

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Good King, Bad King, The King

PART

1

TITLE

Behold Your King

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 8:4-22, 10:17-24, 12:16-22



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Well, it's good to see you, Providence family, and to sing with you this morning. If you're a guest with us, we're glad that you have joined us, and I hope this time will be really encouraging to you as we start a new series on the kings. Most of us were born and grew up here in America, and as such, we've never ... as a people, we've never really been all that excited about having a king, in particular when we had one. And so, when you think about when we are in school and we study our history, we learn about presidents. But when you study the Bible, you learn about kings, lots of kings, in the Old Testament, 43 kings to be exact.

And when you think the breadth of what the Old Testament is, the vast majority of it is either about these kings, it's written by one of these kings, it's a warning of judgment from the prophets because of the culture or because of the ungodliness of these kings, it's actual justice from God that's being given because of the ungodliness, or there's a few books that deal with God's amazing merciful restoration that came after his judgment because of these kings. With very few exceptions, these kings defiled, their soul, their heart, they destroyed their families, and they deconstructed the honor of their own culture.

To be true, and to be honest, or to be fair, I should say, there were a few good kings. Out of the 43, there were a handful that the Bible even says this is a good king. But their failures, and their sin in particular for many of them, at the end of their life, it's so striking that to call them a good king is pretty generous. And yet God continued to pursue these kings, to make promises to these kings, ultimately because he was using this royal line in order to bring us Jesus, who is the king.

And some of you, I know you are probably thinking, "Oh, so we're going to study these 43 kings." We're not going to study all 43, by the way. But we are going to study several of them. And I don't want you to think, though, is that, oh, we're just going to spend several weeks and we're going to talk about dead people, all these people that aren't here anymore, and who cares how they ruled. But this is why it's so important. The Old Testament is the movie theater that you attend in order to view your spiritual movie. When you read the Old Testament and you see these individuals who are wrestling with themselves, and wrestling with the use of authority, who are wrestling with why is that person the king and I'm not the king, why is that person the boss and I'm not the boss, why does that person have authority? That person got the raise and I didn't get the raise. All the motives, all the things that we experience in life, when you turn to the Old Testament, you simply see your reflection.

Even Romans tells us this in Romans chapter 15, verse four, he says everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through the endurance and encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. In other words, when we take the time to study the lives of some of these kings, a number of things begin to happen in our own personal life to teach us and to give us hope about our life. One of those things is we become more self aware of how we exercise our own authority, and the consequences and benefits on the basis of how we do that.

In addition, we learn and we see reflections of our current leaders, leaders within our workplaces, in our church, our state, city, our nation, and we become more understanding about how they are using authority, and the benefits and consequences that come to a culture or to that people in response to it. But then there's another thing that takes place. He says that he's written in order to give us hope. And that is that when we study these kings, one of the results of studying these kings is that we begin to see how Jesus, who is the true and better king, how he exercises his authority. And we see all the benefits of the lives of people who are under that authority, and it creates hope. It creates inspiration, motivation for how to live and how to yield to him. And so over these next couple months, as we lead up to Easter, I pray this time will be really encouraging, edifying to you and to all of us.

So let me pray for us. Father, I ask that you would do just what we read in this passage, and that is that you would answer our prayers for the sake of your great name, that you would peak our curiosity, that you would create interest, that you would remove distraction for the sake of your great name. That you would convict us of sin, that you would forgive our sin. You would restore us from the effects of our sin, and you would do so for the sake of your great name. I pray for those who may be here in the room, or perhaps watching at home, or somewhere else. I pray father that you would help us to see that our picture is being depicted in these pages.

And this morning, as we consider what has to be one of the most epic trade downs in the history of the world, would you help us to see reflections of how we repeatedly make a similar choice and bear the consequence because of it. And so, as we prepare to take the Lord's supper this morning, would you prepare our heart, would you tenderize our heart, would you give us faith. And I pray that you would pour out your spirit in this place, and that you would cause people to be born again to a new and living hope, and you would cause your church to repent of our persistence to resist you. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Whenever I start a new book study with you, I always like to back up and get a good running start in the story of the Bible. So let me back up as far as I can go. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth. And after he created the world to live in perfect peace, the Bible says that we looked at the one restriction that he placed on us, in spite of his vast generosity, and we said, "You're too overbearing." And so we sinned against God. And once the consequences of that sin and the avalanche of brokenness swept over our life, relationships and culture, the Bible says that God, in the book of ... it's the third chapter, the first book of the Bible, it's called Genesis.

In verse 15, God made a promise. It's a remarkable promise. And what it says there is that God said that one day there would be born a son, a special son, a unique son who would be the redeemer and savior of the world, who would crush the head of evil, and who would restore our relationship as people with God almighty who is holy. And what's remarkable is this, then, is that the Bible is intended to be read as though every time there is a new character, a new son that is introduced, we're supposed to be asking the question, if we're reading properly, is this the promised son, is this the redeemer? There is one coming in the pages of

scripture.

And so just several pages after God promises this special son, God comes to a man. His name is Abraham. And we learn very quickly that he's not the promised son because he's worshiping rocks. He's an idolater. And God comes to him in spite of his sin. And he says, "I am gracious and I am good. And I'm going to bless you. And I'm going to make you into a great nation. And from this nation, I am going to bring the redeemer for all people." It wasn't Abraham. And yet, God made good on his promise. And suddenly, he formed out of his line the nation called Israel. God gave them a leader. His name is Moses. And we're supposed to ask is Moses the final savior?

And he did do him amazing work. God used him to save his people from slavery, to actually set them free. And yet, we know that he was not. And yet, God, through this man named Moses, he gave the people of Israel, this special people waiting for this Messiah, this Christ to come, a special assignment. And he says to them these words. He says, "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests in a holy nation." In other words, I'm going to give you some instructions in the way that you should live, in the way that you relate to people, in the way that you relate to me, that's going to make you different than other peoples. You'll be holy or set apart. Folks will look at you and wonder why you don't work seven days a week, but you take one day and you rest.

And not only will they recognize these kinds of differences in you as a people, but they will also recognize that, that's an attractive way to live. That it really is nice to be able to rest one day out of seven. It really is nice to be able to treat people as we want to be treated. And as a result of that, you'll be a kingdom of priests, meaning as you're a holy nation, as you're unique, and as you are distinct, people will come to you. And as a priest, the priest is someone who takes people and brings them to God, they'll come and say, "Can you help me understand why you're so different?" In other words, God was creating a missionary people. And among this missionary people, there's a leader named Moses. Well, he dies. Eventually, there's a man named Joshua. Is that the one? That's not the one.

And then there was Judges. Are they the ones? They weren't the ones. But the last judge was a man named Samuel. And so in First Samuel ... This is where we're going to be today. If you have a Bible, I'm going to ask you to turn to First Samuel, chapter eight. We're going to actually look at five chapters. We're not going to read all five. If you don't have a Bible, there's Bibles in the chairs near you. I encourage you to look at one. And if you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. But he is the last judge. And this is what it says in verse one of chapter eight. He says, "When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel."

Verse three says, "And yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after gain. And they took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, 'Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the other nations.' But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us,' and Samuel prayed to the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, 'Obey the voice of the people and all that they say to

you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice. Only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

And so in the next section, beginning in verse 11, you find this pattern. There’s this constant cadence of what the king and this line of kings would do to the people. And it’s a really devastating thing that it ... He says, “He will take your sons and he will take your daughters. And he will take the best of your fields. And he will take a 10th of your grain. He will take your male servants and female servants. He will take the 10th of your flocks.” In other words, he is going to take from you, and when you have nothing left, then you will be his slave. And the people respond to this warning in verse 19 and said, “The people refuse to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, no, but there shall be a king over us that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

Well, you get to First Samuel chapter nine, and in First Samuel chapter nine, we’re introduced to a man named Saul. And we’re told that he’s going to be the first king. In chapter 10 at the very beginning, there’s a little ceremony, but it’s private, where Samuel anoints him privately, pouring oil over his head. He says, “You’re going to be the next king,” but the people don’t know. And so, what we’re told is, in verse 18, Samuel gathers all the people and he says, I want you to arrange yourself by tribes and clans of all the different families.

And this is what it says. And the Lord said, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘I brought up Israel out of Egypt. I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.’ But today you have rejected your God who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses. And you have said to him, ‘Set a king over us.’” Verse 20. “Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. And the Klan of the Matrites was taken by lot. And Saul, the son of Kish, was taken by lot. But when they sought him could not be found. And so they inquired again of the Lord, ‘Is there a man still to come?’ And the Lord said, ‘Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.’

Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than all the people from his shoulders upward. Samuel said to all the people, ‘Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people.’ And all the people shouted, ‘Long, lived the king.’” Then you get to chapter 11. And in chapter 11, we see little splashes of Saul’s courage and mercy. But the people still do not recognize the insult that they have paid to the Lord by rejecting him as king. And so in chapter 12, Samuel gathers all the people. And in verse seven, it says that he tells them to stand still that I may plead with you before the Lord concerning all the righteous needs of the Lord that he performed for you and for your fathers. And what he does after that is he begins to recount just some of the ways that God has been exceptionally kind to this people, what he’s done for this people.

And yet this people continues to reject him. And he wants to show them depth of the insult of rejecting him. And so he gives them a sign. In verse 16 in chapter 12 it says once again, “Stand still and see this great thing that the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today?” Wheat harvest in Israel was late June, early July. It was dry season. It didn’t rain. “I will call upon the Lord that he may send thunder and rain, and you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord in asking for yourself a king.’ So Samuel called upon the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day. And all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people said to Samuel, ‘Pray for your servants to the Lord, your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil to ask for ourselves a king.’

Samuel said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. You have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart and do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they’re empty. For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great namesake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself.’” What do we learn in this story that is one of the scenes of our own spiritual movie?

First thing I want you to see is that God is the treasure and honor of his people. He’s the treasure and honor of his people. You see, the sin of rejecting him in this passage is so striking because of the honor that is bound up in the one who is being dishonored. Now, these chapters that we read, they do not show us, they don’t recount all of the attributes of God that we find in other places of the scriptures. But leaning on those other places of the scriptures, you can imagine the insult, and you can also imagine just the treasure and honor that God is to his people when you imagine these truths, that he is the creator of the universe. And he sustains all things by the power of his word, and he is the heir of all things.

And he is the source of everything that is beautiful, everything that is noble and everything that is righteous. He is the author of everything that is true. He is the standard of everything that is just. He is the centerpiece of civilization, the master key of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. He is the ocean of every good thing and the superlative of every good thing you would choose to call him. He is incomparable, immeasurable, and indescribable. When the Bible seeks to speak of attributes of the Lord, it falls over like a waterfall, grace, and mercy, kindness, justice, and holiness, omnipotence, omnipresence. His sovereignty, his might, it just continues to flow.

And this is why the Bible, when it references Jesus Christ as the king, it keeps using different metaphors to explain the extent of his jurisdiction. He is the king of the Earth. He’s the king of heaven. He’s the king of Israel. He’s the king of the ages. He’s the king of righteousness. He’s the king of glory. He’s the king of kings. And our passage says this king is also kind. He’s kind. All of this worth that’s bound up in God is kind. This is why in chapter 10, verse 18, when trying to depict the horror of what they’ve done, they said, “I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you. I moved my strong hand in kindness towards you.”

He goes on in chapter 12, verse seven, when he says, “Stand still that I may plea with you before the Lord concerning the righteous deeds of the Lord. You just look at the righteous needs of the Lord.” And what it says there is that God formed this people, and God saved this people, delivered this people, guided this people, supplied this people, and fought for this people. This is why when you turn to Deuteronomy, you find this passage. He, this is God, “God found Israel in a desert land and in the howling waste of the wilderness.” And it says that he encircled him. Now, if you’re in the howling desert and something’s encircling you, that’s not a good thing, is it? Unless it’s the Lord. And when it said as that what he did is, oh, he circled in order to keep everything else away because he cared for him. And then it just ... beyond comprehension, this one who is absolutely immeasurable and indescribable in all of his ways kept this people as the apple of his eye.

Now, my question is this. If they were of the apple of his eye, then what should he have been to them? And what should he be to us? For the revelation of God continues to March forward in scripture. And there we find that this great God, who’s incomparable, immeasurable, and indescribable, the king of all things, he came to this Earth in the form of a baby, grew up, became poor for us, resisted sin for us, instructed us in righteousness for us. He willingly allowed himself to be bound and arrested in our place, to be accused in our place, to be condemned in our place, to be crucified in our place. And then he rose from the dead in order to give us a place in heaven. And then he sends his holy spirit to everyone who believes in him to live in this place, to direct us, and convict us, and change us, comfort us, and console us.

This is why Paul says when he is considering who we are in this weak, frail body, and we think about who he is, and all of his value, and all of his honor, and all of his treasure, Paul says, “We have this treasure in jars of clay.” Do you know what you are? You are a jar of clay that the older you get, the more brittle it becomes, until it finally breaks for good. And God, in all of his grace, places all of his glory, and he says, “I want to live inside of that.” Why does he do this? To show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. Don’t you see, then, that rejecting God is like a ring that rejects its diamond.

In the course of every one of our days, when we look at God and we say, “You may be a diamond, but I’m pretty sure there’s a better diamond,” and we remove that and we try to replace it, it is as foolish as replacing God with Saul. We do the same thing, you understand? He’s the treasure among his people. What does that mean? It means if there was a hundred of us in the room and God came into the room, there would be one treasure and a hundred people. And he is the honorable distinction of his people. What that means is this. It is Christ in us that makes us unique and distinct, meaning if there’s any godliness among us, any goodness among us, any nobility, any excellence, anything that’s worthy of praise, any love, or joy, or peace, or patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self control, any of the fruit of the spirit, anything that originates in Christ, if anything in him is seen in this place, it’s because of him.

He makes us honorably distinct. He is our everlasting treasure. To reject Christ, we only return to being an empty clay pot. And ultimately that’s the great tragedy of our heart, which is the second point. And that is that God is the treasure and honor that our sinful hearts resist. Even those of us who see the honor, the vast

honor, the value and treasure of who God is, even those of us who have been born again, and God has recreated our heart, we still have vestiges of an old person within us that the New Testament calls an old man, that literally is like a palm tree that bends towards the sun.

But we bend opposite of the sun. Our fallen nature bends away from the Lord. We wake up in the morning, we don't bend towards the Bible. We bend towards how much are our investments worth and who won the game last night. And what is Facebook up to today? We're constantly looking at the Lord and all of his glory and saying, "Let me replace that diamond with a different stone," and then expect that stone to change your heart. You see, Jesus told an amazing parable that most of us think it's about a son because we name it the prodigal son. But it's actually about two sons, two sons that visibly from the outside, they look like they're so different. And yet, Jesus' point in telling it is to say it's actually the same root problem.

It says, there's a man. He has two sons. And one of his sons comes up to him and he says ... This is a paraphrase by the way, "You're not dead, but I wish you were. So why don't you go ahead and give me the inheritance that is due to me so that I can leave and enjoy the inheritance without you?" And he goes and he squanders everything in sin. So he represents those among us, or those seasons in our lives where we visibly walked away from the Lord, rejected him, rebelled, and went reckless into sin. Then he says, but there's another son. The other son, he stayed home and he was good, and he was religious. But his heart wanted to leave.

There is religious resistance and irreligious resistance to God. And every single one of us participate at least in one of these son's behavior. That's why it's a parable. He's describing us. And this is precisely what we see in this passage. You think about what's happening here. In chapter eight, verse five, they come to him and they say, "Look, Samuel, you're old." It's amazing they would say that. We typically know when somebody's old, but they come and they say, "You're old, and it's very clear you're old, and your sons don't walk in your ways. And so appoint for us a king." And notice what it says, to be like all the other nations. We don't want to be a holy nation. We want to be like the other nations. They have human kings. We have a divine king. We want a moral king.

And Samuel, he begins sulking. He's like, "Man, I thought I had it in me to be the king. I'm still spry. I got my wisdom. I could probably do it. And God comes to me and he says, "Samuel, give up a charade. They did not reject you. They rejected me." So Samuel ... the take, and they say, "No, but there shall be a king over us that we may also be like all the other nations," which is the epic trade down. And a trade down is ultimately seen by what you get at the end of the trade. Saul is chosen and he can't be found. It's amazing. It says, "So they inquire again of the Lord." They go back to him and say, "Hey, one last favor before we shoo you away. Where is that king that we're supposed to have? Where is he?" Oh, you mean the one that's going to fight your battles because his heart is so full of courage and valor? Yeah. He's hiding in the bags because he's afraid of you.

And suddenly, we see a depiction of our trades when we remove the diamond and we asked someone else to fulfill its place. They run and ... They took him from there, it says, and when he stood among the people, he

was tall like, “Wow, look how tall you are. You must be a great king. You can see so far. All that height must make you make really good decisions. Long, live the king.” Let me tell you something. When we ask somebody to be who only God can be, when we ask somebody to fulfill what only God can fulfill, we set them up to fail.

You look at this picture. I know it’s a silly picture in a very serious part of the sermon. But there’s a lot of us who do this to our wife, or our husband, or our children, or a boss, or our president, or a pastor. And that is, we say, “We don’t want the Lord to be our king. I want you to fulfill the job description of the creator of the universe in my life.” So we look at our spouse and we look at our, our kids, and we look at other people in our life, and we stack on them a load that only God can carry. And what’s interesting is this, is that all of these people, they all have unique strengths. And yet when you stack too much weight upon any human’s body, their mind, their frame, they cannot carry the weight. It makes even the strength that they have invalid.

God describes all of this by saying, “My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and of hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that cannot hold any water.” You turn your back on me, and you create clay buckets that you know are going to leak. The Lord feels this insult. And all of our false functional saviors, they feel the impossibility of carrying the weight for us. And we end up feeling ashamed because we can look in our past and we can see all the broken relationships, responsibilities, and all the empty buckets that can no longer hold any water, that prove to be unsatisfactory functional saviors.

And that gets to the last point, and that out as it, God is gracious to turn his judgements into our joys. This is a good point because we’ve all done this. We’ve all sinned in this way. The people, when they’re finally confronted with their sin, and they finally see it, God brings rain when it doesn’t normally rain, all of a sudden they panic and they’re like, “What are we going to do? We already have a Mount Everest of guilt. And we just added to it by asking for a king.” Notice the kindness of the Lord speaks through Samuel. And he says, “Do not be afraid.”

He doesn’t absolve them. He didn’t say, “Oh, you didn’t do anything wrong.” No, he says, “No, you have done all of this evil. You have.” He says, “But do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.” And then he tells him why you don’t have to be afraid. I love this, one of the most beautiful verses in 1 Samuel. Verse 22, “For the Lord will not forsake his people.” Are you one of his? He will not forsake you. Why? Is it because of your values, because of your intrinsic worth, or the fact that you’re going to become useful? No, for his great namesake. His glory is attached to you because you are attached to his name. And he’s so committed to his name, that he’s going to be committed to you, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself.

And so, if you’re here this morning and you simply feel dirty because of sin, let me encourage you to be encouraged, to be reminded of what God, through Samuel, spoke to these people who are also feeling dirty in

this moment, of how you could walk out of here feeling hope. Two reasons. One is because God is passionate about his name that's attached to his people. If you've trusted him, you are a part of his family. You are a son, a daughter in his family, he will not let you go. You are a part of his household. He will not let you go. He will not forsake you.

But there's another thing. And that is that God not only was passionate about his name, but God was determined to send his son. You see, during all 43 kings and their reigns, he kept promising a better king, the true king, the king that would come. Different promises like Isaiah six, "For to us a child is born, and to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder." And you know what his name was. His name was Jesus. All the good kings and all the bad kings, they all led to one king, the king, and his name is Christ. He's the true and better king. And as the true and better king, he never gets old like Samuel. He's the true and better king who never perverts justice or takes a bride like Samuel's boys.

He's the true and better king whose strength is not fortified by slaves, and his comfort is not fortified by the possessions of his people. And therefore, as the true and better king, his kingdom never faces a transfer of power. And as the true and better king, his kingdom is ruled perpetually by perfect righteousness, equity, justice, truth, and love. And as the true and better king, his kingdom is not filled with slaves. It's filled with citizens that he has set free from sin. As the true and better king, he is never found riding on the backs of his people. Rather, he is always found carrying his people on his back. And as the true and better king, he does not rob us of our sons and daughters, but rather makes us sons and daughters when we put our faith and trust in him.

And therefore, let me encourage you this morning as we prepare to take the supper to put your trust in Christ. The Bible actually tells us that if we've never trusted Christ, that we're not to take the elements of the Lord's supper, because to take the elements of the Lord's supper is to tell other people that you're treasuring the realities behind the two symbols. The realities as the death and resurrection of Christ, his body, his blood that's depicted in the symbols of bread and a cup. And so he says don't take it.

But here's the good news. You can trust him right now. You can trust him right now. And the ultimate prize is not that you get to take it. The ultimate prize is you'll be forgiven of your sin, adopted into his family. You'll become a son or daughter in his kingdom. You simply admit that you're a sinner. You put your faith, and trust, and your belief in him, his death and resurrection. You confess him as the Lord of your life. And you can do that right now by simply talking to him. God, I need you. I believe in Christ. And I confess you as Lord of my life. And the Bible says that you will be forgiven right now.

But let me also encourage those of you who have already trusted Christ with a second application. Something to consider this week, and that is to wrestle your wandering heart. The lazy river that is in your heart never drifts towards God. Even a redeemed heart has those vestiges of the old person, that lazy river. If you simply just do what your heart wants to do, you don't drift to the Lord. And that is why, metaphorically, every

morning of your life, you wake up, and you take your heart, and you wrestle it to the ground. And then you ... as it's on the ground, you take the head and the chin, and you turn, and you say, "You must look to Christ." When there's so many other things on your table and on your plate, other things to look at, that is the treasure you have to see first.

And just like the psalms, all these palmists who, instead of saying, "You know what, that's my heart wants, and that's what my heart wants, that's what it is." No, they constantly took their heart, held it to the ground, looked up and said, "God, fix it quick." And so, Psalm 90, he says, "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love." What does that mean? It means you plead with God in the morning, "God, would just show me that you're sweeter than my sin that I want to commit."

Psalm 86, "Unite my heart to fear your name." God would you show my divided heart? That you're the only one that I need to fear, and it's your evaluation over my life? You're the only one I should care about. Psalm 119:36, "Incline my heart to your testimonies," another prayer. What does that mean? It means this. It means, God, would you show my heart right now that your word is more life giving than my portfolio, or the scores of last night's ball game, or my newsfeed, or my social newsfeed." In other words, we need to compensate for our nature that bends away from the Lord. We need to admit and acknowledge when we wake up in the morning, okay, my heart, it's constantly leaning away. And so at the beginning, part of my day, I'm going to take my heart, and then sometimes even through the day, and say, "You've got to look again. You have to look again." There's the treasure. He's the treasure.

In the blur of our pace of life, in the many lights and things to look at on this Earth, you constantly have to see. You have to see the diamond in the center of the ring. And the last thing I want to encourage you is let's wait for God to turn his judgment into joy. Some of us, I know, you just feel dirty. I want you to know no matter what you've done, you don't have to run from it or try to numb yourself to it. You got to look to Christ. When I have blown it again, and I feel shame or I feel dirty, one of the things or places that I turn to is Micah, Micah, chapter seven, verse nine. And this is what it says. This is a prophet saying this. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him." You see what he's saying? It is true. I did this, I did this, and it was against him.

But then notice what he says. "I'm going to bear it until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me." Now, this is amazing. This him, sinned against him, is the same as this he. In other words, Jesus Christ, we're told, is the just and the justified. He's the one we offend. And then because of our faith in Jesus Christ, in his over overwhelming mercy and grace, the same person that we have offended is the same one who pleads our cause on the basis of his righteousness in our life because we have trusted him. It's a beautiful thing.

And so if you sit here and you think, "I just feel so dirty," let me encourage you to pray like Daniel prayed. He said, "Oh Lord, would you forgive? Oh, Lord, pay attention and act. Do not delay for your own namesake, oh my God, because of your city and your people are called by your name." Before we take the Lord's supper,

the Bible says that those of us who are going to take it, we need to examine our heart. And as you examine your heart, there may be a person in the room who says, "I just feel so shameful." Let me encourage you to pray like Daniel.

God, it's not because of my value, it's not because of my name I'm asking you to forgive. I'm asking you to forgive for the sake of your great name, for your honor, and for your glory. So let me give you a moment now to pray.



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