

The King We Need

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[0 : 00] Hosea chapter 10 verses 3 through 4.

! May God add a blessing to the reading of his word.

Would you please be seated? Well, if you remember, last week we talked about purpose. And how we were created by God to reflect his image.

We are to reflect his character to the rest of the world. And one of the ways we do that is by being generous. Understanding that our things, even our lives, are not our own.

But they've been given to us by God. And so we are to be stewards. We are to be managers of the resources that God has given us. And when we realize that, we'll better understand the purpose that our lives have and the material possessions that we have, what we should use them for.

[1 : 39] Using them. Our lives. Our things. To reflect the character of God to each other, to the world. One attribute of God's character is that he is generous.

He generously gave us his son. Jesus, his son, generously gave his life to atone for our sins.

That we might have salvation. And so we will be most satisfied in God. Again, this is a review of last week. We will be most satisfied in God when we pursue his purpose and his mission for us.

Which is to reflect his image and to make disciples as we do that. And when we do that, we will glorify God.

And as a result of that, we will live lives that are truly satisfied. We will be most satisfied in God when we pursue his purpose and mission for us.

[2 : 42] But I think we'll better understand that. We'll better understand our role and we better understand the concept of stewardship. That we are stewards of the lives, of the resources that God has given us.

And if you remember from last week, I used an illustration to communicate that from the Lord of the Rings. If you remember, I talked about Denethor. Denethor, who was the steward of the kingdom of Gondor.

And his job was to rule in the king's absence. He was given authority, but he was never given the place of king.

His chair was on the ground. He'd never ascend the steps. He would never sit in the king's place. But he wanted to be king.

And because he wanted to be a king, he ended up being a terrible steward. Corrupted by his sinful desire to take something that didn't belong to him. Denethor's unwillingness to hand over the kingdom ends with his decision to take his own life.

[3 : 49] And in his place, as the story continues, Faramir, his son, becomes the new steward of Gondor.

And thankfully for everybody, he's much different from his father. Because when the heir comes back to the throne, when he returns to his kingdom, this man did not resist him, but welcomed him. And he encouraged the other people of the kingdom to do the same. In fact, he leads them in saying, Behold, our king.

He's the first to say it, and he encourages everybody else to do the same. Faramir was everything that his father was not. He was a good steward.

A steward who looked forward to the king's return. And when the king returned, he was willing to give everything back to him because it rightfully belonged to him.

[4 : 47] He had been entrusted with it. It did not belong to him. And he was more than willing to give it back to its rightful owner. If you remember when I came here about a year and a half ago in view of call, the sermon I preached was from Matthew 25, verses 14 through 30.

That's the parable of the talents. This is my ministry philosophy. This is my life's ambition. That parable. To take what God has given to me, what he's placed in my hands, and to multiply it for his kingdom and for his glory.

That's my hope in this life, is to be a good steward. And so that's also my encouragement for you. It will always be that you do the same. That you be a good steward of what God has placed in your hands.

That you would multiply it for his kingdom and his glory. Because the king will return. And when the king returns, he will ask. And he will examine the evidence of your life.

And he will know whether you've been a good steward or not. So let's not waste our lives here. Let's not waste our times pursuing our own kingdoms here on this earth.

[6 : 07] Because it will perish. Instead, let's be stewards who anticipate the fact that our king will come back. And let's live our lives in such a way that we are always encouraging those around us to behold him.

The one true king. And in doing so, we will fulfill an aspect of our God-given purpose. To use our lives to bring him glory and to bring him honor.

Is this not what scripture says? 1 Corinthians 6, 19-20. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you? Whom you have from God.

You are not your own. For you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 10, 31.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever it is that you do, do it all to the glory of God. Now that sounds pretty easy and pretty straightforward.

[7 : 15] However, as we witness both externally and internally, mankind would much rather play the role of king than they would play the role of steward, right?

We'd rather give the orders than receive the orders. We'd rather be the one who obeys than the one who submits. Because that appeals to our flesh.

So we seek to be the king of our workplace. Some of us seek to be the king of our fantasy football league. We're the king of the neighborhood Christmas light display, right?

I'm going to have the biggest display. Everybody's going to know how awesome I am because of how great I decorate my house. Some of us treat the highway as if it was our own little kingdom.

Demanding that our minions speed up or slow down or get out of our way or ask for our permission before they change lanes. We act as if the highway is where we rule.

[8 : 14] We like the idea of being king. Because the king stands above everyone else. Nobody is over the king. The king receives the praises, the reverence from everybody else who is around him.

Nothing is withheld from the king. The king can have whatever he wants. The king never comes in second place. It seems like it's good to be king.

Or at least, again, we're led to believe that that's the case. Adam and Eve were God's appointed stewards. Stewards of his kingdom, remember?

God had created them in his image. And he had given them authority over the rest of all that he had made. But like the rest of creation, they too were creatures made by the creator.

They had a lot of authority, sure. But they were never given authority over God. That's where their authority ended. However, you guys remember the story.

[9 : 22] Satan comes and he tempts them with the idea, with the thought that, you know what? Hey, maybe, maybe you can have a place next to God.

In fact, maybe that's exactly what he's withholding from you. You could be your own God. You could be his equal. You could be your own absolute sovereign.

God is withholding from you. And so, they weren't content with being stewards. They reached out. They took the fruit that was desirable to their eyes.

And they ate it, seeking in a way to become their own kings. At that point, God could have wiped the slate clean. He could have terminated man and the rest of creation.

But he had a plan in all of this. And in the midst of pronouncing the curses that would result from sin, he begins to reveal that plan with a promise to one day send a deliverer.

[10 : 25] One whom Satan would bruise. But who would, in the end, ultimately deliver the death blow. A promised Messiah.

A king who would be the king of kings. A lord who would be the lord of lords. One who would put an end to the curse of sin.

And so, here's the main idea for this morning's sermon. In his grace, God has provided us with the king we need.

In his grace, God has provided us with the king that we need. So, in verse 3, Hosea looks to the near future.

When Israel will be taken captive by Assyria. And in that day of judgment, the people will realize the just punishment of their sin and anguish over their rejection of God as king.

[11 : 33] So, again, look at verse 3. For there, again, Hosea is looking to the future. What these people will say. They will say, for now we will say, we have no king. Why?

For we did not fear the Lord. And a king, what could he do for us now? To give you a little history, Hosea was the king of the northern kingdom of Israel at this time.

There would be no more kings to follow him because there would be no kingdom. And it all goes back to a decision that Israel had made back in 1 Samuel 8, verses 1 through 18.

I want to read that entire passage for you so that you get a better understanding of what is happening here so that we can better apply this text to our lives. If you want to turn in your Bibles there, go ahead, but I have it on the screen.

Let's read. 1 Samuel 8, 1 through 18. When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel and the name of his second Abijah.

[12 : 37] And they were judges in Beersheba. Yet his sons did not walk in the ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. These were in the days before Israel had a king.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways.

Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the king, but the thing displeased Samuel.

When they said, give us a king to judge us and Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Obey the voice of the people and all that they say to you. For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.

According to all the deeds that they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you.

[13 : 38] Now then obey their voice. Only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them. Verse 10. So Samuel took all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him.

He said, these will be the ways of the king who will reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and run before his chariots.

And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots.

He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants.

He will take the tenth of your grain and your vineyards and give it to his officers and his servants.

He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys and put them to his work.

[14 : 42] He will take the tenth of your flocks and you shall be his slaves. And in that day, in that day, you will cry out because of your king.

And you have chosen for yourselves, whom you have chosen for yourselves. But the Lord will not answer you in that day. Well, guess what? That day had come for the northern kingdom of Israel.

Here in Hosea chapter 10. What's important to understand here is that it wasn't a total rejection of God at this point. They had not totally rejected God in 1 Samuel chapter 8.

They still wanted God around. They just wanted him to kind of stand over there. Just get out of the way a little bit, right? We still want you around, but you're kind of embarrassing us.

We'd rather you just go over there. So we know that you're there, but just kind of stay out of what we're trying to do here. So I think about it as like young children, you know? You get to a point as a parent with your young kids where it's not cool for you to be around them anymore.

[15 : 46] They don't want you gone, right? They've got to have a place to live. Somebody's got to feed them and clothe them and all those things. They still want you around, but they'd just rather

just go over there because you're making me feel embarrassed.

And so I kind of think Israel is sort of acting in the same way. God, just go over there, would you? They didn't want to make him mad. They still needed him as a safety net just in case something went wrong.

But at this point, they felt like what they needed was a king. And they felt like their own king would be somebody who they could better identify with and somebody whom they could better control. They could see him. They could go to him. They could trap him into a corner if they needed to. And God rightly calls their attitude here rejection of him.

But again, it wasn't a complete and total rejection, at least not at this point. But it was rejection through demanding another king with the assumption that they had that that king could make them more secure, that that king could make them happier in life.

[16:53] And that kind of rejection still happens today. With unbelievers, non-religious people, they reject God by not wanting him to be a part of their lives at all, refusing to acknowledge his existence.

But believers do this as well, rejecting God by letting him be a part of their lives, but not really fully depending on him for anything. They like the fact that they have him as sort of a safety net when they need him, but they're not truly, totally devoted in him and believing that he truly can do the things that he's promised to do.

I have a friend who's an adventurous person, and he likes to go rock climbing. And one time he went rock climbing with a friend, and they were both going for the first time.

They're kind of learning this together. And when it came to their time to repel off the mountain, they were getting instruction on how you're to do that, right? And I'm not a rock climber.

I'm probably never going to be at this point in time in my life. But what he was saying is when you're repelling off the mountain, off the rock, you have the rope, right? And the rope there is to keep you from obviously falling to the ground and dying and being crushed by the rocks on the ground.

[18:13] And so what you've got to do to repel safely is you have to lean back on the rope. You've got to put your trust in that rope to hold you up. Take your hands off the rock.

Keep your hands right here on the harness by the rope. Well, his friend struggled with that. He couldn't keep his hands off the rope. And so his friend would continue to kind of reverse mountain climb with his hands and his feet.

He tried to climb down the mountain, not fully trusting the rope and what it was there to do. And he got badly hurt as a result of that. And I tell you that story because we do the very same thing.

The Bible tells us that we should trust God, that we should hope in God. But isn't it the case that often we would rather trust in ourselves?

We'd rather trust in our own situation. We'd rather have guarantees from God. And so Israel's request here revealed a lack of trust in God, a lack of satisfaction in God in the work that he was doing.

[19:21] He was supposed to be the real king, but they instead were not willing to depend on him as such. And that was the case for them from the beginning.

Remember? After God brings them out of Egypt, they wanted to make their own image of God that they felt comfortable with, that they could better identify with.

And so they made the golden calf. And then from there, they were always making demands of God. They were always seeking guarantees from him. That they could trust him. That they should continue to follow him.

And again, this isn't just a problem that ancient Israel had. This is our problem, very much so today for people in the church. It's easy to trust God when you feel like you have everything that you need.

When you have job security. Your marriage and your relationships are fulfilling. When everyone you care about is healthy and doing fine. But when those things are missing, when those things are missing, it's not so easy to trust in him.

[20:27] To lean back on him. So we tend to take matters into our own hands. And that's what Israel here was doing. They wanted a king that they could control.

They wanted a king that they could put their hands on. They think it would be so much easier. We think so too, don't we? It would be so much easier if we could just control God. If we could just have the power to force him to give in to our demands.

This attitude does not express faith in God. It doesn't express trust in God. It reflects an attitude that in actuality doubts God. Doubts in his sovereignty.

And leads one ultimately to reject his authority. And not realizing that as a result of that, rejection of God's authority is an elevation of our own.

When we reject God's authority, what we're doing is elevating our own. Like our parents. Adam and Eve. We can be deceived into thinking that we can do a better job of being God than God can do.

[21 : 35] So God here in 1 Samuel 8 gives the people what they request. He gives them what they want. Now that seems confusing to me. Why would God give them a bad request?

Why would he acquiesce to their demands? Why not simply say, no, I'm not going to do that? Well, because God was up to something here. And the Israelites were going to learn a lesson in a very hard way.

One of the worst judgments in the Bible is Romans chapter 1, verses 24 through 25. Therefore, it says there, God gave them up in the lust of their heart to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and they worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever.

Amen. God turned them over to the desires of their heart. And his judgment in Romans 1 and 1 Samuel 8 is to give the people what they think they need.

And so things don't go so well. They don't go well when we elevate our authority over God.

Because the king was supposed to make them happy. He was supposed to secure their prosperity.

[23 : 05] The king whom they thought they could control ended up, as God said, controlling them, as Samuel had warned them. The king would exploit them.

The king would take from them. And so we see that when you have other kings besides God, those kings do not save you. They tyrannize you.

Other kings do not save you. They do not give to you. They tyrannize you. You've got to understand this.

Whatever you depend on for happiness and security, you make a king of that thing. And as a result of that, you become its slave.

And this can come in many different forms. It can come in the forms of a relationship with another person, whether that's your spouse or your children or your parents or anybody. You have that person and you make them like your king, expecting that they are going to make you feel secure, expecting that they're going to make you feel happy.

[24 : 09] And so as a result of that, they've always got to say the right thing to you. They've always got to do the right thing for you. They must drop everything at a moment's notice to help you whenever you need it.

And when you do that, you crush that person. Because nobody can fulfill that role all the time.

Nobody is fit to be your own king. People will let you down.

Success would be another thing that we seek for dependence and security and make it our king.

And we at Slave, many families have been torn apart as a result of mom or dad seeking to have a better job or a greater title in their place of work, making their kids also feel like they never measure up.

Their grades are never good enough. They're never good enough at sports. Mothers and fathers putting their role as a mother and father behind their pursuit of whatever they deem will make them be a success in the world's eyes.

We also do this with many different kinds of physical escapes, things that we seek to release stress in our lives to make us feel more relaxed.

[25 : 24] But those things, too, can eventually and will eventually enslave us. It starts out innocently enough. It's an escape that you can control, whatever it be, substance abuse, whatever you're looking at on your computer or on your phone.

But when you feel you need it more and more, it begins to be that escape from your real life. And the more you do that, the more you crave it, and the more you pursue it with greater intensity.

And as a result of that, things worsen in time as you pursue that thing in worse forms. No longer able to turn that drive off, you have become enslaved to it.

It's your king, and you are its slave. So you've got to understand that every life has a king. The king in your life is whatever you must have in order to feel happy and feel secure.

And you've got to understand as well that kings make their subjects their servants. So it's important who your king is.

[26 : 39] Romans 6, 16. Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey? Galatians 4, 8.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. Now, I don't doubt that there are some of you who hear that and you think, well, you know what, Pastor Mike?

Not me. Not me. I'm my own man. I'm my own person. I don't need any of that stuff. I don't need any of those people to make me feel happy or secure.

I'm free. It is these same people who are often afraid to commit in their relationships. They're afraid to express their emotion because they don't want to feel or appear vulnerable to others.

They won't allow anything to stand in the way of their feeling of independence. And so for them, independence becomes their king. The people got the king who they deserved.

[27 : 46] And they paid dearly for it. Because as they recognize here in verse 3, they did not fear the Lord. The king who they had, Hosea, would be stripped of his power.

And there was nothing left that he would be able to do for his people. Because after all, what value can a former king have to a former nation? And then in verse 4, that brings us back to the present. Israel's experience with kings had not been, I should say, exemplary. Sure, they had David, but David was a flawed man with a lot of issues. He was no perfect king.

They had wanted a king to lead them and protect them. They wanted a king who would justify them. But what they got instead was a sham. Especially in the northern kingdom of Israel.

Look at verse 4. What they're acknowledging here is that the kings that they had were untrustworthy people.

[28 : 56] They had made oaths to them. They had made promises to them. But they never delivered on any of them. And then they talk about how judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field. What are they talking about here?

Well, what they're saying is that the justice which the king was to have provided them, in fact, turned out to be treachery. These men who they were supposed to trust for their well-being did not care any bit for them.

And so injustice pervaded their nation. Their kings took more than they gave. They consistently made and broke their promises. And they killed their very own people at times to cover their own sins.

And so we are either wanting to be king or looking to imperfect people to lead us perfectly. But our kings never fulfill us.

And like Israel, we often fail to look to the king whom we already have. The king we need is the king that we don't deserve.

[30 : 07] A king who sets captives free. A king who didn't come to be served but to serve. A king who doesn't kill his people to cover his sins but who dies to cover theirs.

A king who cannot be bribed. A king who cannot be corrupted. A king who will always rule justly. A king who will forgive those who seek it.

And who will extend mercy to those who don't deserve it. There is such a king. He was born to die. And he was raised to reign. And he's a warrior king. He gets into the battle at the very heart of it. His death is our death.

His victory is our victory. His kingdom is our kingdom. Jesus Christ, he is the king that we need.

[31 : 15] He's the king that you and I could never be. He's the king who completely satisfies. He is the king we need. He is the king if you are a believer that you already have today.

And I love this quote by Tim Keller. He says, Jesus is the only Lord who, if you receive him, will fulfill you completely. And if you fail him, will forgive you eternally.

Doesn't that sound good? Man, that sounds great. There is no higher authority than Jesus Christ. His reign over all things is absolute.

It's unbreakable. It's unshakable. God raised him from the dead and placed him over all things.

Ephesians 1, 21 through 23. He said, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named.

Not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him his head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

[32 : 27] So let's be good stewards who reflect our very good king to this world who's in desperate need of the church being the church.

Amen. And I'll tell you this. That one day, every single life, every single person who has lived, who will live, will stand and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is king.

You will either do it in this life willingly and thankfully, or you will be forced to acknowledge it one day. And so I want to close with that verse from Philippians 2, 5 through 11.

And if you're seeing and realizing today that Jesus must be your king, I encourage you to come down as we sing our invitation hymn. Because I'm telling you, one day, this day will come.

You will be there. And will you welcome the coming of your king? We will all bow. We will all confess. Let's look. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

[33 : 33] How should we be stewards like this? Modeling our king, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God. Not a thing to be grasped. But he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

Even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.

In heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Thank you.