

The Covenant King

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[0 : 00] If you're visiting today, my name is Niels, part of the staff team. It's really great to be with you. I'll be preaching in a moment. But yeah, before the reading, before Annalise and Catherine will come and read, why don't we pray that God would speak to us.

So let's pray together. In verse 31 of today's passage, we read, The word of the Lord proves true. He is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

Father, thank you that your word is true. It's reliable. We can stake our whole lives on it. It makes it a shield, something we can take refuge in. Pray that we would do that. Speak to each of our hearts. Make each of us hear what we need to hear. That we would come to you and take refuge in you. In Jesus' name. Amen. Today we're going to be reading from 2 Samuel, chapter 22 to 23.

Feel free to follow along in your bulletin or on the screen or in your Bible. And David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

[1 : 22] He said, The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior.

You saved me from violence. I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. For the waves of death encompassed me. The torrents of destruction assailed me. The cords of Sheol entangled me. The snares of death confronted me. In my distress, I called upon the Lord. To my God I called. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry came to his ears. Then the earth reeled and rocked. The foundations of the heavens trembled and quaked because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils and devouring fire from his mouth. Glowing coals flamed forth from him. He bowed the heavens and came down. Thick darkness was under his feet. He rode on a cherub and flew. He was seen on the wings of the wind.

[2 : 27] He made darkness around him his canopy. Thick clouds, a gathering of water. Out of the brightness before him, coals of fire flamed forth. The Lord thundered from heaven.

And the Most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows and scattered them. Lightning and routed them. Then the channels of the sea were seen.

The foundations of the world were laid bare. At the rebuke of the Lord. At the blast of the breath of his nostrils. He sent from on high. He took me. He drew me out of many waters.

He rescued me from my strong enemy. From those who hated me. For they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity. But the Lord was my support.

He brought me out into a broad place. He rescued me. Because he delighted in me. The Lord dealt with me accordingly to my righteousness. According to the cleanness of my hands, he rewarded me.

[3 : 25] For I have kept the ways of the Lord. And have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his rules were before me. And from his statutes, I did not turn aside.

I was blameless before him. And I kept myself from guilt. And the Lord was rewarded. And the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness. According to my cleanness in his sight.

With the merciful, you show yourself merciful. With the blameless man, you show yourself blameless. With the purified, you deal purely. And with the crooked, you make yourself seem torturous.

You save a humble people. But your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down. For you are my lamp, O Lord. And my God lightens my darkness. For by you, I can run against a troop.

And by my God, I can leap over a wall. This God, his way is perfect. The word of the Lord proves true. He is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

[4 : 26] You delivered me from strife with my people. You kept me as the head of the nations. People whom I had not known served me. Foreigners came cringing to me.

As soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me. Foreigners lost heart and came trembling out of their fortresses. The Lord lives and blessed be my rock. And exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation.

The God who gave me vengeance and brought down people under me. Who brought me out from my enemies. You exalted me above those who rose against me. You delivered me from men of violence.

For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations. And sing praises to your name. Great salvation he brings to his king. And shows steadfast love to his anointed.

To David and his offspring forever. And in 2 Samuel 23, verses 1-7.

[5 : 21] Now, these are the last words of David. The oracle of David, the son of Jesse. The oracle of the man who was raised on high. The anointed of the God of Jacob.

The sweetest palmist of Israel. The spirit of the Lord speaks by me. His word is on my tongue. The God of Israel has spoken. The rock of Israel has said to me.

When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, he dawns on them like the morning light. Like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning. Like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made me an everlasting covenant. Ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?

But worthless men are like thorns that are thrown away. For they cannot be taken with the hand.

But the man who touches them arms himself with iron and the shaft of a spear.

[6 : 23] And they are utterly consumed with fire. This is the word of God. The word of God. Great. Thanks so much Annalise and Kristen.

It's a long reading. Beautifully read. But yeah, it's very different. Poetry. But let's start today's sermon with dreaming. Dreaming.

And I don't mean the kind of unconscious thing you do when you sleep and you see all kinds of weird things in your head. Daydreaming. I don't know what is your dream. The kind of thing that you wish for.

The kind of thing you hope is true. Usually something different from what life is now, right? Maybe you're single and you dream about being married. Or you're getting old and you dream of when I was young and those kind of things.

Usually things are different. Maybe a better job. Now, how realistic is that dream? Do you think it will be realized?

[7 : 25] And how? Because that's the thing, right? We all know kind of dreams. Well, dreams are not true. Right? That's what we usually say. And so it's just something that we think about maybe.

But it doesn't really affect us, right? We're kind of resigned to life now. And things don't really affect us. And yet there's another kind of dream, right? That is very different.

So Martin Luther King, he said, I have a dream. Now, he didn't mean that this is something that I kind of wish was true. That was something he really worked really hard for to realize, right? Maybe you know the American dream, the expression.

That's not a kind of wish. That is something, okay, if you work hard enough, you can achieve anything. That's the idea of the American dream. So two kinds of dreaming. And that is, yeah, of course, a dream that dominates your life.

Now, the big question is, what is Christianity like? Because the Bible talks about the kingdom of God. One day, everything will be perfect.

[8 : 27] And there will be a beautiful kingdom of love and joy and peace and rest and perfection. And it's where all our dreams come true. But what is that?

Is that a wish? Is that a dream? Is that something that would be nice if it was like that? But it's just kind of something in the background? Or is that something that we really have to work hard for to achieve that is up to us?

Well, that is where we're going today. Because today is the last sermon in this series. If you're new with us, we've been going through most of the book of 2 Samuel. It's a long book.

Of course, today is kind of the end. It's, you know, in a way, it's the end of the whole thing of 1 and 2 Samuel. And so you need an introduction and a conclusion. And today is kind of the conclusion. We

started back a few years ago with this prayer by Hannah.

And then about a king, about a kingdom. And then throughout the book, God set up a beautiful kingdom under David, the chosen king. Man after God's heart.

[9 : 30] Although, as we've seen over the past few weeks, well, David ultimately wasn't that great king, right? And everything fell apart due to his sin. And even when the kingdom was restored, well, it lost his glory.

But we've seen a glimpse of how beautiful things can be. And then today, well, it's the conclusion of the book. Now, you may wonder why aren't we doing the last chapter if it's the conclusion.

That's because these last chapters are a bit weird. If you see this, this is kind of these four chapters. You can notice the change in genre. We have a story, a narrative, and then we have some military records.

And then we get a poem. And then we get another poem. And then we get military records and a story. And both stories are about the same thing, about the sin of a king and the need for atonement. So, yeah, that's often in the Bible.

It's called a sandwich or a chiasm. But basically, that's why we're doing these two poems that are really at the center of it. Because the other two parts are very negative, right?

[10 : 33] It's about a king who sins. And we've seen quite a lot of that already. We've seen about a king who is weak and getting old, who needs mighty men for his kingdom. But here at the center, we have these poems.

And poems are very different, right? I mean, the thing about narrative is that it's real. It's stories that really happened. Military records are things that really happened. But poetry is kind of real, but it's not real, right?

Poetry is kind of beautiful. It's a bit idealized. It's a bit rose-tinted, right? The Valentine's Day card. You're the most beautiful woman in the world. I've always loved you.

I will love you for the rest of my life. It's a bit idealized, right? That kind of idea. So that's what we see. We have an ideal rose-tinted picture. And that is what we need, actually.

Because in chapter 22, where we'll go first, it's about we get a picture of the ideal king. The ideal perfect king.

[11 : 36] Now, when you read it, maybe you haven't read Samuel much, but maybe it sounded familiar. Hey, I know this, right? Actually, the same song is also in Psalms, Psalm 18.

So maybe that's how you know it, right? The kind of memory verse. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. When did David write this song?

22 verse 1. And David spoke to the Lord the word of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

It's praising God for rescuing him. Saul was kind of his great enemy in 1 Samuel. So, you know, in the first half of the book.

The previous king who persecuted him. So, I don't think he wrote this kind of at the end of his life.

He probably wrote it, you know, kind of early in 2 Samuel. Kind of after he was delivered from Saul.

[12 : 33] So, before Bathsheba. At kind of the high point of his reign. When we thought David was still the good guy. Now, what do we see here? What do we see in this psalm?

First, I think the thing we all are struck by is his great relationship with God. Right? David has such a beautiful relationship with God.

I mean, just the way it opens. Right? The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. My God. My rock. In whom I take refuge. My shield and the horn of my salvation.

My stronghold and my refuge. My savior. You save me from violence. And you hear that repeated word. Right? My, my, my. God is not just a rock out there.

He's not just a savior out there. He's, yeah, it's really my. Right? It's so personal. God is everything to him. That's so beautiful.

[13 : 30] I mean, you may wonder why am I talking about the king? Isn't this psalm about God? Well, it's kind of both. Right? It is the king praising God. But that means you learn a lot about the king from this psalm.

Right? It's about the relationship. As a silly example. Well, it's not silly. Beautiful example. When I turned 40, my wife made this really nice book for me with all these kind of messages from friends and photos.

Now, that tells you a lot about me, of course. But it also tells you a lot about her. Right? Her love and devotion that she made this. And that's the idea here. And I think in context, it's the king that's important.

I mean, David could write a psalm like that. Right? Saul would never write this psalm. He would just praise himself. Absalom was evil. He wouldn't write a psalm like this. No. This relationship is, yeah, it's a king with wonderful relationship with God.

They're so together like father and son. Again, because we need that. Right? How can we, little sinners, have come to God?

[14:37] Well, the only way we can is through the king. Right? Because God is not naturally on our side. We need someone to get us to him. So, again, a silly, you know, a few years ago, there was this ordinary British girl called Kate.

And then she became really close to Queen Elizabeth. How could she? She was just an ordinary girl. Well, we all know, right? It was through Prince William, who, of course, had a great relationship with the queen.

And, well, it was his girlfriend and now his wife. Right? That's how it works. She couldn't come to the queen by herself, but she can through the royal son. So, that's the idea for us.

Right? We need a king who is close to God so that he can get us to God. But how do we see that relationship in the psalm? Second, because the king is rescued from death.

It starts with this. David was in great trouble. He was almost dead. And God rescued him. Right? So, verse 5.

[15:43] For the waves of death encompassed me. The torrents of destruction assailed me. And so, he prayed. In my distress, verse 7, I called upon the Lord. To my God I called.

And he was as good as dead, but he prayed. And then we get this amazing vision of God kind of getting angry and rising from his throne. And getting on his chariot with thunder and lightning and earthquakes and coming to rescue.

I mean, that shows how much he cares about Dave. I mean, if my kids are in trouble, I would do the same. Right? I would get up and go and rescue them. And that is, of course, it's poetry. God doesn't have nostrils and feet and stuff.

But you get the feeling, right, that God really, God and the king, they're so close. And so, God comes and rescues him. It's like the pattern. So often we've seen that.

David, he almost dies, but God rescues him. It's like that's the pattern for God's king. That he'd be rescued from death. But why does God love him so much?

[16:44] Well, verse 20. He brought me out into a broad place. He rescued me because he delighted in me. Why does God delight in him? Well, verse 21.

The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness. Again, verse 25. The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness. Right? David says, well, because I'm righteous.

Right? I'm right with God. And the verses in between talk about, you know, I've kept the ways of the Lord. Verse 23. All his rules were before me.

From his statutes, I didn't turn aside. Right? I've kept the law. I've obeyed God. I've, yeah, I'm faithful to him. And that's why I'm righteous. Yeah?

Because, yeah. Now, of course, we struggle with that. Right? We struggle with people who say, I'm so good. I'm so righteous. Because we think that's proud. Aren't we all sinners? And just to remember, I think he didn't write this when he was on the run from Absalom.

[17:46] Right? He wrote this before Bathsheba when he was a lot better. He doesn't claim perfect sinlessness. I think, again, this is poetry. This is how he feels.

He feels like he and God has this great relationship. Again, think about that Valentine's card. Yeah? I will love you for the rest of my life. That is not true. Right?

Because we're sinners. Our hearts are idolatrous. Of course, I won't love my wife every day of the rest of my life. Of course not. It's just this general feeling. Right? The feeling is true.

But if you've been here for the rest of 2 Samuel, you do think this is kind of what we need. Right? Ultimately, we do need a king, as we've seen, who actually, who really does this.

For whom this is not just poetically true, but literally, absolutely true. Right? Ultimately, what if you have a king who really keeps the law perfectly?

[18:45] Who really is blameless? Who really never does anything wrong? So that he always has God on his side. So that there's never judgment. It makes you think, yeah, what if there's a king for

whom this is really true?

Because after all, God is just, right? Verse 26. With the merciful, you show yourself merciful. With the blameless man, you show yourself blameless. With the purified, you deal purely.

And with the crooked, you make yourself seem tortuous. You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down. God is a God of justice. He cares about right and wrong.

And so to be with God, well, you need to be righteous.

And this king is righteous. And the result, well, a worldwide victory. Now, we had to leave out some of the reading because it didn't fit in the bulletin.

So we didn't read it. But God helps him, gives him victory over his enemies, which, of course, is good. It means peace and security. But not just internal. External.

[19 : 50] Verse 44. You delivered me from strife with my people. You kept me as the head of the nations. People whom I had not known served me. Foreigners came cringing to me.

As soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me. It is like David, well, he's the victorious king. And now all the nations around him come and serve him.

They all, it's like he's now the king over the whole world, right? Because so that there's peace and no one will attack anymore. And everything is right. It's beautiful. And, yeah, and that's where it ends.

Verse 51. Great salvation he brings to his king and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to his Messiah. Well, you see this and you think, wow, if we only had this king, right?

This king who is so close to God and so righteous so that God rescues him and makes him the king over everything and makes him victorious and everything is safe and everything is peaceful, wouldn't it be wonderful?

[20 : 55] Otherwise, it will never work. Now, it's obvious, right, that who this is. Obviously, this talks about Jesus, right? Who is really like this?

Who is really God's son? Who really loves God like this? Who is this, you know, who? Yeah, we can see that, right? Because what does this psalm say? Well, the king goes, he goes into death, but he's rescued out of it and made the king of the whole world.

That's exactly Jesus, right? He died on the cross for our sins, but God raised him and now he's sitting on the throne. It's a beautiful prophecy, in a way, of Jesus.

But it's so clear that he is going to do this. Right? If you see this is what you need to be with God, this is what you need for the kingdom. It's very, it's not an American dream, right? It's not something that we are going to do.

We are never going to build this. We are never going to be like this because we're just little people. We're just sinners. We can't do this. We can't change ourselves.

[21 : 57] We can't change our circumstances. It's very obvious. We need Jesus. But this all sounds great. But at the same time, it remains just a poem, right?

Isn't this just a wish, a dream? Wouldn't it be nice? But how do we know this will happen? Well, it is a poem. Yes and no.

But there are some hints, right? I didn't read that last verse at the end. At the end of verse 51, he shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.

Now, why mention David's offspring? Why mention David's descendants? Well, that takes you back to earlier in the book, right? We saw that at the beginning of the year, 2 Samuel chapter 7.

God made a promise to David. 2 Samuel 7, I've put it here on the screen. That quote from 2 Samuel chapter 7, when God made a promise to David.

[23 : 05] Right?

God promised that one of David's descendants would be that king who would rule forever. And his kingdom would be forever. He promised that. And now, this psalm points us to that.

That, hey, David's offspring. Yeah? God promised it. And that's even more than in that second poem, that shorter one that we read.

Yeah, I've called it God's covenanted king. Covenanted. Now, it's much shorter. It's again poetry. But this is not a psalm, is it?

Look at what it is. Verse 1, 23 verse 1. On the last page of your bulletin. Now, these are the last words of David. The oracle of David, the son of Jesse.

[24 : 23] The oracle of the man who was raised on high. Right? This is an oracle. You know, the oracle, it's like a prophecy. A vision of the future.

A kind of, right? Some prediction of the future. This is, okay, it's the last words of David. It's important, right? He's God's chosen king. But more.

These are God's words, right? That's what he emphasizes. Verse 2. The spirit of the Lord speaks by me. His word is on my tongue. The God of Israel has spoken. The rock of Israel has said to me. Right? This is a message from God. An oracle from God that David is relaying. And what is that oracle? What is that vision? Well, second half of verse 3.

When one rules justly over man. Ruling in the fear of God. Now, I don't think that's really the best translation. Commentaries will tell you the same.

[25 : 19] The word when isn't there. This is a vision. Someone ruling justly over man. Someone ruling in the fear of God. It's a vision that one day there will be a righteous ruler.

Someone who, well, same idea, right? Someone who fears God. Who does everything God's way. And the result is he's ruling justly, righteously over mankind.

Right? A king who is a righteous ruler. And what is that like? Verse 4. He dawns on them like the morning light. Like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning.

Like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth. Three beautiful images. Dawning like the morning light. So it's dark.

It's scary. You don't see anything. But then here's the light. Right? Making everything safe again. Or like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning.

[26 : 20] So the clouds, they trap the heat in the desert. Right? So if there's no clouds, it's really cold. So it's really a bit like, well, for you guys out here. So it's really cold. But then the sun.

And it's warm. Warm instead of cold. Light instead of darkness. Like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

Again, a desert. It's dry. It's dead. But then there's rain. And there's life. And there's grass. And there's renewal. Right? I don't know how to summarize it.

A breath of fresh air. Right? It's just, it's going to be so wonderful. When this righteous ruler is there, it's going to be, everything will be right.

And of course, it's, yeah. Because it's so unusual. Right? Most kings and rulers are corrupt. Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts. Absolutely. And as they say, but here is a ruler over mankind who is different.

[27 : 18] So again, this is the same theme, the ideal king that we need. But this is not a wish. It's not a psalm. It's an oracle. Right? It's, it's a prophecy.

And because, you know, God doesn't dream. God doesn't wish. Because he's almighty. Right? If you are almighty, you don't wish. You just do. And that's the thing. And you see that more clearly in verse five.

Because what does David say? For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant. Isn't this my house? Isn't this my family?

It's true, right? Again, the promise that God made a few chapters earlier in chapter seven. Isn't this my family? Hasn't God promised this to me? Hasn't God made a covenant with me that he would do this?

The answer, yes, he has. Right? This is promised by covenant. God made an everlasting covenant with David's house that one of David's offspring will be this king.

[28 : 19] So it is going to happen. It's a, it's more than a promise, right? It's a covenant. I mean, promises are already, right? If God promises it, we should believe it. But it's, it's more than a promise.

It's a covenant. And so, so when I make a promise, I'll buy some milk on the way home. That's different from a marriage, right? That's a covenant. Now you don't, uh, okay, I'll buy some milk. Let's get a hundred people together and witnesses and legal signing. I'm going to buy milk. No, of course, because, but you can see how big a covenant is. If God makes a covenant, right?

If I don't do this, you can cut me in half as we saw earlier this year. This is, this is really going to happen. This is a covenant. And so it's, it's not a wish.

This is a guaranteed promise. There will be this king one day. What a, what a wonderful ending to the book, right? Yeah, it's been quite a journey.

[29 : 17] It's been quite a few sermons, a lot of sin, a lot of death. But here is the happy ending. One day there will be this king. It's absolutely guaranteed.

God made a covenant, direct words from God saying this will happen. And it will be a breath of fresh air for all of us. Isn't that what we dream?

Isn't that, isn't that what we want? And, and, and for us, it's even more, right? Because this was Old Testament. We're in the New Testament. I mean, this king, yeah, he's going to come back.

And that's what we're waiting for. But he's already come once, right? Next week, we're starting Advent. We're starting Christmas. And that king came. And yeah, and, and, and this passage, this idea gets referenced again and again and again.

So here's a few verses that we're going to look at the coming few weeks. Yeah? So, uh, uh, the angel says to Mary about Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the most high.

[30 : 15] And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father, David. Uh, Zechariah. Uh, he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant, David.

Uh, the angel to the shepherds for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a savior who is Christ the Lord. Right? Constantly David, David, David, because that is the big promise of the whole Bible.

The son of David. Uh, now that we've seen to Samuel, I hope Christmas will be just much more meaningful. Yeah. This is the king that we want, that we need. And he's here.

Right? So wonderful. Now, how should we respond to that? This is wonderful, but how should we respond? I guess one initial question, of course, is, well, is Jesus your king?

Right? Because who is a kingdom for? It's usually for the citizens of that kingdom, right? For the subjects, for those who belong to the king, uh, not for anyone else.

[31 : 16] Uh, back in chapter 23, uh, the, the oracle ends a bit on a downer. Maybe you feel, uh, verse six, but worthless men are all like forms that are thrown away for they cannot be taken with the hands.

Uh, end of verse seven. And they are utterly consumed with fire. Uh, not everyone will be part of the kingdom. Uh, the citizens, yes, but worthless men, rebels, people who don't want the king, of course, they will not.

I mean, it's going to be a perfect kingdom. If you want a perfect king, uh, perfect kingdom, you need to have no sin and no sinners. So yeah, there will be a judgment. So yeah, do you belong to the king?

That's, I guess, uh, a first good question. Yeah. I, uh, you know, how do you make Jesus your king? Well, are you, are you trusting him? Uh, he died on the cross to forgive you.

Have you accepted that forgiveness? And, and do you live now, you know, loving him, uh, following him, obeying him? Now that, that sounds difficult. People don't like that word, right?

[32 : 18] Jesus is the king and right. Doing what he says. But I, I hope we've seen here, you know, Jesus rule is wonderful, right? It's like, uh, light instead of darkness, warmth instead of cold, right?

That, that is following Jesus is the best thing there is actually. But yeah, but that's the fear, the, the big thing. But I think for most readers, you know, they were already like that.

But I want to focus more on this. Okay. Here is a covenant. Here is an absolute certain promise from God. How should we respond to that? Well, what do you do?

I guess in biblical language, right? You stand on the promise. You stand on the covenant promise. This is something that you bank on, something that you, you rely on, something you do something about.

And that's so different from a wish, right? A wish you don't do anything about. But if this is a guaranteed promise, you will. There's an illustration, right?

[33 : 22] Think of a job application versus a job offer. As of nine years ago, we wanted to go to Hong Kong, be closer to EJ's family. Sounded an exciting opportunity.

And so we, we applied for a job in Hong Kong. But of course, it was just a wish, right? A wish that we'd be in Hong Kong. After some delay, seven months later, we got a job offer.

We got a contract. Well, that was completely different, right? It's very different whether you have a wish or a contract. And that turned our life around.

So what will that look like? I think some applications that we've seen, first of all, of course, don't look elsewhere. Right? If this is absolutely guaranteed, well, you wouldn't look anywhere else.

Right? If something is not certain, yeah, you look elsewhere. I mean, when we applied for a job, but we just applied, of course you apply for other jobs too. Once you have a job contract that you really want, you don't apply for any other jobs, right?

[34 : 25] So if all our hopes are going to be fulfilled in Jesus, and that's absolutely certain, why would we seek our happiness in TV and relationships?

Why do we seek security in jobs and money? We don't need to, right? I mean, those things aren't certain. But we know Jesus is certain and his kingdom is certain. And that is where all our dreams are going to be fulfilled.

So why would you look elsewhere? Right? And it's not an American dream. We just trust Jesus and he's done all the work. We just need to make sure we belong to him.

We are on his side. He will win. He's already won. He's raised from the dead, seated at God's right hand. Right? We don't need to look elsewhere. If this is a certain promise, don't lose heart.

The kingdom will come. Our dreams will come true. And so even if life isn't perfect now, if life isn't great now, that's okay. Right? It's only temporary. All our dreams will be fulfilled one day.

[35 : 27] It's guaranteed. You know, sometimes things don't matter. I remember when we were moving to Hong Kong, our toilet broke a week before we flew.

And that was annoying, but, you know, hey, a week later we're moving. We're flying anyway. So who cares? Right? It's a bit annoying, but hey, well, you know, it's okay. Isn't it the same thing with here?

Maybe your job isn't great. It's okay. Right? Jesus will absolutely certainly come. Maybe you're single. That's hard. But Jesus will come.

Right? Maybe your relationship is difficult. That's okay. Because Jesus will come. And maybe, I don't know, in the summer we had this body series. Maybe you don't like the way you look or whatever.

Jesus will come. Right? All these things that go on. Maybe our health. You know, it's okay. Don't lose heart. If we weren't certain that Jesus would come.

[36 : 26] If we're not certain that everything will be all right. Yeah. Then life would be tough. But if we know there's absolute hope at the end. Maybe we can keep going.

And finally, more positively, well, go and invest. Right? If this is absolutely true, then we can live for Jesus. We can serve him.

We can give our lives to this. Again, when we had applied for this job, it would be a bit foolish to kind of already book our flights. And look for flats in Hong Kong.

Right? We've only applied for a job. Right? It's just a wish. It would be foolish to spend so much money. Of course, once we got a job offer, yeah, that's when we booked flights.

Right? That's when we looked for housing in Hong Kong. Et cetera. Now it's real. It's really going to happen. Now I'm going to, yeah, going to give my whole life to this and get it organized. So again, if Jesus is just a dream, yeah, don't invest in it.

[37 : 28] But if it's really going to happen, well, we can work for it. Right? We can spend time serving and discipling. We can, you know, give to mission and store up treasure in heaven.

Right? And, you know, use it for something. You know, if Jesus' kingdom will last and nothing else will last, well, that's where we should invest. Right? We will spread the gospel. Right?

It's worth it because, you know, Jesus is building his kingdom. It's going to happen. Right? You want to point people to something real. I mean, all the people in Hong Kong are looking for hope and the only real, certain, guaranteed hope is Jesus.

So isn't it wonderful to share that with people? Right? If this is true and real and we know it, that it's guaranteed by covenant by God, well, it's the greatest news and it's worth giving your life to.

It's worth investing in. It's worth living our lives for. Right? And that is, I think, what we should do at the end of this book. It's been a long journey, but this is real.

[38 : 32] This is happening. This is coming. We're going to think about it more the coming weeks over Christmas. But let's give our lives to this Watermark Church. Why don't we pray?

Our Father, thank you that we don't need to wish.

We don't need to dream. But everything will come true in Jesus. Thank you that he is real and he will come. Thank you that we already know he died on the cross and he paid for all our sin.

And he made everything possible for us to be yours and to be with you. And he will come back.

Lord, we often are so distracted by the things around us, the things that seem more real, more secure.

And yet the only thing that's secure ultimately is your promise, your covenant that Jesus will inherit the world and that his kingdom will last forever. Please lift our eyes to that and help us to live for

that.

[39 : 35] Help us to, yeah, would our lives be changed because we really give our whole lives, trust our whole lives to your promise that is absolutely real.

In Jesus' name. Amen.