

The Kings Speech!

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[0 : 00] Now I'd like just for a little while this morning to look at a verse really, just one verse from the reading that Emma took from Matthew's Gospel chapter 6.

I've entitled this sermon The King's Speech because this is part of Jesus' speech. It's called Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The film The King's Speech was a great film about George VI and about his inability to speak in public and how that was overcome as speech impediment. Well, the sermon's got nothing to do with that whatsoever. It's just a handy title really for another King's Speech, King Jesus and what he's saying.

And it's a very significant number of chapters where he's laying out his understanding of who he is and who we are and our relationship with him and our need for his power and his grace and his rescue in our lives so that we can live the way he wants us to live, the way we were created to live.

[1 : 26] It's a great thing and I just want to think about one verse particularly in the light of the baptism today and the parents and ourselves as a congregation in our lives.

So in chapter 6 where we read in verse 33, it's a very well-known verse which says, But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

So Jesus is really here speaking about, if you look at it in the context, he's speaking about our priorities in life, what's important to us and what things we are to use and see as absolutely foundational in our lives and that is the context with which we'll be looking at it today.

Remembering that Jesus never really speaks about insignificant or unimportant things. He's always dealing with things that are really important. You know, he was only here for a short time, he only had a public ministry for three years and so his words were really weighted.

They were significant, they were not that long, he didn't say that much but what he said was really significant so we will always do well when we think about who he is and his claims to be from God and God himself and what he came to do.

[2 : 40] And so as a church, I preach from the Bible, we respond to this word of God which has been given to us and we focus on Jesus Christ and Jesus is our Savior, he's our Lord and we follow him and we follow his teaching by his grace.

We can't do it on our own and without his grace and without his redemption in our hearts and our lives we're blind and we're in the dark. So we come every Sunday really needing him and needing his help in our lives.

What is Jesus saying then very briefly, what is Jesus saying in this verse? Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well as a foundation of verse. What's he saying? Well, he's saying some, you know, if you just slightly peel it back and look at it very simply, he's saying some very simple things. He's saying in the first place that there is, there is a spiritual kingdom, there is another kingdom that he goes on to say is not of this world, he's seeking first his kingdom, there is a kingdom to which Jesus is the King and to which his followers belong and that's very significant for us to recognise and know that.

We are in a very significant year here in Scotland and there will be an independence vote later in the year, I don't suppose any of you have heard of that on the news or the radio in the last 18 years, months, days even, but it just seems to be always every hour talking about independence and the vote and what's going to happen, whether there will be a new kingdom created and well, that may or may not be the case, but whether that's the case and I'm sure there's a lot of different opinions here about that, there's another kingdom which is much more significant even than the one that may or may not be created in the years that lie ahead and Jesus says it's a spiritual kingdom, an invisible kingdom at that level, an eternal kingdom where Christ Jesus is King of kings and he goes on to in his life and in his death and in his resurrection declare his kingship in this kingdom that he is

more powerful over life and over death and the grave and that he is powerful over sin and over evil and over Satan and over all that is dark and rebellious against him, he is King of kings and it's a kingdom that he has been establishing ever since he rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father, it's growing, it's being populated, it's being established, it's a good kingdom and it's a kingdom which will one day be absolutely perfected and filled to exactly the right amount, there is a spiritual kingdom and I think that's always important for us to remember because we live in a day and an age which is very flesh and blood, aren't we? It's just what you see, it's just what you feel, it's just what you touch, we pride ourselves in being scientific and that everything must be reasoned and reasoned through, we're not saying this is unreasonable, we are saying there's perfect evidence for it and the clarity in it but it is nonetheless a spiritual kingdom that can't be measured in a scientific way but it is nonetheless very real with Christ as the King to their spiritual kingdom, it's not just about our life here and now, it's not just about the few days that we have here, it's not just about what we can see, feel and touch, it's not simply about what we can earn or what we can possess or our material wealth, that we are made as people to have a relationship with God who is spirit in a spiritual kingdom and that Jesus says can only come through him. So there's a spiritual kingdom and there is also righteousness, seek, first seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

[6 : 56] Again, a very unpopular concept is the concept of absolute right and wrong, the concept that God declares, Jesus declared what is righteous, that is what is right and declares what is wrong and he says it's a kingdom which is governed by, ruled in righteousness, that is that it's a prerequisite for entry into the kingdom, what would be a prerequisite for entry into a new kingdom of Scotland? I don't know, would it be that you live here, would it be that you're born here, would it be that you can say it's a broad brick moon like nothing, I don't know what it would be, that would be entry into the kingdom of Scotland but entry into the kingdom of God is only through Jesus Christ. Now that's a very exclusive claim, he says I am the way, the truth in the life, no one comes to the Father but by me. Now that is hugely a challenging and significant and important claim, he's saying you either come through Jesus or you can enter into the kingdom of God and that is because it's a kingdom of perfect righteousness. So who can enter? Me, I'm a free church minister,

I'll get in surely, I'm holy and I read the Bible and I pray I'll get in, anyone else want to put their hands up and we'll get in? No, of course not because no one is righteous, I know my own heart, I know how far short I follow my own standards, my wife's standards, my family's standards, your standards as a congregation, let alone God's standards that are absolute and perfect righteousness, I've got no hope entering the kingdom unless someone will be righteous for me. And Jesus came to be righteous, perfect for me because that is what he does, he loves us and he comes to be righteous in our place, so he lives that absolutely righteous life but dies on a cross bearing the wrath of God against unrighteousness and sin that is mine or anyone's who will put their trust in him. That is why Jesus says in different parts of the gospel that to become a Christian is to be like being reborn, it's like starting all over again and that's significant and important because we become in Christ new creations, we belong for the first time to a different kingdom, still citizens of Scotland, UK, Great Britain, America,

Sweden, wherever we're from today but we become part of a different kingdom, a spiritual kingdom that we enter the moment we put our trust in Jesus Christ and it's a kingdom that gives us hope, it gives us a future, it gives us direction, it gives us forgiveness, it gives us life, well beyond the grave I'm not saying for a moment because when we we've prayed and we've given thanks for new life and we're going to baptise Bethany shortly and that's a lovely new life and I guess somewhere when you become slightly older and you've lived for a bit longer you begin to deal every time that we praise God and thank him for life we recognise that somewhere along the line that death comes into the picture that horrible ogre that darkness comes into the picture and we're not saying in Christ that death doesn't remain an enemy but it remains a defeated one for the believer and it means that we will rise to live and live with Jesus because he's risen from the dead and he is king of his kingdom and we will go to join with him in that so there's a kingdom and there's righteousness so that's a great challenge for us I think today is a great challenge for our lives as Christians this is a verse that Jesus preaches and he preaches it to believers and to unbelievers he preaches it to all people and to believers we have the ongoing responsibility as Christians to be seeking God's kingdom we don't kind of get born and then just stay like that you know there's a great sense of longing and anticipation today in Bethany's baptism because there's a longing and an anticipation

well maybe not a longing but there's certainly this a recognition that she'll grow up and that's very important that you know they'll be in Rachel will be responsible for caring for her and loving her and and teaching her and nourishing her and she'll grow up she's not always going to remain a baby it would be strange wouldn't it?

it'd be odd if she'd never grow up 25 years later we came back and she they still carried it in they would get old and wrinkly and they were still carrying her in in a little cut because she wasn't growing up it would be on that she would be strange and spiritually the same is true we keep seeking looking to seek after God's kingdom in our lives we have a strenuous effort as believers to remain in his strength as citizens of the kingdom of servants of Christ we learn to seek a lifestyle that loves God and loves one loves each other that we serve one another that we give for one another we're seeking the principles the the characteristics of the kingdom have been citizens in the kingdom and we don't just sit back say oh it's all done I've become a Christian God Jesus done it for me I'll just sit back and relax we continue to seek his kingdom and our eyes are open to the privilege of citizenship and we serve him because we love him and we we we pray to him and we seek him because we're in a relationship with him in a way we were never before if we stop seeking Jesus Christ in our Christian lives we may know it all but we will grow cold in our hearts and we will go distant from him and we will we will shrink spiritually we will vegetate it and it will not be a healthy and blessed so we're to seek him and we're to prioritize him as

Christians in our lives seek first his kingdom you see the the the temptation for us is to just become obsessed with everything else in life and that that's a temptation for all of us at different ages and stages of our lives that we don't prioritize him but we just let everything else come in and we are concerned about life and this life to the exclusion of building a relationship with Jesus Christ that's what Jesus is speaking about the undue concern we have for the material things around us and he says we need to prioritize as a matter of urgency for our spiritual health we need to prioritize our relationship with him seek him first make him the priority of our lives make him the foundation of our lives and that's a hugely significant thing in our lives to do individualist Christians and also to do as Christian parents to recognize that I'll say a little bit more about that just as we come to an end which will not be long but the recognition that how we live and how we prioritize Jesus Christ in our lives as Christians will be something our children will recognize from a very early stage and we have a significant role to play in showing them that Jesus matters to us that Jesus is important not just as some insurance policy that we hope will make a difference when we die not just as some religious ritual that we are involved in week to week but as a living growing loving relationship with our Creator as created people that we're in that growing loving relationship through what he has done for us as our substitute and our Lord and when we do we come to recognize that all these things will be given to us as well in other words he looks after us he gives us what we need now that might not always be what we want this is not a carte blanche signature from God to say just ask me for anything I'll give you it like some kind of divine Santa Claus or something like that but it's rather this recognition he's our loving Father our loving parent and he will give us what we need and he promises to bless us and he promises to give us good things because he's a loving Father good things that he knows are important for us and when when difficult and dark and bad things happen he will still use them and will help us to come through them you know how it is as a parent we don't we don't grow with our children we don't allow our children to grow and say to them whatever yeah absolutely what yeah go out for McDonald's every night absolutely no problem sweet of course have as many as you want stay up as late yeah try some drink yeah no problem it's not like that is it we don't give our children everything they think they want lovingly caringly we hope we pour out blessing on good things on them but we also recognize there's times where we we say no because that's the loving thing to do and that's the blessed and grace thing to do because usually if we just give in to our children all the time they'll become spoiled and nobody else will really want to spend time with them either and spiritually that would be true with it not as many things that God's dealing with in our lives in our hearts he's transforming he's changing he's molding he's sandpapering the rough edges and he will do that because he wants to make he wants us to become like him and that is a non-going process so he takes care of us as Christians but the challenge here also goes out [17 : 11] I think does it not if maybe you're here today and you're not a Christian you're considering it possibly or maybe you're not but nonetheless you're here today for whatever reason it's a challenge from Jesus Christ himself in his word it's recorded to us to at least consider your life and where you're going and what you think life is that he says it is more than just clothes and food and tomorrow he's saying there is something else there is a spiritual reality there is a god to whom we're

accountable because he made us and there is a god that one day we will face and there's a spiritual kingdom that we will belong to or not and he says the way is open and I love you enough to have died to provide the way and to have been raised from the dead to show that power and that victory and his encouragement to you and my encouragement to you as well as a very ordinary Christian who is hopefully seeing his life daily transformed by

God's grace and his forgiveness to seek his kingdom seek it you know don't don't take on my word or don't reject it on my word or don't reject it on the failure you perceive to see in other Christians are in the church or in the hypocrisy that's there did I read an instinct no I'll not say it will I'll probably not remember it um not going to church because it's got hypocrites in it is like saying I'm not going to go to the gym because it's full of people that are unfit something like that is that a rubbish illustration maybe it is but anyway you know you know what I mean you know don't don't reject the message simply on the basis of the people that you think are not good ambassadors for that message whether that's right or wrong but listen to what Jesus says and be challenged by what he says that he is God and he comes in the flesh and he says seek first my kingdom it's a kingdom which he offers freely it's a kingdom that he offers because he loves you it's a kingdom that's spiritual it's a kingdom that that moves us beyond this life and into eternal life and he says please make that search urgent you know seek first his kingdom you know if his claims are true is it not worth seeking out urgently yeah if it's rubbish then you know you can make that decision but don't do it on the basis of because my best friend says it's rubbish or because it's easier to think it's rubbish of course it's a challenge it's going to be an absolutely life changing challenge if it's true and you come to recognize that you'll turn your life upside down it turns our life upside down but it's life giving turning upside down it's good turning upside down isn't it because it's talking about eternal life in his kingdom make that search urgent you know search the scriptures search what Jesus says find out what he says about being born again find out what he says about our need and about God reveals of himself and why he came and speak to Christians who've who've been forgiven who have seen their lives changed from the inside out ask them question them poke poke your finger and find out and if they're self-righteous tell them they're self-righteous and they'll probably explain they're not being self-righteous they're not trying to be holier than they're they're simply trying to live to follow Jesus Christ as king and if they are self-righteous then they don't understand the gospel and they don't understand grace so make that search urgent and recognize that Jesus has come to provide the way he's done it it's finished it's a gift it's free it's full he says just accept my grace accept your need of forgiveness and of my righteousness which I'll cover you with so that you're innocent before God and you come and enter into release so that's a great thing so can I just say very briefly but before finishing there's a challenge particularly to us I think with respect to our children now that's a parental challenge but it's also a congregational challenge because we take vows at the end of the service when the baptism is happening and finally we'll be doing the baptism but he will ask the congregation if they also will remember to pray for and care for Bethany so it's a covenantal thing it's a covenant as part of God's people here it's not just an individual thing it's not something we just do in the privacy of our own home it's something we do together it's something that's very public and we vow together to bring up that child Bethany in the loving instruction of the Lord's and it's so it's very important and and this verse is very significant with regard to that as well so we just can I remind you as we close that for our children it's hugely significant that they come to know the king you know sometimes we think parenting or parenting within the church is all about rules and regulations and ethics and all these things now I'm not saying it doesn't include these things but the most important thing is that your child knows that you love the king and that you want to share the king with them most important that Christian children or children brought up in Christian homes know that you love Jesus that's the most important thing that is the most important thing that you live by grace as a parent that you will teach them forgiveness and that you will ask for their forgiveness do we think as parents we've always got it right shame on us there'll be times when we need to take our children aside and say look I'm sorry they need to know that we are imperfect and that we need Jesus just as much as they do and we need to show them that we love Jesus it's not about rules and regulations we're dripping down here too it's coming here and it's primarily about sharing the grace of Jesus Christ with them grace not only in coming to know the king but the grace in our family the way we treat one another the way we act the way we react it's about putting into practice the grace that we've received from God and putting into practice our children and yes of course within that we

teach them the ethics and the morals of the kingdom that's absolutely right we teach them to respect other people we teach them to be humble we teach them to be respectful of their parents and of those in authority we teach them many different biblical ethics about love about self-control about discipline about receiving about giving about serving about gifts about all of these things it will be a different ethic to the one that they will hear and see most of the time in their lives and that requires effort and work and challenge and we were within that nurturing them in the teaching and discipline and instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ that's what we do with our children we teach them about the king we teach them about the ethics of the kingdom and when we do so we will also teach them about righteousness we will teach them about the righteousness that is here because it's his righteousness I think there's sometimes I think kids brought up in a Christian home struggle sometimes because and I probably feel I felt that struggle as well is that it's difficult sometimes to think how much you need Jesus Christ because you know you've been brought up to all intents and purposes really well and you know you're acceptable and you're nice and you get on well people and you you know you get on you're as good as other people and you're in church and you worship God and you read the Bible and all these things but none of these things that's what makes us Christian none of them it is there's this great need to recognize and teach our children also that their hearts need to be washed that they need cleansed that they need forgiven that they need Jesus that they need as it were to be born again they need that it might not be a dramatic experience for them at that level outwardly but there's that real important reality that they need his righteousness as well just like all of us need his righteousness our own is not enough it wouldn't have put God to the cross we need his righteousness to be cleaned in to be washed and really the sacrament of that baptism and of the washing that it symbolizes involves that teach them about Calvary that most significant of all historical events but remind them that it's not a dead Savior that we worship it's a risen glorified Savior who is enthroned in heaven teach them about his righteousness and his character and maybe that we shape our young people in kids church in our homes how we worship with them how we teach the Bible to them and we pray with them and we teach them to pray may it be that we are teaching them about this great foundational significant truth seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well Jesus finishes this great King's speech with the story of the wise and the foolish builders what you're building your life on he says is it on Jesus Christ or is it on sinking sand because when the storms of life come and probably more significantly when the storms of death come will we stand and we will stand if our foundation is on Jesus Christ and that's the good news of the gospel and it's the good news that we want to share with you and share and teach our children also for God's glory amen let's pray Lord God we ask and pray that you would help us today to know the good news to understand that good news not to be threatened by it which is understandable because it's news that will turn our lives upside down if we respond to it but to be turned upside down towards life is absolutely significant when there is no other choice and we pray that you would bless our thoughts around scripture today and bless the baptism and bless Finley as he participates and as he does this baptism today and bless the family and all friends and relatives and congregation who are here today so continue with us we pray in Jesus name amen