. Leading means dying. Christ's expression of His Kingship was death.

He is a Servant-King. Remember that those of you who lead or aspire to lead. Being a leader is not a high position in the Kingdom. Being a leader is the lowest position - it is a position of humiliation and sacrifice.

He reigns from the cross. He's not a king who has smooth hands. Or a King who sends everyone else into battle while he waits in his palace. He's a bloody and scarred King.

## C. A better King

That makes Him a King worth serving. The reason the Jews were so excited when Jesus entered Jerusalem is that they'd been waiting for a king for a long time. Their whole history revolved around who would be their king.

They didn't have one at first. God led them through prophets and they were fine. They made it out of Egypt, made it to the Promised Land. But once they got settled in their land, they realized that all the nations around them had kings, so they started demanding one, too.

God agrees and gives them their first king: Saul. He didn't turn out so good. And after him, they had many more kings. King after king led Israel into sin, divided the nation. And in the end, all this bad leadership got Israel kicked off their land. And that's when they realized: they need a better king.

That's what we'll all come to see. We try out all these different "kings." We let money, success, love be master over our lives. We hesitate to give him full control because we think we're better kings than He is. But are we?

Anyone make a bad life decision before? Anyone get themselves into trouble or end up hurting others? At some point, we realize: *"I can't be king anymore. It's not working."* Serve Him. Give Him control. He can be trusted. He's worthy.

## II. THE KINGDOM WILL GROW

### A. The parable of the mustard seed and yeast: hearts and world

Jesus gives this illustration of the Kingdom: [Matthew 13:31-33]

The Kingdom has two dimensions: **the heart and the world**. In our language: up and out. He wants to increase His reign in us (in the heart of each believer), and He also wants to build *out* (adding more believers). That's what the mustard tree and yeast are about (tree grows up, yeast works out).

### B. But it's contested

But the thing about the Kingdom is that it's in an in-between stage right now. Promises are only partially realized now. So that means: The Kingdom (for now) is *opposed*.

We see that clearly in the world. The world is in rebellion against Him. We read headlines of awful things happening, but the real story is that people are in rebellion against God.

There is an idea these days to arm school teachers with guns. Teacher friends I have all say the same thing, however: more than guns, they need *help* (more support in schools, more resources, more help for troubled kids). Because it's not just the system that's broken, *people* are broken.

People are sick with sin. The world is in rebellion against God. And that goes for our hearts too. We resist the reign of Christ in many ways.

### C. He will reign

But that's where we have to know that we're in an in-between time right now. Kingdom hasn't fully come yet. But it will.

The mustard seed will grow. God will finish us. Never forget, as you struggle, God doesn't see us as we are now, but who He is making us to be.

So if that's what God sees, that's what we should see. Don't look at what you are now. It's ok to see our sins, we should. But don't be short-sighted. Look at Christ because you're seeing who you WILL be.

For the world, too, it can seem hopeless if we just look at now. But see "later." Revelation 11:15-19 gives us a glimpse: *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you*

*have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."*

"Nations will no longer rage", He will "destroy the destroyer", and He will increase the number of saint.

#### D. Movement's cause

That's why the Kingdom is worth fighting for. Because it's more than He *should* reign...He has to reign. We have not ounce of hope, if Christ is not on his throne.

That's why we pray: "*let your Kingdom come.*" He needs to end the rebellion. In the world, and in us, too. We long to see him increase his rule, for all people to be submitted to him.

That's the Kingdom cause. That's what He's after and that's what we're after also.

I was sharing our core values with a friend and he asked: "*why isn't missions/evangelism one of them?*" And the answer is: "*Because it's the goal of all the core values.*"

- We keep the word of God front and center because it's the gospel that saves
- We pray because we need power to preach the gospel
- We preach radical discipleship, we build the church because we want to reach the world!

Lord, reign here! Be King in our families and church and world, for your sake and *our* sake.

### III. THE KINGDOM WILL LAST

Every time I look at this parable of the treasure in the field, what jumps out at me is joy. The man is not struggling with his decision. It's an easy choice. What he's getting is so much more than what he's giving.

We often focus on what we're losing and giving for Christ, but what's the treasure? A couple of testimonies of people who saw it firsthand.

#### A. Love that will last

One comes from the Bible – the Samaritan woman. She was a bit of a mess. You could call her an addict – her addiction was men. She craved love and acceptance, but could never find it. She was married 5 times – each man either died or divorced her. If you've ever been rejected by someone or had someone break up with you, you know that pain. It happened to her 5 times. She's a broken woman. She feels worthless and unloveable.

One day she needs to go to the well to get water, but she has to be careful when she goes, b/c everyone in town is talking about her, she gets dirty looks wherever she goes.

So she goes at the hottest time of day, at noon when she knows nobody will be out there. She gets there thinking she'll be alone, but there's a man there – Jesus. And he asks her for a drink. She's probably thinking a couple of things: *"Is he interested in me?"* But at the same time: *"Another man who will let me down."* But he says to her: *"I know where you've been and what you've done. I know the worst things about you. And I love you. My love is different than all those men, because my love is forever."*

And this woman, desperate for true love all her life, leaves satisfied because she's finally found it.

When you find a love that lasts, that's a treasure. That's worth giving everything for. People think they can find that in another humans. They will easily give everything for even just the *possibility*.

But there's no love like the love of God in Christ. In wedding vows they say: "til death do us part." It acknowledges that even marriage love has a limit: death. But the love of Christ is ours *through* death and into eternity. That's joy.

## B. Treasure that will last

The other testimony: Kathie Lee Gifford/Billy Graham. [Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJQ-s5damZg&t=191s> ]

Whenever someone dies, you think about their legacy. She's his legacy. Someone in our church who told me he recommitted his life through Billy Graham's ministry. He's his legacy, too.

In Revelation, there are mainly 3 things that last into eternity: God, people, and worship. Puts things into perspective doesn't it?

That gold shrine of the Thai king? It's still here. He didn't take it with him. We don't take any of the treasures we're living for here, either. When we see Christ face to face, we won't have any of it. We leave those behind.

But you know what we'll see? We'll see all the people that God brought into the Kingdom, through us. Every moment we loved, prayed, served, preached, those will last. What was done for the kingdom will last. And only what lasts is worth living for.

## CONCLUSION

I committed to living for the kingdom in 2001. At the time I thought I was doing something so noble. Now, I realize. It's MY joy. Nothing I would rather do with my life than labor for the church and labor for the Kingdom. And it's not because I'm a pastor. It's because I've been allowed into a Kingdom I don't deserve. I have a King I don't deserve.

A poem I read many years ago that still moves me.

*Only one life, yes only one,  
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;  
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,  
And stand before His Judgement seat;  
Only one life, will soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, the still small voice,  
Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,  
And to God's holy will to cleave;  
Only one life, will soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, a few brief years,  
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;  
Each with its clays I must fulfill,  
living for self or in His will;  
Only one life, will soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*When this bright world would tempt me sore,  
When Satan would a victory score;  
When self would seek to have its way,  
Then help me Lord with joy to say;  
Only one life, will soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Give me Father, a purpose deep,  
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,  
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
Only one life, will soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Oh let my love with fervor burn,  
And from the world now let me turn;  
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,  
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
Only one life, will soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, yes only one,  
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";  
And when at last I'll hear the call,  
I know I'll say "twas worth it all";  
Only one life, will soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*