

Jesus - The 'Suffering Servant' King

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[0 : 00] Heavenly Father, we come before you this morning in wonder and worship. We've come to praise your name and to center our hearts on you, to recalibrate our lives with that which is true, and to acknowledge, God, that you are the one true God, the one true King.

God, you are great and you are glorious, and so help us to do that, God. Help us to center our hearts and to center our lives with what is true, according to your will and your way.

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that the truth is we're blinded by our pride. We often think we know best or that our ways are better than yours. We're blinded by our own opinions. Father, this morning we confess this and we ask you to forgive us and to help us.

You, O Lord, are all our good in times of peace. You, O God, are our only support in days of trouble. You are our one sufficiency when this life ends. God, help us to see how good your will is in all situations.

Even when your will crosses over our own, teach us to be pleased with your will and to trust you, even when we don't understand it. God, for some of us right now, we're facing things we don't understand.

[1 : 12] Help us to trust you, we pray. Lord Jesus, this morning we thank you for your tenderness and your grace. How greatly and gently and tenderly you treat us.

How you handle our sin. God, thank you for your warmth and your compassion. Jesus, thank you that when we do come to you in sincerity and truth, there is no fear of your disapproval or your harsh treatment.

O sovereign God, this morning we pray for the churches in Hong Kong and the churches in China. We ask for your strengthening grace to rest upon us. We ask you, O God, to baptize us in your Holy Spirit.

Flood us in your power, O God. We want to meet the living God. Come and do that, we pray, God. Father, we pray for ministers who are discouraged or facing a difficult time.

Those that are under-resourced or encountering opposition. Strengthen them by your grace, God. God, we pray for every church family in Hong Kong this morning. Unify us, sanctify us, strengthen us, empower us to live lives of mission and witness, taking the wonderful news of Jesus to our city.

[2 : 18] God, we long to see many, many people come to know you and have their lives changed by your gospel. Empower us, we pray, God. Father, this morning we bring before you the many, many areas of conflict and fighting in our world.

God, we confess at times we wonder if it's even worth praying. Our world always seems to be at conflict. And yet we come before you, sovereign God, the ruler of all the world, and we ask for peace in our time.

We ask, God, that world leaders will swallow their pride and pursue peace. We pray, God, that nations and ethnicities and tribes and people groups will no longer despise and hate one another, but will find ways to work together, to live peacefully, to honor one another.

God, we pray that every man, woman, and child will be afforded the dignity that is fitting one made in your image, irrespective of their language, their culture, or their race.

Jesus, we long for your return. When you wipe away every tear, put right all that is wrong with the world. When you vanquish your enemies and you rid the world of evil, and you restore justice and righteousness to the earth.

[3 : 24] Jesus, come soon. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Come take away the pain of our world, God. We long to be restored to you. We pray these things in your majestic, sovereign, and yet tender name.

Amen. Let's listen to God's word this morning. The scripture reading comes from Matthew 3.

Please follow along in your bulletins or on the screen. Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?

But Jesus answered him, Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him.

And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. And behold, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

[4 : 38] This is the word of God. Thank you, Betty. Okay. Now, if you weren't here last week, just to let you know where we're going as a church, we are working our way through Matthew's Gospel for the next couple of months.

And Matthew's Gospel is all about Jesus and his kingdom. And yet, as we're going to see again and again, Jesus' kingdom is so very different from the kingdoms of this world and the kingdoms of our lives that we often try and build.

He often does things counterintuitively. And yet, as we're going to see, that Jesus' kingdom, though often different to the way we would do things, is the way that leads to life.

And so, over the next few weeks and months, we're going to be looking at this. And we'll see this predominantly in two weeks' time as we start looking at the Sermon on the Mount. But today, we look at this passage, which is about Jesus' baptism.

Now, what's going on here? Remember last week's passage? John, the baptizer, is baptizing people in the wilderness, and crowds are going out to him.

[5 : 48] And John starts off his message like this. He says, repent. Turn from your sin. Turn from your ways. And why does he say that? Because the king and the kingdom are coming.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand because the Messiah, King Jesus, is on his way. And many people heeded John's message, and they turn from their sin, and they get baptized.

But the question is, John's message and Jesus' message, which is still true and valid for us today, turn from your sin, repent, confess your sin, and turn to him.

The question is, is it safe to do so? Is Jesus trustworthy? In other words, when we confess our sin, when we look into the depths of our hearts, that's a very vulnerable thing to do.

Sometimes you may feel like that the safest option is to just stay silent, like anything you say can and will be held against you in the courts of heaven, right?

[6 : 50] It's like God comes and puts his finger and just plead innocence until you've got a solicitor at your side. But Jesus comes and he says, I want you to be vulnerable. I want you to look into the deepest, most vulnerable parts of your life, and I want you to open them up to me.

And is Jesus safe? Can we trust him with our most vulnerable parts of our lives? In today's passage, we see who is this Jesus that calls us to repentance? And what's he going to do with our sin when we bring it to him?

So let's see what's happening. So in verse 13, it says this, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him saying, I need to be baptized by you.

Why do you come to me? So Jesus comes from Galilee, the home, the town where he's kind of grown up, that area. And he comes to John for a very specific reason.

Now remember, Jesus is not like the religious leaders from last week who are coming to John to check things out. Last week we saw the leaders come and they're not so sure about this guy, John. They're not so sure about his message.

[7 : 53] But all the crowds are going and they don't want to be left out or look like fools. And so they come to John to see what's happening. But Jesus doesn't come for that reason. He comes for a specific purpose.

What does it say? He came to the Jordan in order to be baptized by John. Jesus is not just coming to see whether he should join the crowds. He comes in order to be baptized.

But to John, this doesn't make sense because John is Jesus' second cousin. He knows Jesus somewhat. They might not have been very close, but he would have had some connection with him. And John says, if there's anybody here that needs to be baptized by the other, I need to be baptized by you. Remember, John's baptism is one of repentance, of turning from your sin, of changing your ways.

Remember, he said to the religious leaders in the passage we saw last week, he says, don't think that I can baptize you unless there's some kind of change that takes place in your life, unless you've repented and confessed your sin.

[8 : 52] And here is Jesus coming to John and John says, this shouldn't be like this. Ah, if anyone needs to be baptizing someone else, you should be baptizing me. Except Jesus insists.

He says, John, this must be the way it is. Why? Why does Jesus insist on this? Why does Jesus need to be baptized? Well, look at verse 15.

Jesus knows something and he knows what he's doing. And so he says to John, John, let it be so, for this is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Now, I don't know about you, but I didn't have a clue what that sentence meant.

That's like one of those things where you're like, sorry, what? I read a whole bunch of commentaries this week to try and understand it. It's one of those difficult passages. What is Jesus saying? Well, there's two clues here.

When Matthew uses the word righteousness, he's not using it in the same way that the Apostle Paul uses it. Talking about justification or salvation. He's not saying that you must be baptized or you must be baptized in order to become a Christian.

[9 : 57] When Matthew uses the word righteousness, he's talking about something which is in conformity with God's will. Something which is in alignment with how God wills things to work out or to be.

Remember, in chapter 5, he's going to say, Jesus is going to say, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, you cannot even enter the kingdom of God. So, Jesus is saying, John, let me be baptized for this fulfills God's will.

This is in conformity with what God wills. But then there's another clue because Matthew uses this word fulfill always to talk about the accomplishment or the fulfillment of something that God spoke about in times gone past.

Something in the Old Testament, part of God's will, his revealed will, God gives a hint about in the Old Testament and now in the New Testament, he's going to fulfill it. And so Jesus comes and he says, John, baptize me for this fulfills, what I've spoken about long ago, God's will, God's righteousness.

This is in conformity with what God wants to happen. So this is what Jesus is saying. I know this is a little technical in the beginning, so just bear with me for a few minutes. Jesus is saying this, John, let me get baptized.

[11 : 13] It's right for me to do so for this will bring about the fulfillment of God's will. This is what he has spoken. This is what he has planned. This is what he has spoken about long ago and in doing so, we will fulfill God's will that he has spoken about in years gone past.

Does that make any sense? Okay. Thank you, one or two of us. Okay. So Jesus is saying, John, I know this doesn't make sense to you, but trust me, this is in line with God's will.

He's spoken about it and we're going to fulfill God's will. And now, just before we look at what is that will, look at something on the side here, just a side note. Friends, sometimes God's will doesn't make complete sense to us.

Sometimes God says something or he asks us to do something and at the time, it isn't perfectly clear why he's asking us to do that. It doesn't make perfect sense to us.

Think of John the Baptist, one of the greatest leaders in the New Testament. Here's John who was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb. Here is John who has received divine revelation.

[12 : 19] Here is John who is far more godly than you or I will probably ever be. And yet, John doesn't understand. It doesn't make sense to him. And friends, sometimes God's will, even revealed in his word, at first glance will be like, God, are you sure?

That doesn't make complete sense to me. But his will is trustworthy. We can't trust him. But notice something else here. Even more than that, sometimes God's will may look silly.

It may be humbling. Remember, John's baptism is a call to repentance, to turn from your sin. And yet, Jesus, the one person that has never sinned, the one person that doesn't need to repent, he knows that God's will is for him to go through the waters of baptism.

That's going to be a deeply humbling thing. Everyone's going to look at him and say, oh, I wonder what he needs to confess. I wonder what area of life he's turning from. Sometimes God's will will humble us and ask us to swallow our pride.

And yet, Jesus does so because it's the Father's will. Now, Jesus is saying to John, John, I know this doesn't make sense to you right now, but trust me, this is God's will.

[13:27] Baptize me because this is going to reveal something about what's on God's heart. It's going to make known that which God has spoken many years ago. But what is that thing? What is on God's heart?

What is Jesus' baptism going to reveal to us? What's it going to make us understand or know about who God is that's going to draw us in? Well, three things. Firstly, Jesus' baptism is going to show us how Jesus identifies or finds solidarity with the broken and the marginalized and with sinners like you and I.

Secondly, Jesus' baptism is going to show us that Jesus is the chosen king and thirdly, it's going to reveal to us that he's the tender savior. Okay, does that make sense? So, let's dive in.

Firstly, Jesus' solidarity with broken sinners like us. Look at what Jesus is doing here. He's not getting baptized because he's sinful or because he needs forgiveness, but because he's identifying with the very people that do.

He's identifying with the crowds, right? In John's gospel, now, just by the way, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, John wrote the fourth gospel. That's different to John the baptizer.

[14:37] These are two different Johns. They just have the same name. Okay, so in John's gospel, we see John the Baptist, other John, and this is what he says talking about Jesus. He says, I baptize you with water, but there stands amongst you one who you do not yet know whose straps of the sandals are not worthy to untie.

When he comes, he'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire, but the point is this. He says, this Messiah that's coming, where is he? Is he in the synagogues? Is he in the seminaries?

No, he stands amongst you. He's right amongst you in the crowds. There is one amongst you who is coming, who is the Savior of the world, right there with them in their moment of greatest vulnerability and exposure when all these people are coming to John and saying, John, this is what I've done.

This is how I've sinned. As these people are coming and exposing some of the darkest, most vulnerable areas of their life, where is Jesus? He's amongst them.

Jesus is not standing on the hillside saying, oh yeah, I know about that sin. Oh yes, I know about that one too. And if someone ever came to John and said, John, well, I kind of sinned this happened and sort of painted it in a good light like we tend to do.

[15:52] Am I the only one that does that? Kind of trying to talk about my sin like the best possible way. Jesus didn't say, hey, tell them the real story. Tell them what really happened, right? Where's Jesus in this moment of greatest vulnerability?

He's right there with them. He's amongst them. But he's not only amongst them on the banks of the river. What does he do? He climbs in with them and he gets baptized with them.

Jesus is identifying with the very people who are broken, who are marginalized, who are hurting, who are sinners. And Jesus is saying, the people that I made and the people that I love, I've come for them.

I've come to be with them. I haven't come to point my finger and accuse them and tell them how dirty, rotten scoundrels they are. I've come to be with them. And so, coming back to our text, Jesus says, John, let me get baptized.

It's right for me to do so. This fulfills God's will. What God has spoken and revealed in the Old Testament, that I would come and be amongst my people, I would be one of them.

[16:56] And so, John agrees. And so, John baptizes Jesus. And as Jesus comes out of the water, what happens? Two things happen, right? Look at verse 16 and 17 with me.

The first thing that happens is the Holy Spirit comes and rests upon Jesus. Now, it doesn't say a dove rests upon him. It says, the Holy Spirit came and rested upon Jesus like a dove.

In other words, it's a physical manifestation. The Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus and empowers him for his ministry. But the second thing that happens is that there's a voice. A voice from heaven.

Whose voice is it? It's God's voice, right? And what does God say? Well, God quotes, God the Father quotes two Old Testament passages. One is Psalm chapter 2 and the other one is Isaiah 42. And both of these passages reveal something about the nature and the character of Jesus and his mission on earth. Look at what he says. Firstly, he quotes Psalm 2.

[17 : 54] He says, this is my beloved son. And then he quotes Isaiah 42, which is a messianic passage about the coming Messiah. And what does he say? This is my son with whom I am well pleased or in whom my soul delights.

So, let's look at those two things. Okay? So, we've got three points. The first one, Jesus' baptism reveals that he identifies with people like you and I.

Second thing is this, Jesus' baptism reveals that he's the chosen king. Let's look at Psalm 2 together. Psalm 2 is a wonderful psalm.

It's a coronation psalm. It's a psalm that's written around the time of David and it's written when the king is established on the throne. And it's a psalm that's written about God's chosen king.

And in this psalm, God says, I will establish my king on the throne. But what's happening is that the nations around Israel don't like the king. And the reason they don't like the king is because Israel is a small nation.

[18 : 58] It's a vulnerable nation. It's often being attacked. If you know the history of the world, Israel is forever being attacked by everyone from every side. And so the nations around Israel don't like that God has established a king on the throne.

And they want to overthrow the king. They want to overthrow Israel. And so the kings of the nations surrounding it conspire together. They plot and they scheme and they take counsel together how they can overthrow this king that God has established in Israel.

But what is God's response to their efforts? He laughs at them. Look at what it says in verse 4. He says, He who sits in the heavens he laughs.

The Lord holds their plans in derision. He says, As for me, I have set my king on the throne. And then he describes this king. Who is this king?

He says, You are my beloved son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will then make the nations your inheritance. The ends of the earth will be your possession.

[20 : 02] So God says, I've established this king. On one hand it's David but actually that's just a picture of the true king. God has established his king on the throne and this king will be the lord of all the world.

All the nations will be your inheritance. One day all the nations will come and bow down before you. The one true king. And who is this king? Well he says, He is God's anointed one.

God's chosen one. In other words, in Hebrew God's Messiah. Or in Greek God's Christos. The Christ. He is the chosen king to end all kingdoms. He is the king to whom all kings will one day eventually bow.

Why? Because he's God's son. You are my chosen son. And at the end of the psalm God says that this king will become the majestic ruler of all creation.

All the world will one day bow down before him. And he will destroy those who oppose him. Those who conspired against him will find themselves facing the full wrath of the fury of God.

[21 : 04] And so he warns him. He says, You kings that are conspiring against this king, this chosen king, be warned. Kiss the son. Come and draw near to him in faith and repentance lest you perish in your ways.

But if you take refuge under him you will be blessed. You see, this king in Psalm chapter 2 on one hand he's a roaring lion. He's a majestic king that overthrows all those who oppose him.

But at the same time he's a gracious and gentle lamb to those who come to him and find refuge under his wings. This is this king.

And so Psalm 2 speaks about this king and this majestic king. And as Jesus comes out of the waters of baptism, John baptizes him and as he comes out there's a voice that thunders in the heavens and this is what it is.

This is my beloved son. This is the chosen ruler king. This is the king who will one day inherit the earth. The one before whom all nations will bow down.

[22 : 08] This is the king before whom every monk and every imam and every priest and every Hindu guru and every pastor and every premier and every president and every governor and every man, woman and child will one day bow down.

And some will bow down gladly because they've come to love the king and they've found refuge under him. Some will bow down because they've been conquered by him. But before this king all the nations will bow.

He is the chosen ruler, the anointed king because he's my beloved son. And so as Jesus comes out of the waters of baptism, this is what God says. This is my son, the ruling king.

Okay, does that make sense? But that's not all God says to Jesus. He then says something else. And this is the climax. He says, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased or in whom my soul delights.

Now that's a quote from Isaiah 42. Now, in the book of Isaiah, there are four passages of scripture, four poems or songs which are called the servant songs.

[23 : 20] Isaiah 42, Isaiah 49, Isaiah 50, and Isaiah 53. And all four of these passages, these poems, are passages about a certain servant of the Lord.

Okay, that's why they're called the servant songs. And this servant will rule the nations. God calls him to rule over all the world. It's kind of like Psalm chapter 2.

But at the same time, the servant is unique because he is hated and despised by the nations. The servant is horribly abused by the very nations he's called to lead in righteousness and justice, which is why he's called the suffering servant.

He is rejected, he is ridiculed, he is beaten, he is mocked, he is despised, and he's hated. But in the end, he is rewarded. In the end, he rules supreme.

And Isaiah 42 is the first of these four passages. And it's a passage which God quotes in Matthew chapter 3. And look at what Isaiah 42 says.

[24 : 20] He says this, Behold my servant, my chosen one, my anointed one, the one in whom my soul delights. In other words, what does Jesus say?

My son with whom I'm well pleased, the one in whom my soul delights. Isn't that what Jesus, what God said at Jesus' baptism? You, Jesus, are the one in whom my soul delights. And then he says, I have put my spirit upon him.

Well, isn't that what happened when Jesus got baptized? The Holy Spirit rests upon him and empowers him. But if we just left it there, we'd miss the main point of the passage. Because Isaiah then goes on and he says, This king, this servant, this suffering servant, he will not cry aloud or lift up his voice.

In other words, when the servant comes to rule the nations, he will not come with ceremony or pomp. He will not come full of swagger and self-promotion. He will come quietly on the scene. He will not be born in a palace or in royalty. He will not hold office with leaders of society. Here will be the anointed, ruling king, but he'll come humbly.

[25 : 28] He'll come quietly. He might even be born in a stable. Rather than having kings and royalty watching him, he'll have shepherds and the lowly.

But this will not diminish his purpose or his status. His purpose is to bring justice to the nations. And then it says this about the servant king. A bruised reed he will not break.

A faintly smoldering wick he will not snuff out. Now think of that imagery. I think we've got a, oh, we don't have an image. Sorry. Has that been gone for a while? Sorry, I thought I had all the scriptures up there.

Oh, there we go. Okay. Isaiah says this, when the suffering servant comes, he'll come as the king, but he'll also come with gentleness.

A bruised reed he will not break. I don't know about you, but when I go hiking, if I see a broken branch or a stem or a reed, I just can't leave it.

[26 : 30] I've just got to put it out of its misery, right? I snap it off and throw it away. There's just something about it that's asking just to be broken off, right? Or maybe think of this.

Again, I don't know about you. If I go walking somewhere, I always try and find a stick. The first few minutes, I've got to find a walking stick and there's just something therapeutic about having a walking stick, right?

But what invariably happens is I find a stick and I think, oh, this is a good size, good shape. And as I put it down, I see that it's broken halfway along and there's just bark holding it together. Does that ring a bell?

And as you put it down, it can't carry the weight. Now, what do you do with such a walking stick? You throw it, right? You toss it aside. Say, what a useless stick. Somebody find me a proper walking stick, right?

Or think of the picture of a candle, a candle that's outside in the rain. It's in the elements and it's struggling to stay alive. It's fighting to still be burning, right?

[27 : 27] In the times of the Bible, they didn't have wax candles. They'd have a candle, a wick that was in oil and if the oil is almost finished or it's not burning properly, you'd snuff out the candle and then go fill up the oil and relight it again.

But here, Isaiah talks about there's the Messiah coming and he's going to be the ruler of the whole world and yet he's going to come so tenderly, so gently. This king, who is sovereign over everyone, who is majestic, is so gracious and tender that when he comes and he finds us like a broken stick or like a candle that's not doing so well, he doesn't throw it away and say, find me a proper Christian or snuff it out.

What does he do? He comes and he binds us up. He comes and he heals and he restores. Here is a king that is so strong and yet so gentle that he comes and he binds up those that are hurting and those that are broken.

Friends, in our world and in our city, how do we treat those that are broken? How do we treat those that are struggling or those that are hurting or those that are damaged or fall behind?

Our city is not very sympathetic to those that are hurting, are we? I think the ethos of Hong Kong is the survival of the fittest. Our city is one in which you've got to be brave, you've got to be strong, you've got to be hardworking in order to survive.

[28 : 53] But friends, here is a king who comes to the broken, he comes to the damaged, he comes to those who have failed. He comes to those who have sinned. He comes to those who have messed up.

He comes to those with a checkered past. He comes to those who feel like, God, could you ever love me again? And he says, I've come for you. I've come to heal you. I've come to restore you. Just think of Peter, one of Jesus' disciples. In Mark's gospel, Jesus says to his disciples, the Son of Man is going to be arrested and put to death.

And then he quotes the Old Testament where he says, they will strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. In other words, he's saying, I will be alone and when they arrest me, all my disciples will leave me.

And what does Peter say? Peter says, not me, God. Maybe the others, but not me. I will be with you to the end. You can count on me. And Jesus says, Peter, before the crow or cock crows twice, you'll deny me three times.

[29 : 58] And Peter says, forget it, Lord. All the others will abandon you, but not me. You can count on me. Well, 12 hours later, Peter is warming his hands outside the fire and he's watching through the gap.

Jesus has been arrested. And a young girl comes to him and says, hey, weren't you with that Jesus guy? And he says, no, not me. Someone else comes and says, I'm sure you were with Jesus when we arrested him.

Peter says, I don't know what you're talking about. And then a third person comes and says, but you've got the same accent as him. You know where he's from. I'm sure you were with Jesus, right? You're one of his disciples.

He says, I swear I've never met the man. What does Jesus do with Peter's denial? What does he do? After he dies and he's crucified and he's risen again, he comes and he finds his disciples and he says, Peter, you love me, don't you?

And Peter says, yes, Lord, I do love you. He says, Peter, I've got a job for you. I want you to feed my sheep. It's not the end, Peter. I've still got a job for you to do. I want you to be my disciple.

[31 : 04] Go and feed my sheep. And he says, Peter, you do still love me, don't you? He says, yes, Lord, I love you. He says, Peter, I've got a job for you. Feed my lambs. And then he asks him a third time, Peter, I'm just asking because I want you to know that you love me.

Peter, you do still love me, don't you? Yes, Lord, I love you. Peter, go and fulfill the mandate I gave you. Go and be my disciple. Go and lead my people.

Friends, how does Jesus deal with Peter's most spectacular fall from grace? Does he throw him away and say, get me a proper Christian? No, he doesn't. He comes and he restores him.

He comes and heals him. He comes and binds him up. He comes and recommissions him and sends him on his task. Friends, our city, there are many gods and idols that we love to serve.

But the problem with these idols and these gods is that when we fail them, they will accuse us and they will point the finger in your face and they'll tell you all the times that you failed them. Friends, if your children's success is your highest goal in life, when your children get sick or they don't

succeed or they don't fulfill your plans or ambitions for them, you will feel like your whole life is on edge.

[32 : 10] Friends, if your promotion or your career advancement is the goal, the thing that makes you whole, when you pass over for promotion or you don't succeed in your career, you'll feel useless. You'll feel like a failure and that the whole world is against you.

Friends, when the prospect of being loved or being with someone is the most important thing in your life, when you go on a date and they don't call you back or you're not, a relationship doesn't work out the way that you hope it will, you'll feel unloved.

You'll feel ugly. You'll be filled with self-hate. Tim Keller was saying a few years ago in New York, he spoke about these young New Yorkers that gave everything to make their career a success and he says this, these men and women had sacrificed everything to the God of success but it wasn't enough.

In ancient times, the deities were bloodthirsty and hard to appease. Even still, today, they are.

Friends, the gods and the idols and the things we try and serve are bloodthirsty.

They'll demand your blood. They'll demand everything from you and if you fail them, they'll spit you out and move on. But friends, here in the gospel, we have a king. Here we have a king who at once claimed nothing less than being the promised Messiah, the chosen king above all kings, who is king who will one day rule the nations and before whom every knee will bow and yet here is a king who is so gracious, so tender with those who fail him, who is so gentle with the broken and those who fall and those who sin, that those who come to him and feel like damaged goods, he gently restores you and he recommissions you.

[33 : 47] Friends, some of us feel broken this morning. Some of us feel like damaged goods. Some of us because it's of our own sin. There are things that we've done and we feel like, I cannot believe I did that. You may feel so ashamed.

Some of us, maybe it's because you've been sinned against. Maybe somebody did something to you. You feel used. You feel abused. Maybe for some of us it's just the harshness of life in a fallen world.

Friends, here is a king who comes with such gentleness and tenderness. He restores and heals the brokenhearted. I want to read a quote by Sam Albury. It's quite a long quote so you're going to need to pay attention but listen to how Pastor Sam Albury writes about this.

He says, The wonder of Jesus is that he's able to combine what we so easily separate. In our experience, those who are gentlest tend to lack strength and force when it's called for while those who are strongest tend to lack the capacity for gentleness and restraint.

But Jesus exemplifies perfect gentleness and awesome strength. This combination is why he's such a good savior. He is strong and he's mighty to save and yet he is unspeakably delicate and careful with us.

[34 : 58] There is no wound, no vulnerability he does not understand or handle with the utmost care. He is someone who we can trust with our most tender bruises and fragility. He will not be clumsy with us.

He can apply his unimaginable strength to us with affection and sensitivity. In a fallen world like this, all of us are people who have both sinned and been sinned against.

Some of this will have left us with deep wounds that seem unfathomable even to us. But Jesus knows us fully. He understands us entirely. He loves us more than we love ourselves.

He has the power and the capacity to help us and the tenderness and the care to want to help us. We can trust him with our deepest pains and our bruises. There is none more fearsome, none more gentle.

Now, coming into a close, let's go back to Matthew chapter 3, Jesus' baptism. What's just happened before this? John has called people to, he's been proclaiming the gospel by calling people to repent, to repent in light of the coming king.

[36 : 08] And friends, what is this king going to do with your sin and my sin when we come to him in repentance? When we come to him with our most vulnerable spots, when we come to him with our bruises and our brokenness, when we come to him with our failings, when we come to him with our messes and our mistakes, what's he going to do?

Is he going to, like a walking stick, toss you on the heap and say, go sort yourself out, come back to me when you've got your, you know, stuff in order? What's he going to do?

Is he going to rebuke you for being such a lousy Christian? Is he going to point his finger in your face and say, oh, you haven't properly confessed. What about that area of your life? What about that? No, friends.

When we come to him in humility and contrition, we come to a king. We don't come to a schoolmaster or a tiger parent. We come to Jesus. We come to the lover of our souls. We come to the one who brings tenderness and healing in his wings. We come to the chosen ruling king, but we come to the one who is unspeakably delicate and careful with us. We come to the one who we can trust with our most tender bruises and failures.

[37 : 14] We come to the one who will apply his unimaginable affection and strength to our sensitivities. Charles Spurgeon said it like this, when I regarded God as a tyrant, I thought sin was unimportant.

But when I knew him to be my father, I mourned that I could ever have kicked against him. When I thought God was hard, I found it easy to sin. But when I found God was so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I beat my breast to think that I could ever have rebelled against one who loved me so and sought my good.

And friends, this is what Jesus' baptism shows us. This is why Jesus gets baptized. Because he comes to show us that he identifies with the failings and the sin and the mess of the world. But he comes to show us that he's the chosen king but he's also the suffering servant. Now to be clear, he won't be the suffering servant forever. There's a time coming when he will come in all the full might of his strength and he will vanquish his enemies and he will destroy those that have opposed him.

That is true. But for now, as John calls sinners to come to him to humble ourselves and to repent, Jesus stands amongst us so good, so gentle, so overflowing with compassion, identifying with the shortcomings and the failings of our lives.

[38 : 31] And yet, all this was just a foretaste because in three short years' time, Jesus is going to be baptized with another baptism. He's going to be plunged deep, immersed, drowned in a baptism of utter turmoil.

He's going to be nailed to the cross so that those who trust him, those who come to him in faith and repentance will have their sins taken on the cross by him. Friends, because this magnificent, wonderful, savior, sovereign, gracious, gentle king came and died on the cross, those who do trust him, we hear the words of the Father speaking over us.

My beloved son, my beloved daughter, with you, I am well pleased. Because Jesus took all our failings and our sin upon the cross, now the Father speaks words of affirmation over us.

My son, my daughter, with you, I am well pleased. Friends, if you're a Christian this morning, God the Father does not just tolerate you, he doesn't just put up with you, he is pleased with you, he loves you, he pours out his love on you, he is extravagantly delighted in you because Jesus covered your sins, because he took it to the cross, because he makes all things new, because he brings you into his family.

This is Jesus, the chosen sovereign king, but this is Jesus, the suffering servant. Let's pray together. Oh, wonderful God, we do come and worship you, God.

[40 : 09] We worship you not just with song, but to worship you by giving you our lives, God. Our greatest act of worship, God, is to say we so trust you that we bring our lives before you.

Thank you, Jesus, that you are both majestic and gracious. You are sovereign and yet tender, God. And God, it is safe to bring our lives and to leave them at the foot of the cross.

It is safe to bring our lives and hand them over to you. Jesus, thank you for being such a wonderful and glorious king. And Father, this morning, we do ask for more of your will in our lives.

We do say, God, come and have your way. We say, Jesus, come and be king in our lives. Don't just be a friend. Don't just be a gentle savior.

Come and be king. Come and have your way, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.