

Pastor Tom Mortenson

Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

August 9, 2020

Kingdom in Conflict

Selected Scriptures

Prayer: *Father, again, we just thank you that we are indeed washed in the blood of the Lamb. We just again are amazed at the gift that you've given us of your Son. And Lord, this morning we want to again look at another gift and that's the gift of your word. Another gift, that's the gift of your Holy Spirit, and we just again pray for both of those to come together. We pray for your Spirit's presence as we open up your book, that you would give us the ability to make it of permanent value. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, this is our fifth and final look at the kingdom of God and in the very first one we looked at what the kingdom is. We saw that you could sum it up with one line from the Lord's prayer and that is *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* And we saw that it was our task to forcibly advance the kingdom of God against the forces that are arrayed against it. In part two we looked at how we go about doing that task and we looked at three things that kingdom citizens concern themselves with and that is our strategy,

our weapons, and our objective. And we saw first that our strategy is to demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God in our individual lives and that our weapons are prayer and scripture, and finally that our objective is merely to be faithful to the tasks that God has entrusted us with.

Well, next we looked at what motivates kingdom citizens and we decided that it was joy itself. What moves and motivates kingdom citizens to change their loyalties from one kingdom to another is that they get overwhelmed and overtaken by the love of God. And we've seen that there's basically three different motivations to becoming a kingdom citizen and two of them are phony, two of them are unreal, only one of them is real. And there's this transactional legalistic motivation, a phony one that tries to motivate us into thinking that I'm going to get something in return if I just live a sanctified life. And then there's the deceptive motivation that motivates me into thinking that the Christian life is just a nod or an assent to a gospel that costs me nothing; and then finally there's the joyful motivation. It's the one real motivation that Jesus speaks of. He says, *"In his joy, he sold all that he had and bought the field."*

So having discovered joy as the motivation for becoming a kingdom citizen, we next went on to look for our motivation for wanting to

grow as a kingdom citizen. And we asked the question: Are you willing to embrace discipline in order to grow? Are you willing to make the unnatural natural, to commit to being in the word, to commit to having regular times of prayer, to commit to not forsaking the gathering together of the brethren. As Peter said, *make every effort to add to your faith.*

Well this morning we want to address the idea of kingdoms in conflict. I mean after all, we spent a whole lot of time defining what it means to be a kingdom citizen, now we want to explore how is it that citizens do battle? You know, a few months back we did a series called "Back to Basics," and in that series we described our present state of affairs as being directly the result of something, and that something is God's wrath, God's wrath being poured out. And it's poured out because of a great sin and the great sin that God's wrath is poured out because is one of not just actively refusing to believe the God who has revealed himself, I mean that, that would be bad enough. What we are doing is far worse. It is trying to suppress that truth so that others would join us in our unbelief. God makes it very clear that this kind of rebellion is what will provoke his wrath when he says in *Romans 1:18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.* And then God goes on to say that the truth that

we have suppressed about him is the most basic truth that can be suppressed and that's his authorship of all creation. He says in verse 19: *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

So instead of acknowledging God's creative power and ability, we have altogether surrendered to this idea that chance and nothing are the gods that are responsible for creation. And please understand, it's not because there's some kind of compelling evidence that forced us to that conclusion, in fact it really is exactly the opposite. We rejected God first and then we looked for evidence that would support that because mankind intensely resents God and intensely resents God's intrusion into man's plane of existence. I mean, God says very clearly in *Romans 8:7: For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

Well, mankind's inherent hostility toward God met its perfect ally in Charles Darwin. He gave mankind a pseudo scientific reason to throw over his God. And so we have mankind entering into this truly Faustian bargain in which mankind gets the short end of the

stick. I mean he did get to claim freedom from God but at the same time he lost any hope of having any transcendent meaning by embracing the idea that he's just a momentary accident of chance, someone who will eventually die and fade away, having as much ultimate meaning as a mosquito or a chipmunk. For many that's a price that they're willing to pay. Their hatred of God and their desire to be rid of anything smacking of God's influence is such that they would gladly trade cosmic insignificance for a life purged completely of any trace of the sovereignty of God. The problem is for them no amount of bitterness or lies will ever change the fact that they are creatures who will answer to a sovereign Creator. And all of those of us who are members of the kingdom of God have a sovereign duty to respond to those folks as only citizens can. Because folks, we are at war. *Matthew 11* says: "*From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.*" You know today there are many different areas where the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world are presently engaged in conflict and they're no surprise to any of us. I mean this morning we're going to look at just three issues. We're going to look at the issue of race, we want to look at the issue of lawlessness, and then we want to look at the issue of wickedness.

Now that we've established what it means to be a kingdom citizen, I

want to look at each of these individual areas to apply kingdom citizenship to how we respond. And the first one and perhaps the most pressing one today is obviously the area of race. As kingdom citizens we understand that race is literally an attack on God first and foremost. I've said it before, if I were Satan, I would see racism as one of my greatest assets. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. But I would use race and nationality as key elements to divide and separate us into competing groups who fear and mistrust each other. Let me tell you if I was Satan, I'd be pretty proud of my efforts. I mean I believe this is the greatest country in the world but even great countries are made up of sinful people and our history with regard to slavery was certainly sinful. Every single person who has voluntarily come to this country came because they knew this was a place where, by the grace of God, freedom still found its greatest expression. Only one group of people, and that is African Americans, were brought here chained and sold like animals. I mean that was one of Satan's greatest victories. And its effects on both sides have continued for centuries. I mean there are folks in our church who still have to instruct their children how to dress and act if they ever get pulled over because they fear for their lives, and I certainly know cops who put their lives on the line every single day and wonder if their sacrifice is worth it. And I also know who exactly delights in pitting one group against

another. I mean it's true we are centuries from slavery and we've made tremendous progress but understand, there's a reason why racism after hundreds of years is still a huge problem in this country, and it's obvious if it's viewed from the perspective of kingdoms in conflict. It's because racism is inherently an assault on the image of God, on the imago Dei. The enemy attacks the image of God and that's because it doesn't look or act exactly the way we do. And he delights when the bearers of God's image turn on each other based on nothing more than physical, cultural or ethnic differences, because they don't know or they don't care that God hates racism. *Proverbs 29 says: Where there is no vision, the people perish.* And if we'd only look to God's word for a vision, we would see racism for the lie that it is. *Acts 10:34 says: So Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.* And folks, anyone means anyone. And *1 Samuel says: "For the LORD sees not as man sees: Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."* And *Galatians 3:28 says: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

I don't know how many different ways God has to say it, but racism is an attack on the image of God. And so that raises for us the

question, and that is the obvious one, how do kingdom citizens respond to Black Lives Matter? Well the first question that has to be answered here is to what is this question referring? I mean is it simply asking if black lives matter? Well, then the answer is obvious and resoundingly yes. Have black lives suffered injustice? I think that's clearly undeniable. Most of our great grandparents and parents came to this country seeking a new life. They were given all kinds of opportunity that was never given to African Americans who came here shackled and chained with one fate and that's to be sold. I mean, we may look back at our own history as individuals and we can see a connection from generation to generation where each generation tried to make the next generation a little bit better, a little bit stronger. Well, not so if you were a slave. That was absolutely out of reach. But here's the problem. No one knows or has figured out any reasonable way to go backwards. I mean there's been talk of reparations. There was one leader who suggested that \$14 trillion be paid and the question of course is to whom? I mean, how you -- how will you identify each and every person who was specifically damaged by slavery? I mean, must they all come from Africa? I mean how about blacks who immigrated. And were there injustices committed against other races of people? I mean were there not injustices committed against Native Americans as well? Well, as kingdom citizens we look at this problem, we say what? We say, well, what does God

say? What does God say about looking backwards for redress and retribution? He says don't do it. Paul made it crystally clear in his letter to the Colossians. In *Colossians 3:9* he says: *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.* Well, Paul lists eight different categories of people that were identified, and some of the categories are racial, some of them are culture, all of them differed greatly from each other. And here's the point that James White made brilliantly recently in a message that he gave, and he said this, he said, all of these individual groups could look backwards, they could look backwards and find grievances between each other. I mean pick any one of the eight groups and ask them to look backwards at their own history to see if they could find an injustice or a pattern of injustice that was done to them, and there's no doubt one could easily be found. I mean White points out that the Greeks practically invented slavery, and that the barbarians were just that, they were barbarians, the Scythians were an extreme group of barbarians who were known of perfecting the art of taking human scalps and turning human skulls into mugs that they drank out of. Jews and Gentiles famously mistreated each other as circumcised versus uncircumcised. And so you have to ask yourself

the question, do any of those groups, would any of those groups have any trouble whatsoever looking backwards and finding a whole host of reasons why their lives mattered? I mean if these quote new creatures in Christ couldn't put away the injustices done to them in the past, there would have been no Christian church established, and instead there would have been eight sub Christian groups all doing battle with each other over past injustices. Paul insists that each of these people groups put on a new self that refuses to look backwards, that refuses to see distinctions in favor of seeing one new self renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. For Paul this was absolutely crucial. Listen to what he says in *Philippians 3:13*. He said: *But one thing I do: Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.* See, the danger in the Black Lives Matter organization is that it focuses largely backwards to injustices committed at the beginning of this century when slavery was still part of our culture. Black Lives Matter is an organization who's all about a descent into dividing ethnicities. Of course black lives matter. So do red lives and yellow lives and white lives and every other color in between. And the problem is God does not want us looking at immutable qualities, those are that qualities that

you're born with that you can't change, he doesn't want us looking at those as any basis for dividing. God doesn't want us dividing ourselves into little groups on any basis, least of all over things we have no control over like our race.

Black Lives Matter, the organization, specializes in dividing people. I mean the organization itself is atheistic, anti nuclear family, pro homosexual, anti Christian, and Marxist. Other than that, they're fine. You probably heard that the response to Black Lives Matter that says, "well, all lives matter" is viewed by many to be an insult. The way they see it, black lives are the ones that are suffering in particular and to simply say "all lives matter" is as thoughtless as someone responding to a house on fire by saying, "Well, all houses matter, don't they?" Well to a fireman, all houses may matter but certainly the one that's on fire is the one that needs to matter most to the firemen. And black lives are the lives that are on fire. To a citizen of the kingdom though, every house on every block is on fire because anyone, red and yellow, black and white who doesn't know Christ is under the wrath of God, because the one that matters most of all, the creator himself, has been completely removed from our culture. So as citizens of the kingdom, we want to view things from God's perspective rather than man's, no matter how loud man shouts.

Jonathan Isaac did a better job than I ever could of summing up what the real issue is here. Jonathan is an African American member of a highly elite group of athletes. He's a professional basketball player, plays for the Orlando Magic, but first and foremost he's a citizen of the kingdom. Just last week the NBA season opened up and they came out for their games all dressed in their Black Lives Matter t-shirts, and all of them decided to kneel for the anthem with one lone courageous exception and that was Jonathan Isaac. At 22 years of age, he's got more wisdom than most. And this is part of what he had to say for why he refused to kneel. He said this: "I believe that Black Lives Matter. A lot went into my decision, and part of it is, I thought that kneeling or wearing the Black Lives Matter t-shirt doesn't go hand in hand with supporting black lives. I believe that for myself, my life has been supported by (the) gospel, (of) Jesus Christ, and everyone is made in the image of God and that we all forge through God's glory. Each and every one of us do things that we shouldn't do and say things that we shouldn't say. We hate and dislike things that we shouldn't hate and dislike, and sometimes it gets to a point where we point fingers, whose evil is worse, and sometimes it comes down to whose evil is most visible. We all make mistakes, but I think that the gospel of Jesus Christ is that there's grace for us, and that Jesus came and died for our sins and that if we all come to an understanding of that and that God wants to have a

relationship with us. I think when you look around, racism isn't the only thing that plagues our society, that plagues our nation, that plagues our world, and I think coming together on that message that we want to get past not only racism but everything that plagues us as a society, I feel like the answer to that is the gospel." See, like Jonathan, we kingdom citizens, we think differently. We think every single house on the block is on fire.

Next we address the question of lawlessness. How does a kingdom citizen respond to the widespread lawlessness that we see each and every day? I mean every day for months now the City of Portland has experienced nightly riots. What started as a protest over the death of George Floyd has now morphed into a generalized series of conflicts that erupt overnight not just in Portland but over a half dozen major cities. So how do we respond? Well, first of all, we don't make Elijah's mistake. You see it's easy to look at the nightly newscast and we see these fires and destruction and wholesale lawlessness and we conclude that this whole place is just God forsaken. If you remember, Elijah felt the same way after his confrontation with Jezebel. And when she responded to his overwhelming display of God's power by saying she was going to kill him, Elijah, he just crumbled. He actually thought he was the last man standing who believed in the real God. In his despair he cried out to God saying: *"I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God*

of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." Well, Elijah was mistaken. He had clearly underestimated his God. And it's easy to do that to think that God is missing somehow in places like Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis or Atlanta. Well, it just so happens that my daughter Sarah and her husband are moving to a town eight miles outside of Portland, and thus I've been able to learn of a vibrant Christian community that is there and is thriving. Sarah and her husband Jason have had to go out there a few times to make arrangements for their kids to go to a Christian school out there, and they've been cultivating a number of relationships that they have with churches out there that are busily about the business of proclaiming the gospel. So first and foremost, never forget that God has his people everywhere. I mean it's easy to turn on the nightly news and think we are all doomed. Don't make Elijah's mistake. This is Paul commenting on Elijah's state of mind in *Romans 11*. He says this: *God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life."* But what is God's reply to him? *"I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."* So too at the present time there is a remnant,

chosen by grace.

You see, we kingdom citizens, we are the remnant chosen by grace. And secondly, God has specific instructions for how we should approach situations like the lawlessness in Portland and it has to do with specific targeted prayer. *1 Timothy 2* says: *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.* You see, it's incredibly important that kingdom citizens see everything, including the nightly news, in kingdom terms. Everything is about the clash between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, and the enemy wants you thinking that God is indifferent or absent or powerless, and nothing could be farther from the truth. God is one hundred percent sovereignly in charge from a sparrow falling to a riot in Portland. And prayer plays an integral role in the advance of God's kingdom.

Well, so far we've seen how kingdom citizens battle on race noting the courage of one NBA basketball player who points out that all race issues point to a bigger battle and that is the desperate need that every one of us has for the gospel. On lawlessness, we've

seen that the key is understanding that God is sovereign, that God is in charge now matter how random or how out of control things appear and that our response to lawlessness should be persistent, targeted prayer.

The third area that engages us as children of the kingdom in our culture today is simply the advance of wickedness. Toward the end of his time on earth, Jesus was asked by his disciples when the end would come and what would be the signs that it was about to be, arrive. This is what Jesus said. This is *Matthew 24:7-12*. He says: *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains." Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.*

What's fascinating to note that the Greek here at the very beginning has translated "nation" in Matthew 24 is the word "ethnos." It probably sounds familiar because it's the word we get the phrase "ethnic group" from. What Jesus is actually saying is you're going to see one ethnic group rise up against another ethnic group, and I wonder if that sounds familiar. Famines and

earthquakes in various places, check. But Jesus didn't say these were signs of the end, he said they were instead the beginning of birth pains. What follows is tribulation and persecution resulting in death. That may not be our lot but if you look around at the world, if you look around at our brothers and sisters in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, clearly in the Middle East, in China, certainly in North Korea, now even in India, you'll see an ever growing amount of persecution leading to death. So persecution and tribulation, check. Jesus goes on to say: "*And you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.*" Now if you think that's not happening, I would direct you to an article written by a sociologist named George Yancey who actually sought data to back up the impression that he was getting simply by observing our culture. In fact he wrote a book about it, and in the book he comments about it in this article in the Gospel Coalition. He says this:

"In my book *So Many Christians, So Few Lions*, I document that about 32 percent of all Americans like conservative Christians significantly less than other social groups. In comparison, about 31 percent of all Americans like Muslims significantly less than other social groups." I bet you didn't know that, that we conservative Christians are liked less than Muslims. He says, "So it's fair to say that if we're concerned about anti-Muslim prejudice, then we should also be concerned about anti-Christian prejudice -- at least prejudice against conservative Christians.

It's also worth noting who tends to have this type of animosity. My research indicates that those with anti-Christian attitudes are more likely to be white, male, wealthy, highly educated, politically progressive, and irreligious. Those first four markers indicate individuals who have quite a bit of per capita social power." And then he goes on to ask is this mild disgust or irrational hatred? He says: "On to the second question, about the nature of those who don't like Christians. Do they merely feel mild disgust, or is it irrational hatred that can lead to discrimination? I sent a questionnaire with open-ended questions to a group of progressive activists who tended to be white, male, wealthy, educated, and irreligious. They were the type of people who would expect to exhibit Christianophobia. And they did. Here are just a few of the answers I received on my survey: 'Kill them all, let their God sort them out.' 'A torturous death would be too good for them. 'I'd be a bit giddy, certainly grateful, if everyone who saw himself or herself in that category were snatched permanently from our societal peripheries, whether by holocaust or rapture or plague.' 'I am only too well aware of their horrific attitudes and beliefs -- and those are enough to make me see them as subhuman.' Clearly we are seeing this type of hatred that is unreasonable and can lead to discrimination," he says.

Well, Jesus says that hatred will be followed by many falling away.

Check. Followed by false prophets leading many astray. Check. Followed by the love of many growing cold and that due to lawlessness, again, check. Well, here's the problem. Thankfully here's also the solution. See, God has blessed us to do what he has blessed people to do all the time, so that they can in turn bless others. Listen to how God describes why he blessed Abraham. This is all the way back to *Genesis 12*. He says: *And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.* That's why God blesses. But unfortunately that's not what we as a country do. And we as a nation have become extraordinarily wicked. We have turned the greatest blessing a nation has ever received from heaven itself into an affluence that's given us plenty of reasons to ignore God, to drive him out of our culture and embrace everything that the kingdom of this world offers instead. And I don't say this as a bitter anti-American but as someone who loves this country, someone who sees us as the most blessed nation on the earth but one who also recognizes that along with blessing comes responsibility. God said: *"Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more."*

See, as a kingdom citizen I could trace all of our country's present day disastrous relationship with God to our initial great

sin, and that sin is suppressing the truth of who God is. Instead of thanking God for bringing us abundant blessings and seeking how we can pass those blessings on, we have instead decided that we resent God's intrusion into our national public life. God says there's consequences for that. And since then God says the consequences will be first an over-sexualized culture. Check. Followed by a pervertedly sexualized culture. Check. Followed by a culture literally devoid of reason. Check. A culture that God describes by saying: *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* Well, if you're wondering what a debased mind might look like, consider the possibility of responding to months of rioting, looting and lawlessness by suggesting that the police be de-funded. Consider a response to a government accused of being insensitive to minorities by engaging in a series of riots that destroys minority businesses, burns down a brand new, never occupied \$30 million homeless shelter and kills members of that same minority community. Consider the rise to national prominence of an organization that promotes itself as anti Christian, anti family, pro LGBTQ and pro Marxist. That's what I consider to be the products of a debased mind. See, there are sins and then there are sins committed with a high hand. High-handed sins are sins committed with a raised fist. These are sins committed defiantly towards God almost with a dare asking God himself what are you going to do about it, God? Paul

gives a great example of a high-handed sin when he describes the attitude of the Corinthians towards the grotesque sin that was taking place among them. This is *1 Corinthians 5*. Paul said: *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.* See, that's exactly what high-handed sin looks like. It's full of arrogance, it's absent of mourning. Paul raises a question that I think is key to where we are right now. He says, *"Ought you not rather to mourn?"*

You know when Janice and I pray, I end my prayer each time with something that I actually got from the book of Daniel. I was struck in reading the book of Daniel with how this incredibly godly man, one of the few people in all of scripture that not one thing negative is ever spoken about, a man who lived in an incredibly wicked society just like we live in today, I was struck with how Daniel identified with the corporate sins of the culture that he was in and actually mourned for that sin even though he never committed it. This is *Daniel 9*. Daniel says: *I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we -- not they -- we have*

sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

So when Janice and I pray, I try to model Daniel's prayer and I say this, I say, Lord, we are wicked people. We have sinned with a high hand, daring you to take action against us. We have mocked your idea that marriage is to be between a man and a woman. We now insist that the plan which you established all the way back in the book of Genesis that a man would leave his family and cling to his wife, that no longer applies. We now demand that marriage include men marrying men and women marrying women. Oh Lord, we have mocked your design that God made man in his image, male and female, he

made them. We now demand the right to claim our own gender regardless of the way you've created us. And worse, Lord, we have systematically practiced human sacrifice through the slaughter of babies while still in the womb to the tune of 60 million souls. God says if you sow the wind, you're going to reap the whirlwind. And we're now reaping a whirlwind over a slavery that took place hundreds a years ago, then God help us when the whirlwind for child murder comes due. These are not ordinary sins. These are high-handed sins. These are sins done with a clenched fist daring God to open heaven itself and unleash his fury. And by reason of God's mercy alone thus far, he hasn't. I pray every single day that God would give us yet another day of undeserved mercy rather than the judgment we so richly deserve. I pray that God would give each of us the opportunity to change our culture so that the kingdom of God rules on earth as it is in heaven. I said before this is a diagnosis that should be obvious to any kingdom citizen. But here in conclusion is the good news. There's also a cure.

2 Chronicles 7:14: If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. You know, folks say, well, that's an Old Testament statement, that applies only to Israel, it doesn't apply to us. But clearly as kingdom citizens, we are God's people. And if we are willing to humble ourselves and pray and to seek God's

face and turn from our own wicked ways, then why not assume that God will hear from heaven, forgive our sin and heal our land?

Let's pray.

Father, we are a wicked, wicked culture. We tend to think of ourselves as marvelous and wonderful. Lord, as kingdom citizens we see ourselves, we get a hint, a glint of what we look like from a kingdom perspective. And I just thank you, Lord, for the mercy that hasn't reached out from heaven and utterly destroyed us. I thank you, Lord, for yet another day today and I pray for another one tomorrow and I pray that each one of those days would be given to us so that we could in some way affect this culture, in some way do exactly what you called us to do, to humble ourselves, to pray, to seek your face, to turn from our wicked ways and so that we can have a country that is forgiven of sin and healed. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.