

# Establishing Kingdom Communities - Part 1

by Dean Taylor

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a kingdom life, being a collective group of people on the same wavelength doing the things together, and radical teachings of Jesus, including a real family of God and radical sacrifice and economics.*

**Duration:** 50:04

**Scripture:** Luke 12:31-34, Acts 2:44-47, Acts 4:32-33

**Topics:** "Community"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's truth over the pursuit of financial gain. He believes that the word of God is simple and easy to understand without complicated interpretations. The preacher encourages the listeners to submit to God's word without reservation and obey it. He also discusses the concept of the kingdom of God, highlighting that while it is not fully realized in the present, believers are called to live out its principles in the church. The preacher references various Bible verses to support his points and mentions the Anabaptist movement and their expression of the kingdom of God.

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## Transcript

Okay, Brother Nathan gave me this intimidating title, and, uh, it's somewhat academic, I think, and it's, and it's, okay, I know I asked for it, so, yeah, amen, amen, brother, and I thank you, and I, and I just, I'm so blessed to be here, and I, I, can anybody pull together people like the Overholtz? I, uh, I'm just constantly amazed what the Overholtz can pull off, and this is a perfect example, and just the different varieties, even the different types of questions that come out, I, I just, I love the energy of that, I love the, the, uh, being true Bereans and looking into the Word of God, and, uh, I'm just really excited to be here. My name is Dean Taylor, okay, I got some, uh, disclaimers about me, uh, I'm, well, this part's not a disclaimer, I'm married, uh, to my wife, Tanya, for some 26 or 7 years, she, uh, has gone through a lot with me, I'm the father of six, incredible woman, she's followed me leaving the army, um, going living in radical churches down with David Brisseau in Texas for 10 years, 12 years in Lancaster County, and then now in a Hutterite community for, uh, two and a half years. And so she's an incredible woman, and if you're married to a, a visionary ladies, then you can feel my wife's pain, it's, it's, it's not always an easy journey, and she's been a, a tremendous blessing.

Um, my job, I'm a nurse anesthetist, which means I put people to sleep, and that's why they call me the preacher that puts people to sleep, and I'm not sure why that is, but I hope it's because of my job, I don't know. Um, so, um, okay, I love Jesus, I'm a born-again believer in Christ, and I'm trying by the grace of God to be a real follower of Jesus, and lead my family in that way, and that's, that's who I am. And if I could say this, something about, this is the disclaimer part, um, our communities, we're on a journey ourselves, um, we're trying to figure out life, and we're trying not to focus on community, but focus on Jesus Christ and living His way out.

We're on a journey ourselves, and there's, it's not the fix of everything. Uh, there's certain things that are certainly much more challenging in community than not in community, and there's some blessings that are there. Uh, we ourselves are, have made several changes that, that now are exciting, but they also come with a lot of, um, caution, because as we've already heard some people mention about a lot of sudden change and what that brings out, so I tremble over some of those changes, but I'm excited about those changes as well.

Um, again, uh, disclaimer, okay, when I talk about the concept of community, I need to say it's a scary word. I've noticed when you bring it up, you know, people get sort of worried and all that kind of thing, so I wanted to say some things of my view of community so I'm not misquoted. Um, I believe that built into the essence of Anabaptism is, or Biblical Christianity of any kind, is community.

It's built into the very way that we all are about. Uh, now not all community of goods, it's some are community, but we all at least have a community of charity. I think that's a, a term that, um, uh, Binder, um, Harold S. Binder, uh, had a concept, and I, and I will say this, coming from an evangelical background into the Mennonite, Anabaptist, Amish, and the Hutterite world, the, the concept of community that you have is something incredible.

And I want to give you a pat on the back there. I mean, just like you were talking about, if something happened with the tractor and all this, and we, and so there's something built into this thing of seeing yourself as a people that is my desire to encourage that today and to even strengthen that. Um, not all live in the same property like we do, but all join together with a distinct calling and purpose to, here's the key word, collectively glorify God and spread his kingdom as a people.

And I think that that's something that's built in to Anabaptism. So now, okay, say it, Dean. Does Dean think that you have to live in a, uh, with a common purse and community of goods to be a real Christian? The answer is no.

So as we get to the different answers or people think, Dean, are you saying this? I'm not saying that it's, it's, um, it's not at all what I'm saying. Nevertheless, kingdom Christianity, I will say this by definition must be lived out in a people and a community, a collective group of people on the same wavelength doing the things together. Okay, here's a beautiful quote.

Other people groups have done this. I found this great quote by John Wesley. I love how he worded it.

John Wesley, who didn't live in a community like many of us even have, but he had this burden to be a people. And he said this, he says, I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the spirit to fulfill God's creational intention. Great quote, John Wesley.

Um, as I bring this idea of community and want to strengthen your concept of community, I do have to say, I want to say, I do have something to say. I didn't come here to say something. I do have something to say.

And it's my desire that I don't want this to be the next fad. Okay, we tried revivalism. We tried this.

I am scared that I don't want the concept of community to be the next new fad that we try for a little bit and our children disregard. On the one hand, I believe that many of our Anabaptist communities are losing something very precious that you're losing it and you don't even hardly know it. You're losing it to a pseudo community that goes around all of us.

On the other hand, I am excited as I talk to people and hear people that many today are catching on to the kingdom vision like never before. And that excites me. And I'm glad to be a part of that.

I'm glad to be part of that. So let's hear the title again, establishing kingdom communities. Tomorrow night, I'm going to try to go through actual Anabaptist concepts and quotes and see how this concept of community is within all the Anabaptist groups.

And I'm going to be talking about specifics today. I would like to just go to the biblical theology of this concept. The kingdom community is something that I want to try to just lay the biblical foundation of that, because I want you to be careful.

There is a paradigm shift here in the concept. You've already heard it today on the idea of a save me gospel or a concept of salvation to glorify God as a people. And I believe so.

What I'm talking about is representing the coming kingdom. And today's reality is a title given. Here's a title I wanted.

Nathan didn't like it. But here is what I like to try to come down with titles. I like little slogans so people can get a hold of it.

And here's if I could give to you the slogan, the concept of what I believe Jesus's plan for the kingdom on Earth is. It's this. That we are as a church to be what is to become.

Can you imagine that? One day we know the kingdom will come and we will worship Jesus for eternity. I want you in your mind to imagine what that will look like. It is our job to be ambassadors of that today.

Be what is to become. Jesus prayed. I want you to pray like this.

He said, have your existence here on Earth as it is in heaven. He told us to seek first the kingdom of God. And in Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews gave us this concept of partaking of what's to come in this passage that we quote a lot of time.

And an idea of losing your salvation. But we missed this little nugget here in Hebrews six. He says, for it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gifts and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good word of God.

Watch this. And the powers of the world to come. This explains what a born again, true Christian should be experiencing and the powers of that heaven, that world to come.

We're supposed to experience that today. Romans, Paul gave us in Romans chapter two. He told us, do not be conformed to this world, this age, this eon, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that we are to exist in a different place.

We are citizens of heaven. We are to be ambassadors of Christ. We are to be on Earth like it is in heaven.

There's a sense of now and not yet there. We know there will be a final day when Jesus will come and the rising of the sun to us going down. The name of Jesus will be praised.

But now, we're not quite there yet. In the beginning, the kingdom was a garden. In the end, it will be that everywhere.

But for now, it's these nuggets, these seeds called the church. And you are to be what it's supposed to be like. You are to be what is to become.

Allow yourself to dream. What will it be like? And then people will say, oh, so that's what they were talking about. They're living that kingdom today in reality.

Now, people say, Dean, John D. gets this a lot. But you talk about kingdom and money too much. I found this little graph and it's interesting.

What you see here is a graph. And up here is from 20, 40, 60, 80 times, 100 times, 120 times. Are the amount of times that Jesus talked about different subjects.

And 120 or more times is the kingdom. Then the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven and heaven. And so these concepts, and then if you even had another one with economics and money issues, it would be right in there.

And the different things that we typically think of are way down here. And so I want to be about what Jesus is about. I want my heart to beat with what made Jesus heart beat.

I want to be a part of his dream for the cure for humanity. And this is what he talked about. This is what he talked about.

So this beautiful kingdom that Jesus came to establish on this earth was planted from the beginning. In Matthew 25, 34, when he talks about those who will come into his kingdom because of their kingdom attitudes of helping the poor and these different things that he mentions in Matthew 25. He says, Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom.

Watch this. Prepared for you from the foundation of the world. God has a beautiful plan in this.

Paul even continued this different discussion of the kingdom in the very last act summarizes and finally comes up and it says, And John D brought up this morning. And when they had appointed him a day, there came to him and to his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both of the law of Moses and out of the prophets from morning until evening. Hallelujah.

The kingdom. Now we talk about the Anabaptists and how they express this. There is this next excerpt from a letter from Conrad Grebel.

And my opinion is the essence of Anabaptism. He said this writing to his friend, Vadian, who was his brother-in-law and he was a mentor all the time. He was in college.

And yet he didn't join the Anabaptist movement and got a job up in St. Gall. And Conrad Grebel now is a converted, zealous young man. And he's writing him this letter.

And listen to the way he says it here. He says, writing to Vadian, he said, Achieving financial advantage brings us at best a temporary happiness in this world. And it can often disguise the naked force which supports it.

It is impossible to reconcile the love of money with God's truth. And here's the statement. And it's incredibly radical.

I believe the word of God without a complicated interpretation. And out of this belief, I speak. That's it.

I love that. You know, we need to get a study Bible, an Anabaptist study Bible. And we need it like when Jesus says, love your enemies.

And then down here, we'll open it up and it says, what it really means is love your enemies. You know, that's the kind of thing. It's simple.

The Bible is easy to understand. He goes on to say, may God give you the mercy to submit to his word without reservation and obey it. Otherwise, things probably don't stand as well with us as you might hope.

The way is narrow. And then he says this. He says this.

The letter ends. The teaching of the Lord has been given for the purpose of being put into practice. That is what drove the new wine and the new wineskin of the early Anabaptist movement.

The Bible was just coming out and they were getting little copies of the New Testament. And young men were getting around and they're saying, listen to this. And they said, let's do it.

And they did it and they changed the world. Dream with me. Think about it today.

What if Jesus really meant every word he said? If we let this kind of thing permeate our existence today, every generation, community after community, and allow those words to be put into the practice, we cannot fail. It may differ from here to here, from century to century. But the point is, are we even there? It's the question.

What if Jesus really, I think he did mean every word he said. Okay, so now we're going to talk about community. When we consider community, Acts 2 and Acts 4 come up.

And we look at the biblical thing and that comes up. And it should. But the why is a more important question.

And I tell this to the Hutterites a lot. The example in Acts 2 and Acts 4 is a testimony. It's not a command.

There's no command to live in community like they did in Acts 2 and Acts 4. But it's a beautiful testimony. And we get lost in this debate on should we live in community or should we not live in community. And the communitarians pat themselves on the back and say, well, they did in Acts 2 and 4. And then the non-communitarians say, well, Paul later on gave examples of this to the church and to taking care of your

widows.

And so each pat themselves on the back. And both are missing one very important thing. Behind all of that language is a kingdom teaching and a radical cure for humanity created by Jesus Christ that they were trying, each of them, to put into practice.

That's what drove it. So if we congratulate ourselves because we live in community and say, well, we live in community and we just share things and get worldly, or the other guy doesn't live in community and he calls it stewardship, we aren't accomplishing what Jesus is telling us to do. But let's look at those passages because they're important.

As Pentecost came, and say what you want, only one church in the Bible was completely started by God. It wasn't an apostle that was sent to your Pentecost, poured out, and here's what it looked like. Again, it's not a command, though.

It is not a command. There's no command here. It's just a testimony of living a kingdom life.

And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together in all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods and part of them to all men, and every man had need. And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they'd eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved. And then Acts 4 happened again. It's incredible that it happened again.

If it was a one-time thing, okay, but then they were praying for what? What were they praying for when it happened a second time? Boldness. We need boldness. And the church got together and prayed, and bam, it happened again.

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Neither said any of them that they ought that the things which they possessed, that's something, was his own. But they had all things common.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked.

For as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet. And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Wow! Again, there's no command.

You don't have to come under any kind of condemnation if your church doesn't... And so, but what we see here, don't miss the incredible kingdom testimony. Acts 2 and 4, Testimony is not Command. Behind the teachings are the radical, world-changing teachings of Jesus.

Behind this testimony is radical kingdom Christianity. What teaching? Let's look at it. What were they... Why did they do that? What were they getting at? Why did they just worry about getting saved? We've talked about some of those doctrines here.

First of all, Jesus taught us about a real family of God. And I tell you that coming out of the world and leaving the army and all that type of thing, I have experienced that hundredfold here on earth. I genuinely have, and it's beautiful.

And Jesus talked about this, and it's an important factor that I don't want you to lose in your churches. You know the story in Matthew 12, and while He talked to the people, behold, His mother and brother stood without desiring to speak with Him. And then one said unto Him, Behold, Your mother and Your brother stand without desiring to speak to Thee.

But He answered and said unto them, and told them, Who is My mother? And who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hands towards His disciples and said, Behold! Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and My sister and My mother. Notice He didn't add father.

That beautiful concept of being a true family. And if there's anything that people come by and they try to explain when you're really trying to live this kind of life and the way we call each other brother and sister and all this type of thing, I say, you know, the way I could explain it to people who totally come from my background from the outside, it's like you genuinely were suddenly brought into this really big family, especially what we have. It's genuinely like being a big family.

And I've experienced that in many different settings in the Anabaptist world. Radical sacrifice. I'll never forget the first time I was at Shippensburg.

You asked me to speak there, Brother John Dee. And I heard John Dee speaking on, I don't know if I've ever told you this, on Luke chapter 12. And Luke chapter 12, I talked about the rich young ruler and all that type of thing, but somehow it never completely gripped me.

But then John Dee was talking about Luke 12, and the problem with Luke chapter 12 is it's not the rich young ruler he's talking to. He's talking to his disciples. And he was requiring of his disciples some kind of a radical view of economics that in some way has to be lived out.

It doesn't have to be lived out in Acts 2.4. As we saw, Paul clearly gave different ways that it could be lived out in a radically different way. But it does have to be lived out radically. Those are the commands of Jesus.

He said this. I could take you to the spot, John Dee, when you were preaching. And I said, oh, because see, when I was in college and everything down in Texas, I was real poor.

But then when I got this really great job, suddenly, you know, you're really tempted to change those theologies. And as I wanted to walk in these teachings, I found people saying to me the same type of reasoning that people were saying to me back when I was in the army, and they were saying I was taking the words of Jesus too far. But listen to this radical teaching, which I think both Paul and the Pentecostal church is expressing.

Luke says in 12.31, But rather seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. He says, Fear not, little flock. It is my Father's good pleasure to give to you the kingdom.

He wants to give to us the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms. Give to the poor.

Provide for yourselves bags which wax not old and treasures in the heaven that faileth not. Where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

That was to his disciples, not the rich young ruler. I never caught that before I heard you preach it. It affected me.

There's something also in the concept of what you have in your Anabaptist churches, which I think this is one of the biggest concepts you're losing. And that I think that is the expression of the community of the Trinity. The community of the Trinity, the brotherhood of the Trinity, however you want to word it.

A.W. Tozer, I think it was, once said that every problem that we have in church can go back in stem to some kind of misunderstanding about an attribute or a character of God. And I believe it is this character of God that Jesus gave to us in that upper room right before His crucifixion that talks about why we go through all this trouble to live with each other and to dwell with each other and to work out the hard things of a life together and to go through all these brothers' meetings and discussions. It's because we want to do something that Jesus let us know about an attribute of God.

Listen to the way He words it. In John 17.10, Jesus having Him there, He says, And all mine are thine, and thine are mine. Speaking about the souls there.

And I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. And I come to thee.

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one. How many people here believe in the Trinity? Okay. Alright, a lot of you.

Okay. Now, you believe that concept of that oneness is pretty tight, right? He's letting us know about a character of God. And He wants the church to show to the world this character of God.

And get a hold of that. He goes on, He says, As thou hast sent Me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world. This community is not stagnant.

It is active. And for their sakes, I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. That they all may be one.

As thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in Us. Why? So that the world may believe that thou hast sent Me. He's staking His entire testimony on this character of His nature with the Father, and is desiring for the church to represent this attribute to the world.

It's worth the trouble of all that you go through to be a tight brotherhood. And the glory which thou hast given, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I hear in that verse, like Psalm 133, He said, Blessed is for the brethren to live together.

On such I command a blessing. I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one. And that the world may know that thou hast sent Me, and hast loved as thou hast loved Me.

You see, our salvation, as you've heard by John D. Martin this morning, it's not about you. It really isn't. And this was another revelation for me in my journey, is realizing this concept that it's not about me.

And this one passage, I want to take the time to give to you. If you've got your Bible, turn to Ezekiel 36. This is one of those fundamental you-get-to-see-yourself-in-the-character-of-God type of passages.

I'll go on for time, but turn to it and you can mark it. In Ezekiel 36, verse 20, God is rebuking His people for the way they went out and this made a mess of His name. And He says, And when they entered into the heathen, everywhere they went, they profaned My holy name.

When they said to them, These are the people of the Lord. They're gone forth out of this land. So in other words, everywhere people go in the name of God, they're embarrassing Me.

But I had pity, not on them. I had pity for My holy name, which the house of Israel hath profaned among the heathen everywhere they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God.

Now watch this now. I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the heathen everywhere you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them.

And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries and will bring you into your own land. And that's where He says, And I will take that stony heart out of you and put in a heart of flesh.

I will put My Spirit within you and then I will cause you to walk in My statutes and judgment to glorify God. It's an incredible concept. See, at the very core of it, yes, Jesus died for us because He loves us and God does love us and Jesus loved us.

But if you get down far enough, it's about the glory of God. Everything we do. It's about the glory of God.

Even our very salvation. Okay, so look at this different radical teachings. Sorry, I gave that one.

Okay, in this concept, the Sermon on the Mount becomes a lie. And instead of looking at the Sermon on the Mount as some sort of a... Well, in my background, we saw it as something I think Brother David mentioned or John Dee, someone, about dispensationalism, the concept of living it out in the future. But let me ask you a personal question.

How hard is it to love your enemies in heaven? I don't get it. And that kind of thing was in my background. Finally, I had to come to terms that the Sermon on the Mount was meant for us to live today.

It is the cure for humanity of how He wants the kingdom, community, church to be. He says seven times, Jesus said, I know what has been said, but now I say. Anger and murder was taken, even the name-calling.

Adultery taken, the concerns of even lust. Marriage made permanent as it was in the beginning, Jesus said. Revenge was put away, and now even the love of money.

Not coveting was expanded to everything that we had. Judgmentalism was supposed to be put away. And then He says that whoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments and shall teach so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.

Some hope there. But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. And I want to please God.

I try. I fail all the time, but I want to please God. This place that He's talking about, a place of repentance, a place of renewal, a place of saints redeemed by God and implanted by His Holy Spirit.

In the way that Jesus explained what this would look like, a place where the rich came in would say, ouch! And the poor would say, hallelujah! That's the kingdom. A place that would manifest God's cure and dream for humanity. A place that would act as a mighty army that would take this kingdom to the ends of the earth.

That's what He gave. Jesus is the cure. Jesus offered the cure for humanity.

And He created His church as a showcase for His way. He made it the instrument of blessing for the whole world. That's what we're to be.

You are to be what is to become. It's more than just facts. It's a blueprint.

Do you see it? It's important that you do. We talk a lot about being born again in these circles. And certainly the criticisms of fundamentalism needs to be looked at.

But let me ask you a deeper question. Jesus in the whole born again passage said to Nicodemus, verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom. That means you don't understand it.

You don't get it. Do you get it? Do you get the concept of the kingdom on earth? Because if you don't, you need to get with God and get with the words of Jesus Christ, you may not be born again. He says if you're not born again, you're not going to get it.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It is the biggest thing that Jesus talked about. It's the littlest things that we ever talk about.

Why? It's a problem. Alright, I came upon this preaching story. It's hard because when I give these preaching stories, particularly with a historical group like you, somebody's going to ruin it and come up and say it didn't really happen.

So bear with me on this one. But I found out this story once that in the 1800s, I found this newspaper article from the New York Times or something. And it was talking about this musicologist who was over in Germany and he was trying to dig up all the old Bach pieces while they still were scattered in mansions and things like that.

So the newspaper went. And as I read it, it said that he came and he was finding an old document. He'd be so excited and all these different things.

And as he got to one of the mansions or one of the castle places, he went there and as he was out there, there was a gardener out in the middle of the yard. And the gardener was wrapping his trees the way you do with papers and things like that. And as he happened to catch his eye that the paper looked odd, he went over there and he said, what are you using to wrap those trees with? He said, oh, this funny paper that's up in his chest up in the attic.

And as he went to look at it, sure enough, it was one of the manuscripts from Bach that he was using. There was a bunch of scraps of paper. And the thing that I bring this analogy out is it's kind of like the way we use the Bible.

We use it for the entirely wrong reasons. The Bach piece was meant to be a beautiful symphony played and performed for the world and to make beautiful music, but it was used for something odd. We use the Scriptures for something strange when Jesus wants it to be performed.

He wants it to be lived out in a beautiful symphony. And that's why Jesus gave us these incredible teachings. And oftentimes, I'm afraid we get the right answers to the wrong questions over and over again.

When you read something the wrong way, you end up with the wrong questions. The problem is that with a little work, we actually get the right answers to the wrong questions. You know, you get between, okay, I've got this to deal with and that to deal with.

Okay, what's the right? Okay, he's right. And you go on to this, then he's right, and then he's right. And way back there, the problem is you've been asking the wrong question.

You see, our salvation, our church, our life, is not a theology, a book, a creed. It is a Person. Jesus Christ.

The right question is how do we manifest His very presence on this earth? That's the question. And I know sometimes we have to answer things. Even living in a community, you have to answer basic things of life.

I realize that, but we've always got to keep thinking and coming back, what did He say that this should look like? We've got to come back to the right questions. We have to see that again. So what is the central message of the Bible? Okay, I'll do that one.

Looking at it from the beginning. Kingdom Christianity. It began in a garden.

And as we know what happened in a garden, there was two trees. And it's interesting that out of the ground, the Genesis 2 says, Lord God may grow every tree that is pleasant in the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And we know the story that from there that man chose the wrong way.

There was always two ways. It's interesting that Didache, the earliest non-biblical Christian document, mentions these two ways. What I find even more fascinating is that Schleidheim, which there's no way that Schleidheim would have had access to the Didache.

There's no way. They also very clearly articulate there's two ways. It seems like looking at the Word of God, we see there are two ways and there are two kingdoms.

There are two ways to live this out. And we either live by the filling of the power of God or we live by a different way. And these two cannot mix.

It's interesting, Genesis 3, it was so important that these two ways do not mix that the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become as one of us to know good and evil. And now lest he put forth his hand and take also the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore, the Lord God sent to him from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken.

And this idea of then, man had to now be governed by a different tree. A tree of civil law. I don't get confused in Lutheran sense of the law, but just civil law, fear of punishment and fear of death was the way then the world has to be governed.

Genesis, he put out, if anyone kills Cain, a worse punishment. And we see that laid on a little later. One of my favorite Anabaptists was Peter Riddemann and his beautiful writing.

It's ignored usually. It's called the Hutterite Statement of Faith and it's his writings that I encourage you all to read. It's one of the gems of the earliest Anabaptism.

And he talks about several of these topics and very little about community of good. And he says this talking about how these governments all are on this earth. He says, since people did not want to let themselves to be led by the spirit of the Lord God, the spirit of the Lord, God had to use a different rod to protect them from harm.

This was done so that the land would not be completely polluted with blood guilty people. And so that he would not have to destroy the world on their account. The world could thus be preserved until the time of the promised offspring who all things would be made right.

He said the human governments to us are a constant reminder to us three minutes of the wrath of God. A constant reminder of the wrath of God. We see this and God then tries to, or not tries, he then presents his kingdom and Noah and wants it to be in a people.

Later on, he gives it to us in Abraham and we see Abraham called to be a people. And even in Abraham he's called not only to be a people, but to bless the whole world with this people. To Moses, 50 days after they left the Passover, what's 50 days after Passover? Pentecost.

50 days he brings them the law in Exodus 19 and he says, you have seen what I did on the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if you will just obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. But they dropped it. And they didn't do those things.

God still loved them and worked with them. He then worked in different ways and different judges. He worked through with David.

He worked with different human governments. Hosea says that I gave you a king in my anger and took it away in my wrath. We know that Samuel finally gave them a king and rebuked them for the whole concept of choosing the king rather than man.

And I'm coming up to the end now. But the prophets spoke of a different time. The prophets spoke of a day that would come when they would beat their swords into plowshares.

Not just beat their swords, but beat their swords into plowshares. Into instruments that would do the world good and make a difference in this world. And they talked of a coming kingdom and a coming people.

I'll skip that analogy. It's funny. Anyway, in this then, Isaiah prophesied it.

And he talked about a people that walked in darkness would someday see a great light. And then he said, For unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Watch this.

Of the increase of His government and peace, watch this, there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Jesus came. Mark and Matthew quoted that passage. And He said, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Be what is to become. Dream with me today. What if Jesus really meant every word He said? I want you to allow the words of Jesus to permeate you.

In Matthew 13, He said that if we allow it as a mustard seed to enter us, it will begin to grow. And if you let Jesus' words grow in you and you look at the New Testament and you say, I believe it. I want to see it actualized.

It's going to do something, and I guarantee you'll leave here changed. I guarantee you will. What if Jesus really meant every word He said? Lester Troyer from Stone Lake, Wisconsin.

I wonder if you would care to address the issue of protectionism and retirement security as it relates to the church community. Otherwise known as insurance and Social Security. Yeah, it's, you know, it's interesting.

It is something that we always have to keep facing. It's the idea we want to save our life, we lose it. There's an interesting story in the Hutterian Chronicles when they're in one of the times during the 30-year war and they keep being raided and raided and wiped out and wiped out.

And one of them actually said, Jesus said to everyone who asked, let's just give it to them. It will save us the trouble of being persecuted in this way. And yeah, I think it's a lesson that we find difficult to learn.

If you try to save your life, we will lose it. I think though that just careless protection is also can be though and not putting the kingdom forward. We have a world that Jesus wants us to reach.

He has a people that a whole earth that he wants us to minister to. And that protectionism comes in more form of just trying to be careful somewhere and having insurance, but also not taking the action of what Jesus wants us to go. If we try, if we lose our life for his sake, we'll truly find it.

But yeah, that's a deep subject. You can preach on that next year. That's good.

Lauren Slaybaugh, Napanee, Indiana. Hi. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each ended their gospels with the command of Jesus to go and preach and also teaching, making disciples, so on.

What are the, from your perspective, what would be the strengths of a community in loving and obeying that command? What would be some of the challenges that would face a community or do face communities in loving and obeying that command? And maybe just... That's a great question. From your perspective, what is the answer? It's a passion of my heart. And I dream to see this in my life.

I've studied that through the years and I've seen it and I believe that when revival comes, the intention of revival is to bring it out in the way that the Acts experienced it. Totally. Not to set and congratulate ourselves that we live in community.

But these communities would be putting to practice the teachings of Jesus on a world scale. Historically, it has happened. The Hutterites have proved this in the early days of the Anabaptists were a mission machine.

They were the Marine Corps of the Anabaptists. And during the times of the greatest persecution, they were prospering incredibly. Brother Leonard Grossback wrote a beautiful book called The Golden Years of the Hutterites, which goes into that explanation.

And it gives us a proof that amongst our own people it can be done. The Moravians, the non-Anabaptists, proved that this could be done. And so people always say, well, people would flock in or this would happen or that would happen.

Yes, there would be lots of terrible and awful things that would happen. But I believe that Jesus Christ, you see, He promised us a little promise in that. If you do this, lo, I will be with you even into the ends of the earth.

No go, no lo. So, good question. May I see it in my day.

Daniel Hershberger from Kinsman, Ohio. And I just appreciated your message on community of good versus stewardship. But you might be familiar with the episode of the Teflonian brethren come into the Anabaptist setting and looking at different things.

And I think what you brought out, we could bring it out more clear if we would get the message of what these people were feeling, that righteousness cannot be legislated. Yes. And I think that's the bottom line of what you were saying, right? If we congratulate ourselves in either one of those.

To the communities, I am always arguing we need to be a church. And being a church comes with responsibilities that being just a family community does not. And to the church that does not live in community, I think we challenge the other way.

But you're right. That's interesting. I asked actually, I don't know if John Roth is still here.

I wrote him actually when we were going into community. There's some interesting facts about those Thessalonian brothers. One of them actually became a Hutterite later on.

So it's an interesting thing. But yeah, the bottom line, besides all that polemic, I don't want any of us to leave focusing on community or focusing on not having community. But I want all of us to be focusing on how do we put into practice collectively the radical world-changing teachings of Jesus Christ.

And that'll make the difference. But yeah, good point. Joshua Geiser, Caneyville, Kentucky.

My question is, do you believe that Jesus will return to the earth in a future day and live and reign with his saints on the earth in a physical way? And if so, why does it seem to me like few Anabaptists today recognize that or believe that? And does that have something to do with the talks we had earlier about our view of salvation and getting saved so we can go to heaven rather than being a part of building God's kingdom? Is losing that concept of God's kingdom on earth what has made us largely lose a vision for His

kingdom now? Yeah, very well said. The early church, and there's a book written just about that expectation of the early Anabaptists that lived in that. And I do think that it's fair to say that that expectation that we're on this winning team.

That we're going and Jesus is coming and we're going to be part of that. And we're going to gather people to be with that so that we can worship God and praise Him together. That was what motivated these people.

And I want to be in that winning team that's going. There's an interesting book, another John Howard Yoder, *The Original Revolution*, that talks about some of that concept as well. And it's a beautiful thought.

And I think that that kind of thinking that you're talking about needs to permeate our thinking again. And so we'll get our mind off of yeah, I don't know, just silly theology on things. Yeah, well said.

Okay, one more question. John Higgins from Unity, Maine. Brother Dean, you've done something with your life that probably some people stand around and say, well, there goes Brother Dean again.

I say that sometimes too. But you're not alone. And as the time has gone by from what I've been seeing here this weekend so far, that there's many just like you that are trying to find and go on to a better understanding, a better life.

So with this community, many of us have been searching for it for years and desiring but coming up short. And now finding something. Okay, now how do we fit in? We've been this independence for so long.

How do we release that and become part of a community? So I'm just asking you, I guess, just if you could give us a nugget or something. Very good, Brother John. I will say, and again, there are definitely issues living in community that we have to face that I didn't have to face living in a non-community world.

Okay, it is not the panacea of all of our problems. Let me just say that. As a matter of fact, after living in community for two and a half years, there are some people that I would say probably shouldn't be living in community.

You know what I mean? But on the other hand, I will say this. There is something in me. I was in the army and I loved being a part of this group that was clear what their vision was going for with marching orders.

I will say that coming amongst the Anabaptist people and I don't mean this in a mean way, it was hard for me to ever feel completely part. My own fault. I know most of it's all my own part.

But the breaking into the *Freundschaft*, the concept, I struggled with it. Even when I was a pastor, there would be times where I wouldn't even be invited to the wedding. There was something that was just lacking of something that I craved of leaving those family and farms and things that I expected to see on this earth.

And I do want to testify that I do believe I have experienced that living in community. There is a sense, sometimes too much, of family that you just flat feel part of it. I mean, you can't help but just... You're there.

And you're part of this big family that sometimes dysfunctional, sometimes not, tries to follow God. So, yeah, that's my personal testimony. Again, I do want to repeat, it has its own problems though.

And I want to keep going and I want our communities to be salted by your communities. And you do generally have communities. Compared to my background, it's off the charts.

Right, brother? And so what I'm trying to do is encourage all of your senses of community, everyone that you have here, because it's something precious. And I think it's kingdom theology of what Jesus was giving to us. Good question, brother John, and I know your heart.

And the world is pushing us into its mold to destroy that. Yes, it is. It is.

Thank you very much. God bless you.

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