Courageous Faith — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 14 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, November 19, 2023 · *Faith & Its Reward*

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Thank you, Russell and Mary and choir and Taylor for leading us in worship up to this point. In a lot of ways we can just go home. The Lord's certainly been present in our service so far, and I hope that we'll continue in a posture of worship and openness to receive what the Lord wants to receive. For those who are curious why I'm preaching in a polo, it's a one-time thing. It's advertising for the Broadview Men's Ministry. They printed up some shirts and polos, so if you're interested in participating in the men's ministry let me encourage you to come to our kickoff event—not this coming Friday, but the Friday after that, December 1st, at 6 o'clock p.m.

We're going to have our kickoff event. There'll be some really great food. And a message about the vision for our men's ministry and men's discipleship in our church. But you can also get the t-shirts or polos. They're out there in the Gathering Place. I also want to encourage you to please join us tonight for our Thanksgiving meal. If that's not on your calendar, I hope you'll put it on there. We'll have our service at 5 o'clock p.m. and our meal at 6 o'clock p.m. If you have your Bible, you can open it to the book of Genesis.

We're going to be in Genesis chapter 14 as we continue our journey through this great book of the Bible. As we think about Thanksgiving coming up, I don't know if you remember your U.S. history, but one of the first Thanksgivings that ever happened was right here in America. It's a uniquely American holiday, and it was in 1621. I believe in 1620 the Pilgrims sailed on the Mayflower. I think it was about 103 of them that sailed. They were English separatists, they were fleeing religious persecution, and they were coming to the New World to experience the religious freedom.

And so they land right there in Massachusetts, Plymouth Rock, I believe, and they start their new life in this new world. And the first year of their settling here was incredibly difficult. It was one of the harshest winters that there had ever been, and it ended up claiming the lives

of around half of those first English settlers. So it wasn't until about a year later, around Thanksgiving, after their first successful crop of the land, that they gathered together with some of the Native Americans and they held their first Thanksgiving. And as I think about their journey and I think about their surviving that first year, some of the words that come to my mind are words like courage and faith.

They had courage and faith. And that is what enabled them to persevere through some of those extreme hardships and take the initiative of taking a step of faith to go to this new place that they did not know what it would be like or whether or not they would make it. Courage and faith are two virtues that I desperately desire in my life. They are virtues that I desperately desire in the life of my children. Courage and faith, or you might even say a courageous faith, is what God has used historically in the past to use men and women in mighty ways for his kingdom.

Churches and institutions that have been used greatly by the Lord are institutions and churches that are marked by courage and faith. And so what does courageous faith look like? Because courageous faith is what's necessary. This is actually during the sabbatical, it's interesting. Coming back into the life of Abraham and looking at Genesis 14, one of the things that the Lord deeply impressed upon my heart as we navigate an unknown future into a world that looks a lot different—can we say it looks a lot different than thirty years ago—what is it going to require of Christian people to navigate that world with grace and effectiveness and advancing the kingdom is going to require that we be people of courage and faith.

Courageous faith is what's going to keep us moving forward in this broken world. And in any broken culture, it has been men and women of courageous faith that God has used to push the envelope forward to keep things moving. In the direction that he wants them to go. And so that's what our passage is about, courageous faith. And I'm asking the Lord to really instill in us that virtue in deeper and deeper ways as we move forward in what he has for us as a church family. For those of you who do not know, just to give you a little bit of context of what Abram's life is like up to this point, he has been called by God in Genesis chapter 12.

He's called out of this pagan lifestyle. He has to leave his father's house. He leaves everything that he knows, all of his economic and social security and not just social security, but his social safety net. He goes into this unknown land that God's going to show him. And at first it's great. He's got a life marked by real, genuine faith, and the fruit of that faith looks like obedience and worship and evangelism and all these things that you would expect a godly person to do. But then in chapter 13, the Lord allows a famine to enter into Abram's life, and that famine causes him to kind of shipwreck in his faith, makes some extremely foolish choices.

He leaves his land that God had promised him. And he goes down to Egypt. He releases his wife, who God promised him a promised child from that union with her, and she ends up going into slavery in Pharaoh's household and remains in a state of disobedience until God graciously exposes Abram in his sin. Rescues his wife from the hand of Pharaoh and sends them back to the promised land with everything that they did not deserve wealth and prosperity. And great success. And so we saw God renew Abram and his faith the last time that we met together in Genesis chapter 13, just as it is important that we be renewed in our faith when we experience failure in our life.

When you get to our passage today, it looks like some time has transpired. We're not quite sure how much time, but it looks like a totally different season in Abram's life. To me it reminds me of one of those Marvel movies, the origin story part two of one of the main characters. And so that's kind of what we see with Abram. He is a military chieftain down in the oaks of Mamre, far deeper south than where he was when we last left him. And that's where we're going to see him today take a courageous act of faith to rescue his nephew Lot from the trouble that he had found himself in.

So if you like taking notes, chapter 14 paints a compelling picture of courageous faith that rescues the perishing for the glory of God. And that's what we're going to look at in chapter 14 this morning. If you'll go ahead and join me in Genesis chapter 14. It says, "In those days King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim waged war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, and King Shemeber of Zeboiim, as well as the king of Bela (that is, Zoar)."

If you don't like the sound of it, you come up. And you try, you know, it's not so easy. So I try to give you a little map up here. These are the kings of the east, we'll call them. You've got Chedorlaomer down here in Elam and the other kings that we mentioned. You can see they're kings of pretty large areas. Chedorlaomer being the largest, and they're coming against these southern kings down here. This is where Israel is. There's the Gaza Strip. There's the Dead Sea. And Sodom, Gomorrah, all in this bottom area here, and these kings are coming against them.

Now that's kind of a summary statement, and the rest of the verses kind of give us the details of how that happened. So look at chapter 14 verse 5—chapter 14 verse 3: "All of these came as allies to the Siddim Valley (that is, the Dead Sea)." That's right here, the Siddim Valley. "They were subject to Chedorlaomer for twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled." So remember Chedorlaomer was way over here. He had the largest region. He is basically collecting tribute or taxes from these kings and kingdoms down here in the south.

I'm not sure how much they had to pay, but every year they would pay tribute to the king, and he was essentially bleeding them dry, and he did that for twelve years. But in the thirteenth year,[1] they had finally had enough and they decide that we're going to partner

together and we're going to rebel against this guy. And so the response of King Chedorlaomer is shown in the next verses, verse five and following. "In the fourteenth year, Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated"—notice what they're going to do.

They're not going to start down here. They're going to start up here. So Chedorlaomer was way over here. He gets all of his buddies with those other kings that we talked about, and they're going to come from the north down to the south over to the east and then back around to the west. And so it says that they defeat the Rephaim—that's right here—in Ashteroth-karnaim. They then go to the Zuzim in Ham, then they go to the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and then the Horites down here in the mountains of Seir, as far as El-paran by the wilderness.

Then they come back and they invade En-mishpat, that is Kadesh—that's right over here—where the Amalekites are, and then they go to the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar, which is right here. So from the north down to the south over to the east and now they're coming in to the west to finish the job, you might say, of this rebellion that had cropped up around the Siddim Valley or the Dead Sea. So if you go over to verse 8, we'll finish the rest of the story: "The king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and lined up for battle in the Siddim Valley against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five."

The reason I throw these maps up here on one hand is just so you don't get lost in all the names. But the other reason is I want you to kind of get a picture of what the political climate would have looked like in these days leading up to Lot's captivity. And this courageous act by Abram. The way I think about it is it's very similar to many of the regional wars that precede global conflict that we've had in our past. All the great world wars of the past have usually been started by a regional battle that just got out of hand and you can even feel some of that happening.

In our world today, whether it's what's going on in the Ukraine or in Israel. There's all these different wars and rumors of wars that are kind of paving the way for a global conflict. And you've got these kings not just going against another king, but you've got kings partnering with other kings who are partnering with other kings to go to battle. And so the political climate is very similar to the political climate that precedes global conflict. Unfortunately, the politics of Genesis 14 might have looked similar to what regional wars that paved the way for global conflict.

That's if you're taking notes. The problem is they don't stand a chance against these kings, and so even though they come out and face them like they're going to go to battle, they end up losing. Look at verse 10: "Now the Siddim Valley contained many asphalt pits, and as the

kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of them fell into them, but the rest of them fled to the mountains. The four kings took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all of their food and went on. They also took Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, for he was living in Sodom, and they went on."

You might have seen a little picture of the tar pit, very common around that part of the world in the Dead Sea. It says that they fell into them. It kind of makes it sound like they fell into like quicksand and they were like, oh help me please, I'm dying. I don't know that's not the only way to translate it. It could have just been a really deep pit. And so they go down into that deep pit as a way of escaping some of the crazy that was going on. The others, instead of going into the pit, go up on top of the mountain.

The point is, they did not fight. They did not stand and try to muster up some kind of a courage to oppose this Chedorlaomer who they said they wanted to overcome. As soon as they realized that Chedorlaomer had partnered up with these other kings, even though it was five against four, they still didn't stand a chance, and so they flee. And Lot ends up suffering the consequences. And it's interesting because the last time that we left Lot, he wasn't living in Sodom. Where was he living? He's living near Sodom is kind of a trick question.

There's a difference. Most people, when they're living near sin, they'd say, I'm not living in sin, I'm just dancing on the line, you know. So they'll make a distinction. That's probably the distinction Lot was making. He's dancing on the line of sin, but it's a reminder that you can't live near sin without eventually falling into it. And when it comes to this world that had been created in Genesis chapter 14 where Lot thought he could kind of have his cake and eat it too. I can live with the wicked and not become wicked, or I can walk with the wicked and not feel the consequences of that brokenness.

You cannot. You cannot immerse yourself in the world and in the things of the world and not eventually be enslaved by the world. And that's exactly what you see happen with Lot. In this passage. His friends, his so-called friends, who were going to be there for him were fair weather friends. There's the Lord of the Rings quote—Gimli said, "Faithless is he who says farewell when the road darkens." And that's what you have with these kings. Faithless are they as friends when the road darkens. The road got dark and they capture Lot, probably because he was extremely wealthy and had a lot of things.

And so he's very likely regretting his life decisions at this moment, realizing I should have walked by faith instead of walking by sight. But he has no one to turn to. He has no recourse. He has nothing that he can do because he had already separated from his uncle Abram in Genesis chapter 13. All of this, I think, sets the table for why we need courageous faith in our world today. If I changed the names on that map and we brought it over a little further west or maybe a little further south, we could see similar dynamics at play in our world today.

Because the reality is we live in a ruthless world. We live in a world that is marked by wars, thugs, cowards, people who are only in it for themselves, people who exploit. Those under their leadership, nations who don't really desire of promoting righteousness and democracy, but they just rule with an iron fist. We live in that world, and that's why Christian people need to have lives that are marked by courageous faith. We need courageous faith because we live in a ruthless world. And what does courageous faith look like in a ruthless world?

Well, if you look in the New Testament, one of the analogies that is most often used for the Christian life is the analogy of warfare. Especially when it comes to spiritual warfare. Paul says things like, we battle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers of this present darkness. Chapter five or chapter nine—no, no, Second Corinthians chapter ten, verses three to five. He says that the weapons of our warfare demolish strongholds, that they're not fleshly, but they are they are spiritually powerful and they destroy strongholds such as deceptive ideologies.

We take every thought captive and we make it obedient to Jesus Christ. The way that we engage in warfare, the way that we demonstrate courage in our culture as Christian people is by taking the lies of the evil one and combating them with the truth of God. Taking the deception and those little seeds of half-truths that are filtered all throughout our culture and bringing the truth to bear on those ideas and saying this is wrong and this is why; here's where the truth really stands. That's essentially what you're going to see Abraham do when he takes a stand for the truth.

He's going to resist this unrighteousness with righteousness, these falsehoods with the truth of the Lord. So courageous faith is needed because we live in a ruthless world. The main point of this text, why courageous faith is needed, is because we've been sent on a rescue mission. Courageous faith will risk it all because we've been sent on a rescue mission. Look at verses 15 and 16. You're going to see Abram pursue these people all the way up to Dan. Now Dan didn't exist at that time, but they're calling it Dan because for the modern readers that's what they would have known it as.

So—I'm sorry, go back one more—there we go, verse 13. So one of the survivors of the war down here: "One of the survivors came and told Abram the Hebrew, who lived near the oaks belonging to Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner; they were bound with Abram by a treaty. So when Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he assembled his three hundred and eighteen trained men, born in his household, and they went in pursuit as far as Dan." And so here's the battle that got Sodom and Gomorrah, Zoar, Admah, they all flee to the mountains in the tar pit.

You have a survivor in the green here who retreats and he goes. And he tells Abram, Your nephew has been taken captive. And so Abram had not been wasting time while he was down there in Mamre. He was building coalitions, he had made a partnership with these brothers

here, Eshcol and Aner, and they ended up having a military force of three hundred and eighteen trained men. Now we don't know exactly what that means. I don't know if they were like Marine-level trained or if they were like good old Roby boys with some sharp sticks.

Who had a lot of courage, but maybe that's about it. It could have been either way, but this is a sizable force. This is nothing to shake a stick at. This is impressive. In fact, this may be why this king didn't keep going this way. Chedorlaomer—maybe the reason he didn't go up into Jerusalem in the King's Valley is because of the resistance that he would have met by a guy like Abram. Abram risks everything, pursues them all the way up to Dan because that's what courageous faith does. Courageous faith will risk it all because it's been sent on a rescue mission.

And the same is true for our world today. The reason we need courage and faith in a culture that is growing increasingly hostile to Christian convictions is because there are people all around us who are themselves enslaved to this world. They find themselves in bondage to sin, slavery to sin. And the thing about Abram is he did not have any reason to go rescue his nephew. He had every right to say to Lot, you made your bed, now sleep in it. This was your choice. You wanted to go down there where the grass was greener.

But he doesn't do that. Even though he had every right to say those things, he risks his own life. He risks his own safety. He risks the safety of his 318 men. He puts his wealth on the line. He puts his prosperity on the line. Because God sent him on a rescue mission. And I wonder if there's not a similar temptation for us when we live in a world like we live in to just kind of snub our nose and shake our heads and say, you know, this world has just gone crazy.

And I sure am glad that I have my church and we have our friends so we don't have to kind of muddy ourselves with those people. Wouldn't it be easy for us to say, well they made their bed now let them sleep in it. I'm not going to diminish myself or I'm not going to sacrifice my money or my comfort and convenience for those people. Abraham had that right to say those things, but he didn't do so, and neither should we. There are people in Abilene, Texas, right now, who are enslaved to sin and need someone to come and rescue them.

Someone who has courage and faith that the Lord, just like he's going to use Abraham to liberate his nephew, might use us to liberate those who are captive to sin. Genuine faith will not be dissuaded by risk, and genuine faith will not be dissuaded by the failures of those in need of redemption. Can you imagine—what if the Lord would have left you in your brokenness? I know in my life, if the Lord would have left me in my brokenness, I wouldn't be here today. I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing.

What if he wouldn't have sent that person to your life to have that conversation with you, to open your eyes to the brokenness that you were in and the opportunity that you had for God

to liberate you. Look at what Abraham does. He comes and he rescues Lot. This is verses 15 and 16. "He and his servants deployed against them by night. They defeated them." So I don't know how they did this. I'm not sure how big Chedorlaomer's army was. It was big enough to defeat all those other people all the way down.

But he, I don't know, he has some ninja moves or just the favor of the Lord. He breaks them up by nighttime, they invade that camp and they defeat them. And not only do they defeat them, they send them running. "As far as Hobah to the north of Damascus." That's here—Hobah is right here. So they chase them all the way from down here in Mamre, all the way up. They get to Dan, they have the battle. They defeat them there and they flee all the way to Hobah. "And he brought back all the goods and all of his relatives—Lot and all his goods, as well as the women and all the other people."

He brings home the bounty at a great risk to himself and a great risk to his men, even though he had the right to do the opposite. So here's the point. Courageous faith, for you and for me, in our broken world will not be dissuaded by the risk of failure or by the personal failures of those in need of redemption. We cannot allow the brokenness that people experience just because we're not comfortable with that kind of brokenness, or just because it seems a little distasteful to us and icky or yucky, does not give us the right to say, you made your bed, now sleep in it.

We have been sent. By our Heavenly Father. Just like he sent Jesus into the world, Jesus says, "So also am I sending you into the world." I want you to make disciples of every nation, not just the nations that have it put together, not just the nations who are like you. If we're going to be in Christ, part of being in Christ is that we join with Christ in going after the lost. One of the great founders of Southwestern Seminary, L. R. Scarborough, wrote a book, With Christ After the Lost.

And that's what the Christian life necessarily entails. God doesn't just take us up to heaven when we get saved. I wish he would, but he doesn't. He just saves us and leaves us right down here. Why does he leave us down here? Because there's one thing we can do here that we can't do there, and that is to let people know about the freedom that is in Jesus' name. And so when will we be people of courageous faith that take a risk, that set aside our conveniences and our preferences to rescue the people who are perishing?

This is exactly what Jesus has done for us. In fact, in this passage in Genesis chapter 14, Abram's really typifying Jesus Christ. And his rescue. Jesus left the comfort of heaven. He left his convenience of being equal with God the Father. In Philippians two, he emptied himself and he became like a servant. He took on flesh and he became obedient even to the point of death. And at that death on a cross, at great risk to himself and at great personal sacrifice, he laid down his life. And it was through his ambition to do the impossible, to do

for us what we did not deserve, that God, through his death on the cross, disarmed the rulers and authorities.

And triumphed over them through Jesus. And now at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And now because of what Jesus Christ has done, he is using the foolishness of the world to shame the wise, and he's using the weakness of the world to shame the strong. And so we have every reason, even though we may not feel strong and we may not feel wise and we may be intimidated by the wisdom and the strength of this world, we can stand confident because we know that God has chosen to use people like us in positions like ours to rescue the perishing.

And that the Holy Spirit goes before us and does the things that we cannot accomplish on our own and that Jesus has already achieved the victory. All we're doing is announcing the news that freedom is available, that there is life in his name. Let us not be dissuaded by the risk of failure, by not knowing the answer, by what people may think about us. Let us not be dissuaded by the personal failures of those in need of redemption. Even those people in your family who maybe you've written them off because they've just gone too far.

Abraham could have written lot off, but he didn't. He chose to pursue him. All the way to the very end. He brings back all of this money. He brings back all of this spoils of war. And when he gets back, he ends up going to a meeting with the king of Sodom and ends up being another king from Salem, which would later become Jerusalem. And it demonstrates the last thing that courageous faith embodies in this passage in Genesis chapter 14. Let's start in chapter 14, verse 17: "After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley)."

Okay, that's this. Right here. So he's come all the way down from Hobah. He's come all the way back down to Sodom and Gomorrah. He's given all the stuff back, and now him and the king of Sodom are going to come up here to the King's Valley. Jerusalem is right around here. And when they get there, if you go to the next verse, verse 18, Melchizedek, which means king of righteousness, who was the king of Salem—which would later become Jerusalem—which means peace. So the king of righteousness and the king of peace brought out, this is interesting, bread and wine, just like we're about, well, we got crackers and juice, but they got bread and wine.

"He was a priest to God Most High." So he's both a king and a priest, the king of righteousness and the king of peace who is bringing bread and wine to Abram after his ambitious feat. He as a priest blessed him. "He blessed Abram and said, Abram is blessed by God Most High"—there's our word—"Creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High, who has handed over your enemies to you." This is what every good priest does. Every

good priest will bless you, and they will bless God. That's what we as the kingdom of priests are called to do, to bless other people and to bless God in the process.

He blesses Abraham, he blesses the Lord, he recognizes the true source of their victory and then in response Abraham gives Melchizedek a tithe. Abraham gave him a tenth of everything that he had just gotten. From the battle. And then the king of Sodom said to Abraham, "Here's what I want you to do. Let's make a deal. Give me the people, and you can take all the possessions for yourself." That sounds like a pretty attractive offer. [He] says, "Just give me the people back. I can rebuild it off the backs of my people.

"You can have all the stuff." And then Abraham, instead of taking the offer, denies the offer and says to the king of Sodom, "I've raised my hand in an oath to the Lord, God Most High"—there's our phrase again—"Creator of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that belongs to you, so that you can never say, 'I made Abram rich.'" This last part's my favorite. But as for the guys who are with me, they can have whatever they want. That's true. Will we go to the next one, verse 24?

"I will take nothing except what the servants have eaten, but as for the share of the men who came with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre—they can take their share." So what's Abraham doing here? He's recognizing the true source of his provision and victory and blessings in life. One of the things that I was really shocked by was reading a commentary by D. A. Carson on this passage, and he says, if you take verses 18 to 20 out of the text, it reads much more smoothly. I don't know if you notice that if you have your Bible and you just take verses 18, 19, and 20 out, that's the bit about Melchizedek.

So if you said verse 17, "He returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley)," right down to verse 20—or 21—"Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give me the people, but take the possessions for yourself.'" It seems to flow very easily. They meet in the Shaveh Valley, and the king of Sodom says to Abram, "Give me the people; take the possessions." What's inserted in between that very natural reading is this bit about Melchizedek.

Now some say that was added later. I don't believe it was added later. I think it's added on purpose. Almost jarringly so to make a powerful contrast between the offer of the king of Sodom and the offer of the king of Salem, Melchizedek. And the king of Sodom is basically saying, Abram, you did so amazing. Take this money, take this success, take the name recognition. You deserve it all. And Melchizedek is saying, Abram. You are blessed by God. He has empowered you. He has delivered you. And to God be the glory.

And Abraham has to decide who will I recognize as the source of the real blessing in my life. Will I take it for myself or will I give it back to the Lord? And true, courageous faith is

humble faith. Humble faith recognizes it's not about me. It's not about what I want. It's about the Lord and about what the Lord wants. And that's what Abraham does. He is giving a tenth to Melchizedek as a way of recognizing to God be the glory. And really that it's working in that way at three different levels.

On the one hand, he's agreeing with Melchizedek that God has provided the victory. Courageous faith always recognizes the ultimate source of real blessing. He recognizes God has given the victory. When Melchizedek says that he has handed your enemies over to you, Abraham is saying, I believe that, I recognize that. Then he gives a tenth of everything that he received, which is a way of recognizing God will provide. So God has provided in the past. He gives the tenth, saying God will provide in the future. And then thirdly he's acknowledging that God gets all the glory.

When he says, I'm not going to take any of your stuff because I will not have it said that you made me rich, because you don't get the glory. God gets the glory. And so Abraham recognizes that God gets the glory. And all of that is being embodied by this Melchizedek figure who sounds eerily similar to the Lord Jesus Christ, doesn't he? He is a king of righteousness, Melchizedek. He is a king of peace, a king of Salem. He is offering bread and wine. That's all that he has to offer.

He doesn't give him money. He doesn't give him power or privilege or prestige. He just offers the bread and the wine. And then he blesses Abraham and blesses the Lord and gives him the glory. Later in the New Testament in Hebrews chapter 7, there's a whole chapter dedicated to this man, Melchizedek. And basically Hebrews is saying all the way back, prior to the law, prior to the Old Testament sacrificial system, prior to all of those things, there was a greater priest who had no mother or father, because we don't know this guy's mother or father.

He is an eternal priesthood. And this priest was not just a priest, he was also a king, a king of righteousness and a king of peace. And he takes that uniqueness about Melchizedek and says, this is what Jesus is for us. He is both a priest and a king. He is both an intercessor and a ruler. He is the king of righteousness. He is the king of peace. And he is the one who demonstrates for us or reminds us that God has provided, He will provide, and that He gets all the glory.

And so as we enter into a time of taking the Lord's Supper this morning where we think about the bread and the wine, the bread being the body of Christ broken for us, and the wine being the blood of Christ which was shed for us, what an awesome opportunity for us to be reminded of those same things. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian and you would say, I want to live that kind of life, I just don't have the power to do so. You're right, outside of Christ, you don't have that power.

But it's available to you this morning if you'll repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that his body was broken for you and that his blood was shed for you, so that your sins that have left you in a place of slavery can be forgiven. And washed away, and that you can be rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's marvelous light. If you've never made that decision, I would encourage you as we have a time of response for you to come forward to the front and say, I need to give my life to Jesus.

I'll be down here. I'm going to invite our ushers also to come up and we're going to distribute the Lord's Supper. And while you're doing that, the rest of us, I want to encourage you to prepare your heart to receive the Lord's Supper this morning. And specifically, would you ask the Lord to give you a courageous faith. That sets aside preferences and traditions and material prosperity for the sake of rescuing those who are in need of redemption. Maybe for you, you'd say, Lord, I need courage to stand in this culture today.

Help me not to be afraid and cower like I have in the past. Or maybe you just need to worship the Lord this morning and say, God, thank you for providing. I believe you will provide, and I give you all the glory. Maybe like Abraham, you need to start honoring the Lord in your finances with the tithe. I don't know what the particulars might look like, but as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper, I invite you to get right with the Lord and allow him to use his word, to expose things in your heart that need to be exposed and to do the hard work of repentance and faith.

Whatever that may look like. I'll be here to pray with anyone who wants to pray. I'm going to invite our ushers to go ahead and make their way to the front. And as I pray, we'll prepare for the Lord's table. Father in heaven, we thank you for this time and your word, and we do pray as we enter into this time of worship where we recognize that Jesus' body was broken for us and that his blood was shed for us. That we would be reminded that that is the exemplar of courageous faith, to rescue the perishing who do not deserve it and could never earn it.

And we pray that as we take the Lord's Supper, our hearts might be overcome and overwhelmed with a realization of your great love for us and the great sacrifice that you made in order to save us. And that out of that love and gratitude you would stir in our hearts to ourselves be courageous and full of faith as we do the same thing, as we join you in your mission to rescue people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. Would you use this time to produce that spirit in us? And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.

1. Transcript note: spoken as "he did that for up to thirteen years. But on the 14th year, they had finally had enough"; Genesis 14:4–5 says they served Chedorlaomer twelve years, rebelled in the thirteenth year, and Chedorlaomer came against them in the fourteenth year. Source: Genesis 14:4–5 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩