

OVERVIEW

Title: Kings and Kingdoms: Living Under God's Authority

Sermon Summary: This sermon launches a series on 1 and 2 Kings, focusing on the transition of power from King David to Solomon. It explores themes of loyalty to God's chosen king, the importance of accountability, and the dangers of seeking personal glory over God's kingdom. Pastor Matt emphasizes the relevance of these ancient stories to modern Christian life, urging listeners to consider their commitment to Jesus as King and to identify obstacles preventing full devotion to God's kingdom.

Key Points:

- God is the only true God and is sovereign over history
- The importance of being committed to God's chosen king (Jesus for Christians today)
- The need for accountability and open conversations in Christian life
- The danger of valuing personal status, power, or wealth over God's kingdom
- The call to be strong, courageous, and obedient to God
- Identifying and removing obstacles that prevent full devotion to God's kingdom

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Kings 1-2

Stories:

- The story of David's final days and Solomon's ascension to the throne
- Adonijah's attempt to seize power and his subsequent downfall
- The execution of Joab and Shimei as potential threats to Solomon's reign
- The parable of the human blanket (Abishag) used to illustrate power dynamics

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question:

What does it mean to you personally to live under God's authority, and how does that shape your daily life?

Simple Understanding:

1. What is the main message of the introduction about the role of Adonijah in the story?
2. How does the transition of power from David to Solomon unfold, and why is this significant?

Personal Reflection:

3. Have you ever experienced a moment where you decided to take control over a situation instead of trusting God's plan? How did it turn out?
4. Which character in the sermon do you resonate with the most, and why?

Critical Thinking:

5. How does the behavior of Adonijah reflect common tendencies in human nature when it comes to power and authority?
6. Why do you think David chose Solomon (instead of Adonijah) as his successor despite the opposition?

Application and Action:

7. What areas of your life, if any, do you find difficult to submit to God's authority, and how might you begin to change that?
8. In what practical ways can you work towards the progress of God's kingdom in your daily life?

Deeper Reflection:

9. What obstacles or personal desires might be hindering your full commitment to God's kingdom, and how can those be addressed?
10. How can you apply the lessons from 1 and 2 Kings to better understand Jesus' role as King in your life today?

Practical Applications:

Discussion Questions and Suggested Answers:

1. How can you identify and address obstacles in your life that may be hindering your commitment to God's kingdom?

Suggested Answer: Start by prayerfully examining areas where you prioritize personal desires over God's will, such as seeking approval from others, pursuing personal comfort, or holding onto control. Consider asking a trusted friend or mentor for accountability and guidance in these areas.

2. What practical steps can you take to ensure Jesus is the central authority in your life, especially in moments when you feel the urge to "king yourself"?

Suggested Answer: Establish a daily routine of prayer and scripture reading to refocus on God's will, set aside time for reflection and repentance, and actively seek to replace self-centric actions with those that align with the teachings and example of Jesus.

3. In what ways can you engage with others to work towards the progress of God's kingdom, similar to Nathan and Bathsheba advocating for Solomon?

Suggested Answer: Get involved in ministries or service opportunities that align with your gifts and passions, engage in conversations that encourage others to explore their faith, and support those around you in their spiritual journeys.

4. How might regular self-examination and accountability help prevent living for your own glory rather than God's?

Suggested Answer: Regular self-examination helps you stay aware of areas where pride or self-interest may be creeping in. Accountability partners can offer perspective, challenge you when needed, and encourage you to prioritize God's glory over personal gain.

5. What is one specific action you can commit to this week to live more fully under Jesus' kingship in your workplace, family, or community?

Suggested Answer: This could include acting with integrity in difficult situations at work, using words to build up and encourage family members, or volunteering for a community service project as an expression of Christ's love and humility.

Supplemental Discussion Questions

How does the story of Adonijah's attempt to seize power relate to areas in our own lives where we might be trying to 'crown ourselves king' instead of submitting to God's authority?

What can we learn from David's failure to discipline Adonijah, and how might this apply to our own relationships and responsibilities?

In what ways do we, like Joab, sometimes shift our loyalties based on who appears to be in power, rather than remaining faithful to God's chosen leaders?

How can we cultivate the kind of wisdom and discernment Solomon displayed in dealing with potential threats to his kingdom?

What does it mean to be 'committed to the kingdom's king' in our daily lives, and how can we practically demonstrate this commitment?

How might the concept of 'working towards the king's progress' change the way we approach our jobs, relationships, and personal goals?

What are some 'kingdom obstacles' in our own lives that we need to identify and address?

How can we balance the instruction to 'be strong and be a man' with the call to be obedient to God?

In what ways might we be valuing things like status, power, or money over God's kingdom, similar to Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei?

How does remembering Jesus as our unshakeable, eternal King impact the way we live and make decisions in our daily lives?

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: The True King

Reading: 1 Kings 2:1-4, Matthew 6:33

Devotional: As we reflect on David's charge to Solomon, we're reminded that true kingship belongs to God alone. In our lives, we often try to crown ourselves as king, making decisions that serve our own interests rather than God's kingdom. But Jesus teaches us to "seek first the kingdom of God." Today, examine your heart. Are there areas where you've placed yourself on the throne instead of God? Surrender those areas to Him, acknowledging His rightful place as the King of your life.

Day 2: Strength in Obedience

Reading: Joshua 1:7-9, Ephesians 6:10-18

Devotional: David instructed Solomon to "be strong and be a man," but he tied this strength directly to obedience to God. True strength doesn't come from our own abilities, but from our faithfulness to God's commands. In what areas of your life do you need God's strength? How can you align your actions more closely with His Word? Remember, when we walk in obedience, we tap into a strength far greater than our own - the very power of God Himself.

Day 3: The Danger of Unchecked Ambition

Reading: Proverbs 16:18-19, Philippians 2:3-11

Devotional: Adonijah's attempt to seize the throne reminds us of the destructive nature of unchecked ambition. His desire for status and power ultimately led to his downfall. In contrast, Christ exemplified true greatness through humility and service. Reflect on your own ambitions today. Are they aligned with God's purposes? Ask the Lord to purify your motivations and to give you a heart that seeks to serve rather than be served.

Day 4: Accountability in the Kingdom

Reading: Galatians 6:1-5, James 5:16

Devotional: The lack of accountability in Adonijah's life contributed to his poor choices. As believers, we're called to live in community, supporting and challenging one another in love. Do you have people in your life who can speak truth to you, even when it's difficult to hear? If not, pray for God to bring such relationships into your life. If you do, thank God for them and consider how you can be that person for someone else.

Day 5: Surrendering Our "One Thing"

Reading: Mark 10:17-27, Philippians 3:7-11

Devotional: The rich young ruler in Mark's gospel couldn't give up his wealth to follow Jesus. What's your "one thing" that you're hesitant to surrender to God? It might be a relationship, a career goal, or a cherished possession. Remember, true freedom and fulfillment come when we release our grip on these things and trust fully in Christ. Today, identify that "one thing" and prayerfully offer it to God, trusting that His plans for you are far greater than anything you could hold onto.