

Extraordinary Kingdom

by Steve Gallagher

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the value of God's kingdom and being ruled by Him in our hearts. It challenges individuals to make the exchange of their self-life for a life surrendered to Jesus, highlighting the need to prioritize the kingdom above all else and to find true joy and fulfillment in God alone.

Scripture: Matthew 13:44, Luke 14:33, Psalms 16:11, Luke 15:7, Romans 14:17

Topics: "Value of God's Kingdom", "Surrendering to Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

of the fish and the basic point is that the Lord throws his dragnet out into the ocean, world's ocean and brings many fish of all sorts into his environment, basically the church and there's good fish and there's bad fish, there's sincere fish and there's insincere and it's kind of the same message as the wheat and the tares. So that's that. There's so much to share in these other two parables, so I'm just going to focus on them and they really say the basic, the same message and it's an important message.

So let's read these verses. I know you've been looking at them but we'll read them again anyway. Matthew 13, 44, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls and upon finding one pearl of great value he went and sold all that he had and bought it. So as pastor Ed mentioned, these parables are all about the kingdom and the word kingdom is basilika and the the root word is actually basis, you know, so just they the Greeks used it the same way as we use the word, the basis of something, the foundation of something and the point is is that the kingdom, the basis of it is the rule of God in the hearts of his people, just like we heard last week from Dustin. He said it exactly right, that's the definition.

Now it's important that we understand what that means because in America we just have this idea, actually the truth of it is a very cheap version of what the kingdom of God is, what it actually is. You know, we think that because we go to church, because we identify ourselves as followers of Christ and all those

sorts of things that that means we're in the kingdom, we're in, but really what we just heard is the definition defines those who are in, those who are ruled in their hearts by God, those are the ones who are the citizens of the kingdom and there's no one else. That's it.

I can see you don't believe me, so I'll just refer to what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mountains. He was wrapping it up. He said, where is it? Thank you.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter, what? The kingdom. The kingdom of heaven, but who? You still haven't gotten it, you know, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, didn't we do this and didn't we do that? Then I will declare to them, I never knew you, depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

You're a law unto yourself. That's what he's saying to these people. You're a law unto yourself.

You're just doing your own thing. Yeah, you're in my, amongst my people, but you're just doing your own thing. I don't rule your life and Paul takes it kind of even further.

He says, don't you know that the unrighteous, in other words, the lawless, will not inherit the kingdom of God. Don't be deceived. And he goes down the list.

What's right at the top? Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous. He just gave, you know, he just gives a list. He says they won't inherit the kingdom of God.

You can't just, you know, torque the message of scripture and make it the way you want it to be. I mean, you can do it, but you're just deceiving yourself. The only ones who will be part of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, are those who do the will of God.

You can be in the evangelical church and do your own will, but you cannot be in God's kingdom. You can be in the evangelical church and be involved in habitual sin, but you cannot be in God's kingdom. You must enter as a little child.

What does a little child do? A little child is in submission to someone over him. All right, we got all that straightened out now? I don't like this message very well, Pastor Ed. Pastor Jordan, I think they like your preaching better.

You know, this is the first time I've preached up here in two and a half months. I guess I'm not a very popular preacher around here. I don't know what happened.

You know, these two parables, the one thing they have in common is that both of these men began their day the same way. They're just struggling to make it in life. You know, the one's plowing, the other's going all over the countryside looking for pearls to sell and just trying to make a profit and get by.

But by the end of the day, they have the treasure of a lifetime, the treasure they could only have dreamed about. Something happened in that day. So the first guy is plowing a field just trying to eke out a living.

And, you know, him plowing this field, he's probably been plowing that field for years, back and forth, back and forth, not realizing that just inches under the ground, under the soil, is a treasure. All these years he's been doing that. And that represents someone.

It represents people who kind of have done that with God's kingdom. You know, they go back and forth. In a sense, it's like they hear sermons and sermons and sermons.

They go to church services, church services, church services, and the treasure is right there, right, yeah, just a breath away. But they never get it. They never grasp and apprehend that treasure.

They're just doing religion. Just so happens they're in a Christian country, so they're doing the Christian religion. Those people, they could be in Turkey, and they'd be doing the same thing over there, just going about the religious thing, because that's what you do.

That's what they do. They know all about Jesus Christ. They know all about his kingdom.

They know all about the gospel. They've gone over that field so many times that they can't imagine there being any anything of value in it. It's not really worth that much to them.

They'll go looking for it. You know, you didn't discover the treasure, for those of you that that might apply to, because you didn't have your eyes to see, and you didn't have ears to hear. You trained your eyes to see what you wanted to see, and you trained your ears to hear what you wanted to hear.

In other words, you had deserted Christ for another gospel, a gospel that isn't another gospel, a gospel, you know, that you created of your own. It has some elements of the real thing, but it's your version. But instead of Jesus Christ being the center, you're the center.

Well, I want to tell you guys, the Lord wants to change that. He desires to change that for you. He's not mad at you, but you've got to come in on his terms.

You know, he desires to bring you into his kingdom. He does. He greatly desires.

If you knew how much work behind the scenes, he humbly comes and works in your life, trying to usher you to a certain place where you will finally get to that narrow gate, and you will finally come in. He goes through all of that because he cares deeply about you, but he won't cheapen his kingdom. He doesn't fling the door open for anyone that shows the slightest interest.

That's not the Lord. That may be cheap preachers out there, but that is not the Lord. He wants you to come into a knowledge of the richness, and the preciousness, and the greatness of this kingdom.

All right, so while the first guy represents people who just happened on the kingdom, on this treasure, the second guy represents those who go through life with an intense longing, like an emptiness inside that they are trying to fill it. The problem is they try to fill it in the wrong places, right? Some people seek to fill it in pleasure. Others seek to fill it in work or ministry even.

Others seek to fill it with family or kids. Others seek to fill it in money or power. None of these things are evil.

You know, they're all okay. There's nothing wrong with those things unless they become your idol, unless they become the real thing, a value in your heart that takes the place of the Lord. Then you got a problem, you know.

The problem for people who do that is that they're trying to find their fulfillment in self and the things of self rather than in God, and only God can satisfy. All right, so those are just some thoughts on those two

parables, but I got three truths that I feel like most people miss in these two parables. So here they are.

Number one, if you don't see the tremendous value of being part of the kingdom, something is terribly wrong in your understanding of it. Jesus uses two metaphors to establish the value, you know, a treasure and this pearl of great price value. And the extravagance of these two metaphors are meant to dramatize the value.

That's what Jesus is trying to establish in these two parables. Now, he's already established other things in the other parables as Pastor Ed went through them. You know, the sower and the seed, the point is people hear the word of God, but they don't accept it.

And, you know, it's only the one with the good soil. And then the wheat and the tares, there's true and there's false, people in this realm and, you know, other sorts of things. But here he's trying to articulate and with these metaphors, the value, the great tremendous value of being a part of his kingdom.

It's a treasure that is incorruptible, undefiled, unfading and eternal. The world knows nothing of this treasure. Pseudo-Christians know nothing of this treasure, but kingdom people understand its value and treat it as valuable.

So the field in that first one is the world, this bankrupt, miserable place where people who don't really know the Lord spend their lives chasing empty fantasies and elusive dreams. That's really what the world is all about. It's all about idols.

That's what the world is for. The kingdom of the world is all about idols. And the enemy, the prince of this world, has established things as they are to get people to go off following him rather than seeing the value of God's kingdom.

And man, we are so easily led astray. We will just follow anyone. Dumb sheep, right? These men saw this as an opportunity of a lifetime.

Wasn't enough to stand there marveling over these treasures, though. They had to act decisively. They had to appropriate these treasures or they wouldn't get them.

You know, you can look high and low in this world and never find anything of the kind of value of what the Lord has to offer. Nothing compares to having the all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God ruling in your inner man. There's nothing like it.

Like Jordan said, you know, to have him calling the shots. Him who is all-wise, who knows the, you know, up from down and knows the end of all matters. Knows what's going to be a blessing to your life.

Knows what is best for your life. What could be better than have him calling the shots? Or all-powerful, this all-powerful God who can make anything happen in your life. And yet most people insist on staying in control.

What a mistake. Number two, if being a part of the kingdom isn't a source of tremendous joy to you, something is terribly wrong in your understanding of it. This is the great pursuit of mankind, isn't it? Happiness.

And we even wrote it in the Declaration of Independence, didn't we? Every man has a right to the pursuit of happiness, we say. That's true. But you know, where are you going to get it? So the people of the world

and the terrors of the church live their lives going from one possession to another, one experience to another, one relationship to another.

Always looking for that elusive thing we call happiness. But you know, it doesn't matter how much you go after it, you will never find happiness in this earth. Not real happiness.

You know why? Because God created you in such a way that you will only find fulfillment in him. You've heard preachers say this stuff all your life, probably. You guys have been raised in the church, but you just never believed it.

It just sounded like cheap preacher talk to you. You didn't believe there was a reality to it, but I'm telling you there is a reality to it. That's what Pastor Jordan was sharing, what it was like before.

God's joy is an inward atmosphere. You know, it's not dependent on outward circumstances going your way. I mean, oh, it's nice when they do, but you can't count on that in this devil-filled world, can you? The joy of... Man, you guys are being awfully quiet today.

Did I tick you off or something? Hang on, I'll get to it. Now, I got to say this, we're talking about joy. Some people have a natural, upbeat, happy attitude in life.

Sanguines, we call them. There's nothing wrong with that. Praise God for sanguines.

I'm married to one. But that's not the joy of the Lord. You're not born with the joy of the Lord, and that's just crazy to think you are.

You know, my wife, I'll use her as an example. I've known her for 40-some years, and I knew her when she was 18 years old. And she had that kind of happy, quick smile that I fell in love with.

But I've seen her become a woman of God because she went after the Lord, and she saw early on just how superficial that kind of happiness is. There's no fulfillment in it. And the joy that she has is deep, you know.

The joy that my wife has is very deep, and she's a blessing in my life. The joy of the Lord isn't something you're born into. It is something that comes about through the processes of God working in your life, tearing down your self-life.

And as He tears down your self-life, He replaces it with Himself. And that's where the joy of the Lord comes from. It's an awesome thing.

And I need to say also that God is joyful. He's not morose. You know, some people think that they need to walk around looking miserable in life because they think that makes them look spiritual.

But you don't look spiritual if you look miserable. You look miserable. That's all it is.

God is joyful. His nature is joyful, you know. And He invites us to enter into that kind of joy.

Enter into the joy of the Lord, He says. Psalm 16, David said to the Lord, in your presence is fullness of joy. Man, that's an awesome thing.

Just sit for several hours and contemplate that statement. It would do you a lot of good, guys. You've been spending years chasing pleasure, thinking you're going to get some kind of fulfillment out of that.

Did you? Anybody here get fulfilled out of that? Something went wrong, right? Is it possible that the Bible might know what it's talking about? Luke 15, Jesus spoke of heaven as being a place full of God's joy when a sinner repents. I'm sure there was a lot of joy last Sunday when many of you guys responded to that altar call Dustin gave here after the wheat and the tares message. Romans 14, Paul said, For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

And the book of Revelation is all about angels and saints and cherubim and all gathered around the throne of God rejoicing. That's the place I want to go to. Not this cheap, superficial, happy thing they've got going on here on earth.

That's not what I want. I want to be part of God's joy, and I want my heart to be full of it. And you can enter freely into this wonderful, joyful kingdom.

The offer is there for you. It's there for you, if it means enough to you to follow it, you know, to respond to it. But you've got to go through the narrow gate, and you have to live your life on the narrow path.

You can't create your own version. You can, but you're just in a delusion. Self-life must be replaced with Jesus Christ.

As we've already heard, He takes the throne of your heart. He takes the center place of your life, and He directs your paths. That's what it means for Him to be the King over your life.

All right, number three. If being a part of the kingdom isn't worth more than everything else to you, something is terribly wrong in your understanding of it. Okay, now think of the situation with these two men.

They sell everything they own, every single thing they own. And I think, you know, think about that. They probably own some stuff, you know, some things, maybe some certain things that just meant a lot to them.

And they're selling it at bargain basement prices, just getting anything they can for it. People must have been watching them, thinking they're crazy. What's wrong with this guy? But you know what? They knew what they were doing.

They knew what they were doing. And it was, they didn't have any problem with unloading everything. It reminds me a little bit of something.

Kathy and I, in 1989, the Lord had put it on our hearts. We were living out in Sacramento, and he put it on our hearts to go across the country and share our testimony on radio shows and TV shows and churches. And so we started selling and giving away everything we owned.

And we had a 22-foot old beater of a motor home, and that's what we lived in for the next nine months. And people thought we were crazy, and they were trying to caution us, you know. You don't have to be so radical.

What are you doing? What's wrong with you? And I just knew the Lord was calling us to do it, so we did it. And we've never regretted it. But, you know, we're selling and giving stuff away.

And one day, this was all going on, we had a, I would say yard sale, it was actually a house sale, because everyone was just coming in and, you know, going out with all our stuff. And I had this, we had this antique furniture in one of the bedrooms. I can barely even remember it.

But I walk into the room, and it's not there, because it's, you know, we sold it or something. And all of a sudden, I panicked, like, what have I done? You know, it just hit me. And the Lord spoke to me just as clear as could be.

And He said, the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay His head. That's what He told me. And I knew He was telling me.

He was calling me into a life of following Him, and letting go of everything else. You know, you don't get the kingdom because you buy it or earn it. That's not it.

You get it because you want it more than anything else. That's how you get in. That's the secret.

That's the mystery. This is all really good news. I don't know why you guys aren't rejoicing.

Could you at least smile occasionally? You can't buy the kingdom, but it will cost you everything. And if it hasn't cost you everything, you're not in. But, you know, the problem is many pseudo-Christians, I say pseudo-Christians, meaning people that profess Christianity, but really aren't living it.

They go to church. They do the Christian thing, the evangelical thing, but they're not. They're not really living for God.

The problem is they never see the value of the kingdom. It doesn't mean that much to them. You know, God loves to give, but He will not negotiate.

He will not negotiate. But, you know, when you come to realize the value of the kingdom, you're happy to make that trade. Really, you are.

The kingdom person understands the cost. He understands the value of the kingdom, but he also understands the cost, and he thinks about that. He considers that.

Isn't that the message of Luke 14? You know, Jesus said, if anyone comes to me and does not hate, now this is a comparative term. I don't think I need to explain this to you, do I? But he's just saying, he's just saying you've got to have such a great love and appreciation for God's kingdom that no matter what else it is, comparatively speaking, you hate the other stuff. And I understand what he says, even if you don't.

This is one of the worst crowds I've ever preached to in my entire life. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Did he mean that or not? Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

And then he goes into this thing about what kind of king would start a battle with another king without, you know, figuring out, wait a minute, can we really do this? Or building a building, a tower, without really figuring out how much it's going to cost them. No one, you know, it's understood. No one's that dumb.

Well, yes, there are. There's plenty of people. Where am I at? You know, this is the exchange life.

That was exactly, this is in my notes before you said it. Were you sneaking glances or something? Exchange life, says it right there. Can you see that? Exchange life.

It's what the old timers used to call it. You exchange everything you have, your paltry amount, you cut in life, and God gives you everything he has. What a deal.

What a deal. What kind of fool would turn that down? You know, and it costs us everything, but trust me, we're getting a better end of this bargain. And you see this attitude in the disciples when they walked away from everything to follow Jesus.

You see it was Zacchaeus who gave up most of his fortune because he came into the kingdom, and it didn't mean anything to him anymore. And the woman who was a sinner walked away from her old life, poured out her ointment, which was very valuable then, on Jesus' feet, worshipped him. She understood.

She got it. But there's also people like the rich young ruler. It was offered to him.

Jesus offered it to him, directly, personal, talk to him, face to face. Come and follow me, he said. But as soon as he said the price, and the price to that guy was all his stuff and his riches.

Why? Because they were an idol to him. That's what he lived for. He couldn't imagine.

And he walked away sad, grieved, because he wanted both, which is exactly what American Christians often do. They want both. But again, I'm telling you, the Lord is not interested in people who want to negotiate.

He's not interested in people like that. And he will not negotiate. And he's not going to cheapen his kingdom and just give it to anyone who, whatever.

They're just using, they just want to use the Lord. That's all. Just get me out of hell.

I don't want to have to worry about going to hell. And can you bless me down here while I'm here? Lots of stuff, Lord. You know, I wanted this and I wanted that.

Could you do that? That's American Christianity for the most part. That's basically the call out there. How many TV preachers do you ever hear talking about the cost? This will cost you everything.

When have you ever heard a TV preacher say that? Not even radio preachers will do it very often. There's some who will, I guess. I haven't listened to radio preachers in 30 years, so what do I know? I'm pretty sure it's that way.

It was that way 30 years ago. It surely must be that way now, right? If you're a kingdom person, a true kingdom believer, it doesn't matter what it costs you. You know, it just doesn't matter.

Because it's everything to you. And you would give anything for it. What time did I start preaching? It feels like I've been up here three hours.

Man, you guys really working me today. You know, it's going to cost you your pride, your friends, your things. But you know what Jesus says, freely you have received, now freely give.

Give it up, give it away, give it whatever. Yeah, I'm talking to you, Chad. He's got a look on his face.

All right, I'm going to wrap it up. This is going to be a short sermon, I guess. I want to read this.

It's kind of a lengthy quote. It's J.C. Ryle. He usually gets people riled up, so that's why I like to use him some.

I give you guys the best I got. What do you do? You scoff at me. All right, listen to what he had to say.

Behold, in this single picture, the conduct of a true Christian explained. He is what he is and does what he does in his religion because he is thoroughly persuaded that it's worthwhile. He comes out from the world.

He puts off the old man. He forsakes the vain companions of his past life. Like Paul, he counts all things lost for Christ's sake.

And why? Because he's convinced that Christ will make amends to him for all he gives up. He sees in Christ an endless treasure. He sees in Christ a precious pearl.

To win Christ, he will make any sacrifice. This is true faith. Behold, in these two parables, the real clue to the conduct of many unconverted people.

And he's talking about church people here. They are what they are in religion because they are not fully persuaded that it's worthwhile to be different. Now think about your church life before you got here and your attitude, right? Am I lying to you? All right, then answer me.

They flinch from decision. They shrink from taking up the cross. They halt between two opinions.

They will not commit themselves. They will not come forward boldly on the Lord's side. And why? Because they're not convinced that it will compensate them.

They're not sure that the treasure is before them. They're not satisfied that the pearl is worth so great a price. They cannot yet make up their minds to sell all that they may win Christ, and so too often they perish everlastingly.

I didn't say it, that other guy said it. All right, so when I was praying about this, I felt like the Lord showed me there would be three basic groups of people in here. There's a lot of you guys, maybe newer guys, whatever, you really have never made that exchange.

You just haven't. You're not there yet. I hope you will be there, but you haven't gotten there yet.

You haven't come to that place yet where you really do lay your life down for Him, where you really do allow Him to take the throne of your heart. You haven't gotten there yet. And Jesus would say to you, enter in.

It's an open invitation to you. He wants you for Himself. He really does.

He went through so much to bring you here. You know, you're just kind of oblivious doing life, and you have this problem, and you happen to cross this one website, and okay, that's your view of things. That ain't the way it happened.

Are you crazy? The Holy Spirit's been working in your life for months, probably, to get you to the place where you finally be so desperate you'll go to Kentucky. Like I said the other night, don't complain to me. I've been here 36 years.

No, Kentucky here, in this place, is a wonderful place. And then there's those of you who have crossed that line. I don't know which ones, because I don't know you guys, but I know there's guys in here.

Something happened for you at some point. You were down on the prayer trail. You were in your room studying.

You were in a counseling session. You were at the altar. Somewhere at some point since you've been here, something powerful and dramatic happened inside you, and you became a different person, and you're on a different path now.

Praise God. The Lord wants you to know that He's thrilled with you and what's going on in your life. That's some good preaching, Gabe.

Take note. Amen. The third group I want to mention are those who once had a love for God and the things of God, but over time the joy waned, the gratitude fell away, and you came to lose the sense of the kingdom's value.

It's become cheap and worthless to you, really. You've just been going through the motions for a long time, so you've become like the Ephesians who walked away from their first love. And I think the Lord would say to you to consider the prodigal son and the father who would run out onto the road every day looking for that prodigal son.

That was, that's a picture of how much He wants you back for Himself, and He wants you to return to Him. In my Bible here, I've had this Bible for many years, um, right here. Jordan's going to read this little thing right here.

Yeah, you want it. Right here. This right here? No, right there.

Steve, is He more precious to you than your ministry? What date is that? Uh, 827, 1995. 1995. Did you hear it? Did you care? That's, um, I was, we were sitting in a Bible study at the Faith Homes, and, um, it was just a, yeah, just a Bible study.

It wasn't a service, and the teacher said that to me. She just blurted it out right in the middle of her teaching, and later, you know, after the meeting was over, she came up very apologetic. I'm so sorry.

I don't know why I did that, you know, and I said, this guy is fine. Listen, that was the Lord speaking to me. I don't mind the Lord speaking to me.

I don't mind if He rebukes me or whatever, but it was true, you know. I did love the ministry, Pure Life Ministries, 95. That was, uh, nine years old.

The ministry was nine years old then. Um, I had a passion to see men set free, as God had done that for me, and I had a passion for people to know the Lord, but I also had a lot of self in all that I was doing, a lot of self, and I needed to be, my motives needed to be purified, and I needed to be purged of a lot of junk that was in me, and because I had so much self in all that I was doing, I couldn't love Jesus like I should. That's what was written right there above those two parables, because the Lord spoke to me that day.

You know, the bottom line, I've said this in one of my books, I don't know which one, but I said, we're driven in life by hunger. You're driven in life by hunger. You've all got your own, you know, renditions or whatever, the things that you hunger for, the things that are the most important things.

You're going through life constantly chasing and pursuing those things. It's the hunger in your soul that's driving you after something. What is it? Now, obviously, for you guys in the program, sexual pleasure has been a big part of that, but that's not just that.

It's rare that I ever see anyone come through this place that only has that one idol. It's usually a whole bunch of them, cluster of them, idols. I did.

The Lord wants you to hunger for him and his kingdom, and if you will do that, he will meet you in a way that is beyond your imagination. Like Jordan was sharing, he had no idea. Isn't that what you said? He had no idea what he was stepping into when he made that exchange.

No idea, but he knew that he had to do it. He was sick and tired of the emptiness of this world, and so he had to make that exchange, but when he did, he stepped into something brand new, something so awesome, something so wonderful, and it has gotten better and better. Has it been 12 years since you did that or something like that? And, you know, I can just speak for myself.

My life, I've gone through a lot of different stuff, a lot of humblings and breakings and pain and stuff, and every bit of it has just set me free a little more, a little more, a little more, a little more. Free inside. I don't know how to explain that.

I'm not driven by anything anymore except my love for the Lord. Free inside. It's an awesome thing.

It's such an awesome thing. So that's what the Lord wanted me to share with you today. That's what was assigned to me.

Two and a half months later, I'll have something else maybe. This just ain't right. I want to pray for you.

Why don't you all stand up? You're tired of sitting there. Just come on up and get on the keyboard, Josh. We're not going to have an altar call.

We had a big altar call last week, and many of you have already been down here this morning because the Lord's already been speaking to you, so this is just kind of reinforcement, but I want to pray for you, and I, yeah, let me just pray for you. Lord, I, I don't know what to say other than what I just shared is the absolute truth. Everything I've given up for you has been, what you've given me in return has been just multiplied by a thousand, the value.

You can't get joy externally. Joy comes internally, and that only comes from you, Lord. That kind of joy, that kind of fulfillment, that kind of peace of mind, it comes from, it comes within.

The kingdom of God is within you, Jesus said. That's it. The kingdom isn't eating and drinking.

It's righteousness and joy and those things, the kind of things that they can't take from us, no matter what. Those who are just bent on circumstantial living, always trying to make circumstances be just right, always trying to whatever, fight through to get whatever it is they want, just will never know the joy that comes from that kind of fellowship with you, Lord. That kind of submission to your rule, to your will, and I just pray, Holy Spirit, that you will continue your work in everyone's heart here, those who are watching through the streaming video, them as well, that you will just speak deeply into our hearts, Lord.

You're the only one who can do it. We ask that you would, Lord, speak deeply, impart into people's hearts a recognition of the preciousness and the value of your kingdom, impart into their hearts a hunger to know

you in a greater way, to walk closely with you, to be ruled by you, to walk in submission to you, to give up all for you, to live for you. Pray that you would impart that into hearts today, Lord.

I know that's your desire, Holy Spirit. Be with everyone today, those who have to travel today or whatever, Lord, just be with them, protect them. All the guys in that retreat that are coming back, Lord, protect them as they drive back up here, protect Skip and Josh as they're headed somewhere.

We just depend on you for everything, Lord. We do not have what it takes to make it in this devil-infested world, Lord. We must have you.

We must, Lord. We must have you in control. We'll blunder right into a cesspool of devils.

We just can't trust ourselves, Lord. We must have you in control. Thank you for meeting with us today.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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