

The powerful king's kingdom

OT: Isaiah 25:6-9

NT: Revelation 7:1-17

Big Idea: Jesus is the powerful king who has an incredible kingdom where he reigns forever.

Elections are just around the corner. How are you feeling about them? Are you excited? Are you feeling a bit more like Eeyore the donkey from Winnie the Pooh?

What's the point, everyone is corrupt, nothing will change...

Maybe you feel angry that there doesn't seem to be enough change, just a bunch of broken promises.

I'm not quite sure what I am feeling at this stage just yet, but we all have some ideas and opinions about the outcome.

It's around this time in our country that many of us become professionals on politics.

We share our point of view as often as we can and wherever we can and try and sway people over to our side.

We just want them to see the truth, to think things through...if they do well then our Province and country will be a better place.

For a moment, think about your ideal result in the upcoming elections. Think about what the best outcome could be for our country.

What would make life better for us? What would get your vote no questions asked?

Better and equal education? Making abortion illegal? Equal job opportunities?

A decent and fair minimum wage? Better and more reliable public transport? A president that is not corrupt and is self funded?

Housing for the homeless and care for the poor? Support for the elderly? Equal hospital benefits for those who can't afford medical aid?

That one is close to my heart, my mom would have benefitted from that one enormously.

Safety in your area, with police people you can trust and who are reliable? Traffic officers that work constantly to make our roads safer?

Rehabilitation in our prisons? Feeding plans that help those who regularly go hungry?

Those are really great things aren't they? Who wouldn't want to live there?

Over these few weeks as we have spent some time reflecting on the Easter story, which is familiar to most of us we have seen Jesus the powerful king.

Last week we saw that Jesus is the powerful king who has ALL authority. Jesus the Christ, conquered death.

Jesus the Christ is God, Jesus the Christ is our creator. Jesus is the only person with any real authority.

Jesus is the powerful king who has more authority than our president or government parties.

There is no one bigger than Jesus the powerful king, there is no thing bigger than Jesus.

Those are the facts we have seen over these last four weeks. Tonight I want us to turn our attention to the end.

I want us to be reminded of where we are heading so that we don't lose focus.

We move out of Matthew's eye witness account of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Tonight we look at a letter John wrote to some churches.

John is another eyewitness of the powerful king Jesus. John was one of Jesus' close disciples. As some of you will know he has written his own eye witness account.

The gospel according to John...as well as 3 smaller letters written to some churches.

We turn our attention to his last letter.

The last book of God's written word. The book of Revelation. If you have closed your app or Bibles, please open them to chapter 7.

That's where we will be spending our time tonight. The book of Revelation is a book filled with imagery.

In chapter seven we see the vision that John himself saw of the eternal kingdom. Particularly who would be there and what would happen.

The first thing we see is that in the eternal kingdom...

1. Everyone is included

Please follow with me as I read the first 10 verses again for us; see if you can pick up the contrast.

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, restraining the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel rising up from the east, who had the seal of the living God. He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels who were allowed to harm the earth and the sea: ³ “Don’t harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads.” ⁴ And I heard the number of the sealed:

144,000 sealed from every tribe of the Israelites:

**⁵ 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Judah,
12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,
12,000 from the tribe of Gad,
⁶ 12,000 from the tribe of Asher,
12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,
12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,
⁷ 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,
12,000 from the tribe of Levi,**

**12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,
8 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Benjamin.**

9 After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

**Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!**

We pick up John's vision near the end of his vision of the seven seals being opened.

So far six seals have been opened, bringing various judgments on the earth until the final judgement after the sixth one.

This is where we pick up John's vision.

As John looks at this final judgment he sees that the servants of God will be marked with the seal of God and unharmed.

The seal being the wax seal used by royalty, to show that it has their mark of approval. It carries their authority.

John sees that the servants of God are marked with his royal seal. We are marked with his authority and therefore are his.

This is great news for those who are servants; it means they have nothing to fear on the final day of judgment.

They are safe, they are free from God's wrath. We already know this because that what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Jesus took God's wrath on himself so that we never have too. That is what John sees happening in the final judgment.

John then hears the number of the sealed.
Remember this is image language you can't hear
numbers.

But as John listens he hears the sealed and they
are basically Israel. All the tribes of Israel are
sealed.

144 000 in total. 12 000 from each tribe. That's
where the Jehovah's witnesses get their total for
heaven from.

Only 144 000 can go to heaven the rest have a
sort of heaven on earth.

That's what seems to be happening here in
John's vision, but remember this is picture
language along with symbolism.

John hears the nation of Israel, but then as he
looks in v9 wat does he see?

That's the contrast, he hears what he thinks will
happen, but what he sees is much bigger.

John thinks the eternal kingdom is just for a limited number of Jews, but then he sees it's much much bigger.

As John looks at the eternal kingdom, he sees people from every nation, every tribe, every people and every language.

There are so many people that no one could number them. 144 000 might have seemed like a lot, but John can't even count the multitude in the new creation.

What an incredible sight that must have been. Imagine seeing people from all over the world gather together before Jesus' throne.

The powerful king Jesus' offer for salvation is open to everyone. His salvation is not for a select few.

His salvation does not discriminate. This is also his plan to reach the world worked. Going out making disciples and teaching them to obey.

The eternal might start off small, and we might forget about it and we might not see the growth ourselves.

But the kingdom continues to grow, it will grow so large that it will be uncountable. Amazing!

If you believe in Jesus, if you are following and serving him, then you are amongst those people.

You are marked with God's seal and you won't face the final judgment. You will join the people crying out in v10...

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb.

Firstly we see that in the eternal kingdom everyone is included. Secondly we see that in the eternal kingdom...

2. God is worshipped forever

Have a look with me as I read from vs11 again for us...

¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne, and along with the elders and the four living creatures they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying,

Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “Who are these people in white robes, and where did they come from?”

¹⁴ I said to him, “Sir, you know.”

Then he told me: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

As the vision continues and John zooms in on the throne he sees that the people sealed by God are not singing God’s praises alone.

The angels, elders and the four living creatures are all bowed down and worshipping God.

Have a look at v12 they give God all the glory in their worship of him. As we have seen over the past few weeks and reminded in this chapter he deserves it.

God had an incredible rescue plan from before the creation of the world. We have the privilege of being able to see that it was a great plan.

A plan that worked. A plan that was fulfilled in Jesus the Christ. God the Son.

Without Jesus we have no hope, there is no salvation. Without Jesus, judgement day is terrifying and inescapable.

Without Jesus we cannot have a relationship with God. Without Jesus we are lost and heading to forever death.

God in his love, mercy and grace had a plan to save us from this horrible fate. As we reflected on over Easter, Jesus died and suffered for us.

That is why for all eternity we will be singing his praises and worshipping him and giving him the glory he deserves.

God has done it all for us there is nothing that we have done to help him or that deserves any praise.

No matter where you come from, or what have done or haven't done, those who follow Jesus the Christ who believe in him have been washed clean.

It's right there in v14 our robes will be made white by washing them in the blood of the lamb.

Jesus' death for us, the shedding of his blood in our place makes us clean. That's how awesome Jesus is, he is so pure, his blood is so precious it makes us clean.

Jesus' blood is able to clean the filthiest of sinners, this is true throughout history, perhaps it's true for you?

It's definitely true for me. Brothers and sisters
what more could we want, what more do we
need?

This is a vision, but it's a vision that will be
fulfilled, it's not an empty promise, it's not some
unobtainable dream.

It's true and it's guaranteed. Praise the Lord. The
great news doesn't stop there because finally we
see that in the eternal kingdom...

3. Jesus is on the throne forever

Follow with me as I read these last few beautiful
verses as we see what else lies ahead for us in
the powerful king's kingdom.

**¹⁵For this reason they are before the throne of
God, and they serve him day and night in his
temple.**

The one seated on the throne will shelter them:

**¹⁶They will no longer hunger;
they will no longer thirst;
the sun will no longer strike them,**

nor will any scorching heat.

**17 For the Lamb who is at the centre of the
throne
will shepherd them;
he will guide them to springs of the waters of
life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their
eyes.**

Wow what a great place to be. How amazing.
Often people think of heaven and the new
creation in terms of stuff.

I can't wait for heaven because then I will get my
mansion, my super fancy boat or private jet.

I can't wait for Jesus to come back because then I
will be able to eat as my chocolate as I want
forever.

I can't wait for the new creation because I will have so much money I can get whatever I want.

Often in movies and songs and other forms of art that's exactly what heaven is portrayed as.

A place where every wish you have comes true.
That is sad for two reasons.

Firstly it's sad because all those views are fuelled by self, we are putting ourselves on the throne.

We are thinking with our pride. We still want to be number one. What we see here is that we are not on the throne in the new creation.

In fact we never will be because that position belongs to Jesus the Christ. Jesus the powerful king sits on the throne for eternity.

A position he fully deserves, he is the only reason we get to spend any time in the glorious new creation.

We will be in the new creation, but we won't be sitting on the throne, instead we will be gathered around it.

Gathered together serving the powerful king and worshipping him. Jesus the Christ alone is king.

Our robes are washed white with his blood. He is our saviour, he has done it all for us.

In fact we are sealed for him, we have been bought with his blood we belong to him, we are his servants for all eternity.

Jesus our servant king served us in his life, death and resurrection and we will serve him for all eternity.

Which is really exciting. Serving Jesus is a great privilege because Jesus is not like other kings.

Being a servant of the powerful king Jesus comes with many benefits. Which is the second reason it's sad to think heaven is just about material possessions.

It's sad because we get Jesus the Christ for all eternity. We get an eternal relationship with the powerful king forever.

Jesus will be our shepherd forever. Have a look over those verse again.

That means shelter forever, no fear of losing your home.

That means no more hunger or thirst. We will always have food and drink, another massive need sorted out...forever.

The sun and heat means no more struggle and toil. Life will be easy...forever.

Jesus the Lamb, the powerful king will shepherd us and lead us and care for us.

Jesus the powerful king will lead us to the waters of life...no more death...we will live forever.

And finally every tear will be wiped away, no more sadness, no more loss or struggle that causes us deep pain.

We will be comforted, we will be cared for and
we will be looked after...forever.

It sounds like we are being served far more than
we are serving. Jesus the powerful king is
incredible.

That's what this series has been all about. Seeing
Jesus the Christ, remembering Jesus is the
powerful king who has done it all for us.

Striving to live that out in our everyday life.
Striving to not shy away from the emotions we
feel from being loved so deeply.

Striving to face the evidence and to stop hiding
away in our everyday, because what we believe
is true.

Because Jesus the powerful king can save anyone. He can save your family member, your friend, your colleague...even you.

Tonight my final challenge to you from God's word is where is your focus?

Where are you investing all of your time and effort? Are you pouring yourself out into this world?

You need to see tonight that this world does not compare to what awaits us as believers. This world will always disappoint us.

This world will always make us feel betrayed, hurt angry and injustice will never go away.

Because we are made for more. We are made for relationship with God.

It's naïve to think that things will be perfect this side of the new creation. As long as we are around, people who are sinful, we will mess things up.

Therefore we need to work hard to stand firm, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:58. Listen to his words...

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

As soon as we start to believe the lie that we can be satisfied by the things of this world we are in grave danger.

As soon as we start worshipping the gifts over the giver of the gifts we will lose focus.

We have an eternity waiting for us, an eternity with our incredible, amazing, powerful king Jesus waiting for us.

The best way to keep focussed is to not get distracted, let's strive to keep busy doing the lord's work.

When we are focussed on doing the lord's work then we are constantly being reminded of our future, of what we have.

What is the Lord's work? We saw it last week it is to make him known to the ends of the earth.

Let's keep talking about the kingdom, it is real, it is true. Let's keep sharing the great news we already know and believe.

Let's keep using the opportunities God gives us.

The people God places in our lives. Let's tell people our story, the incredible miracle God performed in our life.

God changed my heart, God called me out of darkness...there is nothing great about me it's all him.

Finally let's show people that we have a real relationship with our king.

Jesus is our powerful king, we belong to him, let us live for him, let's show people in how we treat them and ourselves that we serve an awesome king.

A king who is full of mercy and grace. Let's live for the kingdom now and as we do Jesus will be glorified and we will keep focussed.

Jesus is the powerful king, he has done everything for us. Let's not forget this, let's not grow tired of this.

Let's tell people, let's show people, let's not lose focus. There is only one eternal kingdom, this world will pass away.

Where is your focus?

Let's pray.