

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday Nov 8, 2020. "An Unshakable Kingdom: What's Unshakable?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

We're still gathering in person. A small but growing group who follow all the safety guidelines joins us in person. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

II Recap.

Where to begin? It's post election, and we're now trying to clean up all the mess. You might be elated, your people won, and think everything is uphill now. Or you may be devastated, and just know THIS might actually be the end of it all. Either way, it's a new day, the sun actually did come up, and we've got to figure out how each of us will be moving towards the person God has called us, and create us to be. So, roll up your sleeves, we all have a lot to do.

Last Sunday, and at The Gathering this past Wednesday night, we talked about several things that helped us frame this conversation of "*An Unshakable Kingdom*", and why this truth is so important...especially now. In the message there was a lot of conversation around several topics. We'll briefly hit each one just to give you some context for this topic.

The first two issues were identity and belonging.

IDENTITY- To know who I really am, inside and out.

BELONGING- To know where I fit in. Who are my people? Where do I belong?

Probably the two most emotionally pressing needs in our inner psyche. Humans have wrestled with, and have asked deep questions for years, trying to discover the answers to these two deep-seated needs. **Who am I? And where do I fit in?**

The other two concepts we touched on are tied into these two fundamental questions in our search for meaning - and those are **fear** and **insecurity**. We are afraid and feel unsafe when we don't know who we are. And that struggle for identity is so closely tied into where we think or believe we fit in. Because we are tribal in nature, (we have our favorite team, political parties, hobbies, groups we identify with), our sense of self draws us to groups we feel like we have some things in common with. And then we usually adopt the entire identity; (language, dress, behavior, beliefs, rules, etc.) of that group because it lessens the feelings of...wait for it...fear and insecurity we feel from not knowing who we are or where we fit in. See how this is all tied together? So, some questions.

Now that the election is over, where might you have some fears?

And if we define security as a predictable and positive future, where might you have some concerns about your security?

We hit those topics more deeply last Sunday, and a little at The Gathering, but we returned to the same passage we've used all along. It would be helpful to watch both Sundays to get a feeling of the content that helped introduce this passage. Even though our primary teaching passage remains the same, read **Hebrews 12:14-29**...again, and we'll talk about some of the specifics.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

Without getting caught up in the specifics of change, how did it talk about how we handle change?

It framed the concepts of shakability, and unshakability in the changes God was making in worship. What can you draw from those examples to how we should define and understand what is shakable and what is unshakable?

I posted these four points last week. But I've tweaked them a bit to build our understanding and conversation from Wednesday and Sunday to how we see and practice these truths..

1. We must create a place of peace to receive grace.

This is the first understanding from this passage in Hebrews. Creating a place of peace is the entire purpose of why we hold onto the unshakable. Everything we do must be centered around creating a community that builds on peace, shalom, wholeness, which is how 'eternal life is described. And allows people far from God to receive the gift of grace. If we are genuinely concerned and care for those who feel and are far from God, what kind of community are we growing that draws those people towards Jesus?

How will holding onto only what is unshakable help create this kind of place?

2. Change is hard, but we have to be open to new expressions and experiences of God.

Everyone says they want and like change until they have to do things differently...or change. Our God is a god who is constantly creating and doing new things. This continual change is a gift to keep our faith fresh and our passion red hot. And this also allows us to be co-creators with God. What better place is there to be than working alongside a God who is reconciling the world to himself? We see God changing the very nature of worship, the only way the people knew how to experience God, and God called that 'shakable, into something completely new and different'.

If this is true then how do we frame everything else of the world that we tend to hold onto?

3. The 'unshakable' when things change is not the 'how' but the 'why'.

Not only do we get attached to the things of the world, but we also get comfortable with routines, the way we've always done things. We like what we like, and changing our habits and routines is hard. Routines and habits are important. But they are only a vehicle to get us to a greater place, not to get good at the routines. The writer is saying that if our certainty, what we find 'unshakable', is in something more than earthly things, how we understand our 'how', then we set ourselves up to be shaken. But if we keep in front of us our 'why', then we can navigate a world of change easier.

What are some things you think you may have gotten overly comfortable with?

4. The 'unshakable' is received.

This is such an intriguing thought, and I know we haven't even scratched the surface of what it may mean. But we can probably say this about that. <smiling emoji>. To let go of shakable things, and to begin to hold onto unshakable things, is something we surrender into rather than grit ourselves through. We cannot just will ourselves to only receive the unshakable. Yes, it is something God is doing we must surrender to. But we also have to 'take hold' of this *"unshakable kingdom"*. There is a certain responsibility on our part to see this change God is doing, and to embrace it.

What would it look like for you to 'take hold' of this "unshakable kingdom"?

III Challenge.

Ok, this was a super tough topic, that contained way more information than we were able to cover or even understand even in three gatherings. Reading the same passage at three different gatherings might have been a bit much. But, considering the circumstances we find ourselves in, with the election, COVID, the division and turmoil in the world and more, the desire for something 'unshakable' is more important than ever. We have to fight the urge to hunker down for the next four years and cling to what is familiar. You know there will be more shaking down the road, and we just have to brace ourselves for it, and find those unshakable things to hold onto to keep ourselves in place. Hopefully this was helpful, in your work wrestling with the questions of

Who am I?

Where do I belong?

And what am I afraid of and where do I feel insecure?

So, some final repeat questions.

What are you holding onto that you're beginning to find is 'shakable'?

Why do we, you, hold onto 'shakable' things?

What are a couple of things you could do to begin to identify what is 'unshakable' for you, and what would it look like to design your life to begin to hold onto these 'unshakable' things?

Have a great week and we'll see you next Sunday.