

Royal Kingdom

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

Sermon 3: The Power of a Promise

2 Samuel 7:1-29

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- June 7, 2020

Well, good morning, Grace Covenant Church. It is great to see you today. This is a very special day for us. This is the first time in two and a half months for us to have the band and the teaching time together. We've been working separately with the band on Wednesday night and the teaching time on Thursday morning. Here we are on Wednesday night together. By the way, if something happens between today and Sunday and I don't talk about it, there's a reason why. I can't see into the future.

Here's why we're doing what we're doing tonight: because we are trying to do the very best we can to broadcast the worship service on Sunday morning together. And we're practicing that now on Wednesday nights. And we're doing that so that the internet looks great, and then we're doing that so we can meet together with as many people as we can, as soon as we can, and as safely as we can. And that's happening as well. So, we're running that parallel track.

And we're looking at a passage today that I'm pretty excited about. I'm glad you joined us because we're going to celebrate communion together. We're going to look at one of the three passages in the older Testament that rises above all the others. Most of the Bible is used to describe one of these three passages and we're going to look at one of those today. It is a passage in the Old Testament that is carried over into the first words of the New Testament and the last words of the New Testament. So, a lot of things to do today.

But first, we desperately need to pray for our country. So please join me in a word of prayer, and then we'll get on with our learning as well.

Prayer for Our Nation

O, sovereign God, our hearts are grieving and are shocked by the suffering and the injustice that is before us, and we can only imagine what You must experience. We see the evil

one seems to be unchained. And if our hearts grieve for justice, how much more Yours?

Everywhere, it seems like on every level, there is injustice taking place, and in some areas, way more than others. And we would ask, Lord, that You would solemnly intervene and stop these things. Help us know what we can do to stop these things. You love life, and death is happening everywhere, violence against other men and women, all of them in Your image. You love industry and creativity. And what it has taken some families three generations to build, burns in minutes. And that must grieve You. It grieves us. You love truth, and we cannot find truth tellers. Industries that have been delegated the job to tell the people the truth celebrate their lies. We have lost our way.

Lord, this country ... make our Justice Department just. Let there be no man or woman above the law, not in a small town or in the Oval Office. Give men and women the courage and the honor to show justice is blind: it is blind to color, it is blind to power, it is blind to politics. Lord, would You help us do what we need to do? Make it so that authorities can know about people in the justice industry--the people that are supposed to be keeping us safe and keep justice prevailing--for those people who are bad, could you help us make it easy to report those bad police and men and women in that industry; that authorities, when they hear about a bad person involved in these things, that they would have the power and the courage to take action with that? And if they won't, Lord, would You help us find people that would take those places of authority and let justice reign in those places? Justice is supposed to work itself out in our communities.

Lord, have mercy on us. Help us listen so that we might understand, so that we might know what to do. Let Your Church be an example of what it looks like to respect and enjoy the different ethnicities and different racial groups. Let us celebrate Your creativity. Let us be the group that defends those who are not treated fairly. Let the Church not be a church of Democrats or Republicans. Let us be a church united together, supporting people that are promoting truth and courage and justice. We are tired, Lord, we are grieved, and we are angry. And we know You are too. Do not let this spirit of evil that is promoting lies and confusion to divide Your Church. O Sovereign God, it is Your kingdom come, Your will be done that we long for. Yours is the kingdom, Yours is the power, and Yours is the glory. And all God's people said, Amen.

The Adamic, Abrahamic, and Mosaic Covenants

Today's passage that we're going to look at actually has a lot to do with the circumstances around us. It has to do with the eternal kingdom of God. When we look at this passage today, we're reminded of the context of it. Going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, that the purpose of man eternally, the reason that we were designed, is to rule the garden as kings and queens, as a royal family. And in that ruling, it is a gift to God, and then we rest with Him. And at the fall, Eden is lost, but the purpose of man is not lost. We are still to do these things. And what we've added to Eden, what was lost – what we've added to that is chaos and violence and death. And look around. We never fail to fail. It's the easiest thing to do.

And we are so broken and bent that God promises that He will fix it, because only He can fix it. And He makes this first promise to Adam, and it is in the context of a covenant, and He says, "I'm going to send a king. And that king will rule for eternity and He'll bring justice. He'll bring peace and He'll bring rest."

He makes the promise again to Abraham, and what He promises to Abraham is that "One of your descendants will be that eternal king and your people will be too numerous to number, but they will be a nation. And then they're going to inherit some amazing land that I will promise them – the Promised Land. But you will have a dynasty of kings." And that promise to Abraham is important to know. It is unilateral, unconditional, one way, no conditions attached. That promise has to happen.

Later on, in our eternal kingdom storyline of God redeeming creation, is the promise to Moses. Now Moses' promise, his covenant, is conditional. And it's bilateral – there are two people involved in it and it's conditional upon something. And the promise of God to Israel is this: "If you will remember my father-like love to you and obey me, then you will be prosperous and you will be protected. I'm your father, you're a child to me. If you stay close, you're going to like life. If you're out on your own, you'll be ... out on your own." And that's the Mosaic promise.

And the rest of the Bible and the older Testament is a display of that Mosaic promise. So, what's happening in the next book that comes along is that Joshua decides – that generation says "We will be strong and courageous and obey all that the Lord has commanded." And that generation flourished. They stayed close.

And the next season is called Judges and it's a four hundred-year teenage rebellion. And you wonder, *Where is God's plan now?*

Introduction to David

And then ... and then a thousand years after the Abrahamic promise a young teenage boy that happens to be a pizza delivery man – think about it – bread, cheese – there might be some tomato paste with it, we don't know. Anyway, this pizza delivery boy shows up. His name is David. And he hears some giant bully defaming the name of the God of Israel. And he leaves the pizza there and comes home with that Goliath's head. His name is David, and if you liked him as a teenager, you're going to love him as a king.

David: Jerusalem, Palace, Ark of the Covenant

Fast forward thirty years after he takes Goliath's head and he is now the undisputed king of Israel. And David, in this kingship, in this responsibility – David is God's man to be king – he does what needs to be done so that God's kingdom will rule. And so, he gets right after it. In 2 Samuel chapter 5 he needs a capital and he takes Jerusalem. Jerusalem to this day is still the capital of Israel. He takes that place and puts a palace on the hill there so they can look over and rule in that way. He has a beautiful palace, he has a capital city, and then in 2 Samuel chapter 6 he realizes, *You know what? This town needs the Ark.* And the Ark of the Covenant is probably the single most piece that serves as a primary visual aid about the nature of God. It is not in the image of any created thing. It represents His transcendent nature, that He is above and beyond anything that we can imagine. He is local, He is imminent, He is with us, and that Ark is carried with them wherever they go. That Ark experiences what Israel experiences.

David Desires to Build a Temple

And so, David brings in the Ark in 2 Samuel chapter 6 with the peace and the capital and the palace and the Ark, and he looks down and says, “I want to build God a temple.” And chapter 7 of 2 Samuel is one of those three high points of all the Old Testament. Look what he says, what’s on David’s heart.

2 Samuel 7:1-2

After the king was settled in his palace and YHWH had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”

“After the king was settled in his palace and YHWH had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, ‘Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.’”

David is thinking, *Look, I want to make sure everybody knows God rules Israel, that the battle belongs to YHWH. I want to make sure everyone knows who’s really the king of Israel. And the Ark needs a temple for that. He’s saying, Look, I have a home; God needs a home. I have a place of honor; God should have a place of honor. And that’s what is motivating him.*

God’s Answer Is No

And so, he tells Nathan that. And you’re not going to believe it, but the way God responds is unpredictable. He does two things that we wouldn’t expect God to do, especially with this ambition in mind. First is that God says, “No. I don’t want you to build a temple for me.”

2 Samuel 7:4-7

But that night the word of YHWH came to Nathan, saying: ⁵ “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what YHWH says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. ⁷ Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”””

2 Samuel 7:4 says, “But that night the word of YHWH came to Nathan, saying, ‘Go and tell my servant David, “This is what YHWH says to him: You are not the one to build a house, a temple, to dwell in. Have I not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day? Haven’t I been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling? Wherever I have moved with all of Israel, did I ever say to any of the rulers who I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar for me?’”””

In other words, God is saying, “I’m the God who’s with you. I’m the God who travels with you. I’m that God who has humbled himself to be with His people.” And He’s saying, “I don’t need a house of cedar.”

So that’s one of the reasons that God says no to David. Another reason is found in the Book of Chronicles, and that is that David is not suited for that job; that this place, Jerusalem, where this Ark is and the place where God’s very own hand touches this blue marble in the universe—this is the tangent point between heaven and earth. That special place—the temple—cannot be built by a king with blood on his hands. It cannot be built by a warrior king. It has to be built by a king of peace—not Achilles, but Paris; not David, but Solomon. David’s son Solomon will be king and his name literally means “peace.” And so, God says, “You’re not the one to do this because your bloody hands will soil that virgin linen that will be part of that

temple. You can't do that. It's holy." God says, "No, but thank you for asking, and I know your heart."

God Makes a Covenant with David

And then the second thing that God does that you can't imagine or predict is that God makes a covenant with David. And again, let me say covenants in the Bible are the way to understand the will of God. These are the formal promises of God, these covenants He makes. And the reasons we need to know these covenants is because the covenants are what we look for. They're like a light in the times of darkness. They are the North Star when we're lost at sea. Covenants are what we go to, like a lighthouse when there's a raging storm around us. If we watch the storm we'll be at least seasick and we'll be worried. But when we keep our eyes on that lighthouse that is built upon a rock that does not move, that's what the covenants do. And if you want to know the plans of God, you follow the line of the covenants. That's why we teach the Bible here. That's why there are surveys of the Bible like we're doing, so that we see the plan of God being rolled out.

This covenant with David – you need to know that it is unilateral and unconditional. Unilateral: only God's going to be doing the talking in this. He's the only one doing the promising. And unconditional: David doesn't have to do anything to receive these promises. He doesn't have to perform. He just receives it.

Now the important part when we're listening to this covenant that God's making with David – we need to realize that is like the Adamic covenant, like the Abrahamic covenant. But most importantly for us, this is the salvation covenant, this unilateral, unconditional promise from God. This helps us. This is a template that we follow. When we receive Christ by faith, this is what we receive: a unilateral, unconditional, unrelenting promise from God. And with this promise, here's what is going to happen. God's going to swear by himself – He's going to swear by His own name because there's no other name higher than that. And He's going to say, "I am going to graciously and unconditionally promise you these things. Nothing can stop them from happening." He will say, "Death can't keep them from happening, sin can't stop these promises from being fulfilled, even time itself cannot thwart my ambitions for these promises to you, David, and its application in the eternal kingdom."

2 Samuel 7:9

“I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.”

And the first thing He’s going to promise is that David has been made great and will be made greater amongst all men. Here it is, verse 9 of chapter 7: “ ‘I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I want to make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.’ ”

2 Samuel 7:11b-13

“YHWH declares to you that YHWH Himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

Then he says that death won’t stop this from happening. “ ‘YHWH declares to you that YHWH himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you are resting with your ancestors’ ” – after you’re dead – “ ‘I will raise up from your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood. And I will establish His kingdom. He is the one who will build my house for my name’s sake, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.’ ”

Even sin can’t keep this from happening. He says in the next two verses, *That son of yours?* “ ‘I will be a father to Him and he will be a son to me. And when he does go wrong, I will punish him. But my love will never be taken from him ever, I promise by my own name.’ ” That’s the nature of an unconditional, unilateral covenant.

2 Samuel 7:16

“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

And then He finally says, *Look, it's eternal. Time can't stop it.* He says, “ ‘Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; and your throne will be established forever.’”

Here's what's happened. David sees the Ark from his palace, from his home and he says, “I have a home; God needs a home. I have a kingdom; God needs a kingdom.” David means it literally. And God comes back and says, “Oh, I'm going to build you a home. I'm going to build you a house. I'm going to build you a kingdom – an eternal kingdom.” David realizes in this promise that David is being enveloped into the eternal kingdom promise line that started with Adam and then to Abraham. David knows the significance of being part of the eternal kingdom.

What Is the Eternal Kingdom?

What is the eternal kingdom? The eternal kingdom is the plot line from beginning to end. It is the story of the entire Bible. It answers the existential questions that, honestly, our souls that are longing for Eden are crying out for the eternal kingdom. These questions like *Where did I come from? And Why am I here? Where am I going?* The eternal kingdom is the answer to that.

And when we look at how God is going to fix a broken world by intervening, that is what the eternal kingdom is all about. He promised Adam that because Adam broke these things and only God can fix it. He gave us more clarity in the promises that He made to Abraham, and now David is thinking, *Wait a minute ... I'm part of that line now? I'm going to be part of that eternal kingdom where one of my descendants will be that king, that one king?*

2 Samuel 7:17-21

Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.
18 Then King David went in and sat before YHWH, and he said: “Who am I, O Sovereign YHWH, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign YHWH, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, O Sovereign YHWH, is for a mere human!
20 What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign YHWH. 21 For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.

Look how David responds. He is overwhelmed. He can't even stand up. “Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation. Then King David went in and sat down before YHWH, and then he said...” He sat down. What else can he do? It's unconditional, it's unilateral. He just sat down and took these things, took these promises. He sat down and he worshiped in the presence of YHWH.

And he says this. Listen to this – this is his prayer. This is only part of his prayer. “ “Who am I, O Sovereign YHWH, and what is my family that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign YHWH, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, O Sovereign YHWH, is for a mere human!

“ “What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign YHWH. For the sake of your word *and* according to your promise” – this promise, this covenant – “ “you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.””

Look how his prayer rolls out. He says, in the whole prayer itself, eight times he'll say “O Sovereign YHWH.” Two times he's going to change things up and say “God Almighty.” David is using this title for a purpose. “O Sovereign YHWH” – what does that mean?

O Sovereign YHWH: God Has a Plan and He Has Power

It means that God has a plan, an eternal plan, an eternal kingdom, and He has the power to make the plan happen. And David is starting to realize that He has a plan, it's working out in front of David, and now David is realizing, *I'm being made part of that plan. I'm in this lineage*

of Adam and then Abraham and now me. It's unconditional. It's unilateral. Nothing can stop it from happening. Nothing can stop these promises from becoming true.

And so, in the story itself, you can see that after David's death there are six hundred years where God is working through what is called the United Kingdom, and then there's a civil war, a Divided Kingdom period. Not a lot of good things are happening during that part of history. Then God just goes silent. He's not communicating to Israel any more through His prophets. God doesn't say anything ... for four hundred years. And it appears that they're lost at sea. It's too cloudy to see the North Star. The lamp is flickering off. How can they find their way in darkness? Is the lighthouse even there? The waves are even too high to see it. That's the context.

Matthew 1:1

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham.

The first verse of the biography written to Jews—Matthew—after a thousand years of what seems like there is no plan or He doesn't have the power—Matthew breaks into this chaos and violence and says this: "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham." That sentence is loaded. *This is Jesus. He's the Messiah. He's the son of David, He's the son of Abraham.* He's linking these unconditional, unilateral covenants together and saying, "This is Jesus."

And the Jews are saying, "Wait a minute, wait a minute. There's a plan still? And He has the power to pull off the plan? Wait a minute. He was quiet, but He was working. He was moving pawns around His little checkerboard there. He was moving pawns around, like empires—the Greek empire and the Roman empire, using them like pawns on a chessboard." *O Sovereign God, O Sovereign YHWH.* No wonder David prays that way.

What difference does that make? If we could understand David's way of thinking about God--the most important thing about you is what you think about God—what if you were to think, "O Sovereign God, O Sovereign YHWH"? If you were to say that in your prayers eight times, you would be convinced of it, I bet.

Trust, Not Worry

And it would affect you. It would show you, at least in one way, that you would trust and not worry. When you think of the promise of the coming Messiah, when you look at the promises of Jesus being fulfilled as a savior, and it's to that exclusion, it's very individual and you have a lot to worry about because He came as a savior and He did that. That's good, and good for you to be part of His salvation experience.

But that's not the promise. That's a very small part of the promise. The promise says that He came to be a savior, but He also came to be a king. He came to be a king, a sovereign king that rules. And what does a sovereign king do when He rules? He brings justice and righteousness. He brings peace. And then He brings rest. That's what a sovereign king does. That's why they wanted a king to have sovereignty. And when Jesus is fulfilling those promises He's fulfilling the promise to be a sovereign king. Listen, His resurrection proves that He's a savior, absolutely, that He paid the price for sin and the payment was accepted. It also proves all the promises about Him being the king. He is sovereign. He rules and He brings justice, He brings peace, and He brings rest.

So, we're supposed to trust that there's still a plan and He has the power to make that plan happen. And we're not to worry. Severe worry, significant worry is an expression saying that God doesn't know what's happening down here, or that God can't do anything about it. We shouldn't worry, even in times like this. We can be angry—oh, yeah. We can grieve—absolutely. Worry? No. Because the King had made promises and the promises are showing to be made true.

Obedience, Not Rebellion

Not only trust instead of worry, but we also need to obey instead of rebel. If you look at the language and understand what a king is, there's a king and he has these subjects, and the subjects do as they're told. I've heard people say, "I tried Christianity and it didn't work." I want to interrupt and say, "The Christianity that you tried—did you try the one where you obeyed all that He commanded? Or did you try the one where if you didn't like what He said, you didn't have to do it?" Because that's not Christianity. Christianity has a king. And the king rules as a sovereign over the things that belong to Him. And we belong to Him.

If you read the Bible, you'll find that there are five reasons to obey God. The number one reason? He's the king. And we obey the king. It has to do with authority. The gospel to the Jews is Matthew. We saw how it started. Here's the last paragraph to the Jews who were looking for this king. Here's what Jesus says.

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

"Then Jesus came to them"—Matthew 28—He "came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.'" Why? Because He's a king. " 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, even to the very end of the age.'" *So be courageous, because I will be with you.*

"Teaching them"—look at those words. Those are king-servant words. "Teaching them to obey"—what? "His commands." Which ones? All of them. That's a king. *I want you to obey my commands. I want you to obey all of my commands.* That's the purpose of the Church, to go into all nations. He's delegated that authority to us because that's the nature of the Garden of Eden, that we would rule that garden in justice. And we're supposed to be going and teaching other people to obey all that God has commanded, to practice on earth what it is in heaven. And when we do that, when the Church plays its part in making sure that justice and righteousness prevail, it's an expression of giving back to God what He delegated to us.

Proverbs 21:15

When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.

Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does YHWH require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Amos 5:24

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

Proverbs 29:7

The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Look at these passages that we find in the older Testament about this. In Proverbs 21 it says, “When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to the evildoers.” Let’s do that, church.

Micah 6:8 is kind of a famous passage: “God has shown you, O mortal man, what is good. And what does YHWH require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.” That’s what we’re to do—practice this as co-regents, co-rulers, on earth.

Amos chapter 5 says, “But let justice roll out like a river, righteousness like a never-ending stream!” Everywhere, all the time, to every people.

Proverbs 29: “The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.”

O YHWH God, O Sovereign YHWH God, O God Almighty, this is what we’re to do. This is what the Church is supposed to be doing. I mean, we’re supposed to be bringing righteousness and justice to all mankind. Can you hear the cry for justice right now? The cry from the poor and the oppressed and the unborn—they are crying out for the Church to step in and teach the world to obey what God has commanded. That’s what we’re supposed to be doing.

These Promises Are from So Long Ago ...

You know, when you look at those promises to David three thousand years ago and the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, two thousand years ago, it's very easy to come to this: *It's been so long. Is there still a plan? Is there still power? I mean, look at the chaos around us. It's been so long, and look around.* That is exactly what was stewing in the hearts of Mary and Joseph when an angel shows up and says, *I'm here and I never left.* O, Sovereign YHWH.

So, we're to trust and obey because what He promised will happen, will happen. It's based on an unconditional, unilateral promise. It cannot not happen. Just to be clear, when we look at the Book of Revelation to see how things end, the Book of Revelation is prophecy for us. We're looking ahead. It's a history book for God. He's looking back. This is how time works in God's economy. We're sitting at a train crossing and the train's coming by and we're seeing cars one or two at a time. Sometimes we can back up and see four cars and see perspective on human history. That's not how God sees time. God sees the whole train.

In Revelation it says, *The last car is green. It's not a red caboose, it's a green car.*

And you think, *How did you know that?*

That's just foreknowledge. I saw it, I know it's green, that's foreknowledge.

That's not what we're talking about. God's saying, *No, no, it's green. I saw it. I put it there. I put that green car at the end. I've already worked this thing out. What I promised would happen, it will happen.* All of these things will be fulfilled. All of these promises will be granted. They can't not be granted. They will be fulfilled in the second coming of Jesus Christ and until then we are to take on these roles.

And when the King comes—and the Book of Revelation is the story of justice being applied, accountability being instituted—there will be no suffering. There will be no disadvantaged. There will be no birth defects. There will be no poverty. There will be no death. There will be no tears. There will be no tears of sorrow. I think there will be tears ... of joy. And we live this day how Mary lived and Joseph lived, the day before the angel shows up, believing in these covenants, these unilateral promises in the name of God, by God, that serve as a lighthouse in storms, the North Star when we're lost, a light in times of darkness.

Revelation 22:14, 16

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright morning star.”

The last book of the Bible, in the last chapter of that book, it says this: “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city”, into that garden. And it says, “ ‘I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David. I’m the morning star.’” That’s how it ends, with YHWH quoting this promise in 2 Samuel 7.

Listen, if you have trusted Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for your sins; if you’ve trusted in the promises that He’s made, that whether you can see them or not, that you believe; that you were filled with shame but now you have received honor by grace, just sitting down; that you were powerless and now you’ve received the Holy Spirit; that you were guilty and now have the innocence of Jesus Christ Himself; those are promises made by a righteous king. If you believe those to be true, they’re going to happen. It can’t not happen. Those are the promises we live in, not just for a savior, but for a king. And we live for that day, especially in times like these. But we forget. We get confused. We watch the waves instead of the lighthouse. We lose the North Star and we get slipped in the darkness and Jesus says, “No, you have to remember the kind of promises I made to you,” and He gives us this as a gift. This is communion. This is the Lord’s table. And this is a command from Jesus. He says to us, “Listen, you’ve got to do this as much as you can. Every time you eat this bread and drink this blood, do this so that you’ll remember me and that I’m returning.”

Communion

You’ve been warned that we’re going to have communion today. Why don’t you go and pass out and distribute those elements to your family or the people that you’re with today. Let’s take communion together as a church. What a time to take it. We need to remember a couple of

things about communion. We need to remember this. The purpose of it is to remind us that the promises of God are true and we don't necessarily have to see them to believe them. We can believe in the sun on a cloudy day; we can believe in the promises of God when there doesn't seem to be a lot of evidence for that. But time and death and even sin can't separate us from these promises.

The other reason we need to practice this is because it's called communion—community. And friends, there is evil amongst us that is trying to divide the Church. Because the Church unified, the Church showing itself to be the creativity and the extravagance of God and the way He makes different kinds of people with different colors of skin and jawlines and features. God loves that sort of thing. That's what He does with flowers and other expressions of creativity. And the world hates to see us united. We have this thing in common, the blood of Jesus Christ. And that's what we celebrate with communion—the unity that makes us His. Let's do that together.

The night He was betrayed, Jesus took the bread and He said, "Listen, this bread is my body and it's going to be broken for you. It's going to be torn apart and gashed." Because what humans broke, only God can fix. And God so loved the world that He sent Jesus, His only son, God and man. Because only He could fix it. And His body was broken. He said, "Take this and eat it. Do this in memory of me." Let's take that.

Lord, we are so grateful for Your sacrifice, Your death that atoned for, paid for our sin, Your shame that brought us honor, and Your humility that gave us power. Lord, we want to remember that in times like this, that Your promises are true, that You are sovereign, O Sovereign YHWH, that You have a plan and You have the power to make the plan happen. Lord, let us focus on those promises and Your nature. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Then He took the cup and He said, "This is my blood." But it's also the blood of a new covenant—there's the word again. Covenant, a marriage of love and law. Love is a generous feeling towards you. Law is saying, "I promise I will always have this love and affection towards you." And He says, "This is a new covenant, a covenant that will give you by grace my Holy Spirit. And it will live inside of you. My sacrifice will pay the price of your sins and make your soul worthy of holding audience with the Spirit of God. And when He comes into your soul, I will seal that door so He can't escape, because He's safe there." God provides salvation and the power of the Spirit. He says, "Take this cup and remember this. Remember this—that you're all

my people. You are all my family. You are all in my image. You all share this blood, the blood of the new covenant.” Take that together.

And then Jesus said, “Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, do this in memory of me until I come again in glory like I promised I would.” And He will. I know, it seems like a long time. I look around and it doesn’t look like He’s coming back. Yeah. That’s happened before. Let’s be ready for that coming. Let’s live each day like we’re righteous kings and queens distributing justice and peace and rest to all those around us, teaching them to obey all that He has commanded.

I thought it would be appropriate if we as a church pray the Lord’s Prayer together and closed our service time with that. Let’s do that, okay?

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation and deliver us from this evil one. For thine is the kingdom, Yours is the power, Yours is the glory forever and ever.

I hope that this was a spiritual moment for you and your loved ones. I can’t wait to see you again, Grace. We’re going to get back on campus as soon as we can as often as we can. We’ll see you again.