



Summer sermons

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Colossians 1:9–14 | July 5, 2026 | Austin Stafford

SERMON SUMMARY

Using the vivid image of toddlers picking up each other's behavior in a nursery, Austin Stafford opens with a simple but convicting observation: we all conform to the codes of conduct of whatever group we are in. Whether in corporate culture, academic spaces, social media, or politics, we spend enormous energy shaping ourselves to fit in to kingdoms rooted in worldly things, and none of them ever fully satisfy. Drawing from Colossians 1:9–14, Austin shows that the kingdom of darkness actively works to leave us confused, empty, exhausted, and hopeless, while the kingdom of Jesus offers something altogether different. Because of Christ, we have already been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of his Son. That transfer means confusion gives way to clarity, emptiness gives way to wholeness, exhaustion gives way to sustaining power, and death gives way to eternal life. The invitation is straightforward: lay down our lives, allow God to renew our minds, and live every day in the freedom and fullness of the kingdom of Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Austin opened with the image of toddlers picking up each other's behavior. Where in your own life do you notice yourself adopting the unspoken code of conduct of a group or culture around you?
- 2 The sermon described four things the kingdom of darkness wants for us: confusion, emptiness, exhaustion, and hopelessness. Which of those four feels most present in your life right now, and what does it look like in your day to day?
- 3 Paul says Jesus has "rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son." What does it mean to you that the transfer has already happened, and how does that change the way you face your current circumstances?
- 4 Austin said the kingdom of Jesus turns confusion into clarity by reorienting us away from our own will and toward God's mission. What is one area of your life where you most need that reorientation right now?
- 5 The fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) is described as the natural evidence of kingdom living. Where are you seeing that fruit grow in your life, and where do you sense it is being choked out?
- 6 Austin shared personally about a season of trying to control everything and burning out as a result. What is one thing you have been gripping tightly that God may be inviting you to release to Him this week?