

FIVE FORKS BRETHERN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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SERMON: *Becoming “Kingdom” People*

SERIES: *Kingdom Come*

SCRIPTURES: *Matthew 6:9-13*

SPEAKER: *Brady Smith*

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Credit to Jeremy Treat for his book “Seek First”

Good morning everyone, thank you all for joining us this morning. Similar to what we did last week I’d like to ask everyone who is able to please stand and join me in reciting the Lord’s Prayer.

We will be reciting the NIV version of Matthew 6:9-13, and you can follow along on the screen behind me.

Ready? Let’s begin.

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”

Thank you, you may be seated.

Last week, we began breaking down these 3 words that we find in the Lord’s Prayer...

“Your Kingdom Come”

Three simple words. “Your Kingdom come.” These 3 words contain so much to them!

Looking into these words we took some time to understand that the “Kingdom” Jesus was referring to was the Kingdom of God, we then explained it like this.

The Kingdom of God is... **GOD’S REIGN through GOD’S PEOPLE over GOD’S PLACE where God’s people were rescued by GOD’S SON.** What a beautiful Kingdom it is.

We then continued to talk about how we can begin to find the Kingdom of God in action today throughout our everyday lives.

Now, this morning, we want to pick up the conversation talking about what it looks like for us to be a part of the Kingdom of God. We understand what it is, we are beginning to be mindful in seeing the Kingdom of God in action around us... but how can we become Kingdom people?

That’s a tough question... what should we do, what should be mindful of, or what should we begin practicing in order to grow as people who are members of the Kingdom of God?

As we wrestle with this question, there are 3 different points I’d like to challenge us with this morning.

First, we need to **“Know Our Identity”** in Jesus.

Second, we need to learn to **“Adopt a Kingdom First Mindset”**

Third, we need to learn how to **“Battle Through the Tension”** of our Old and New Self.

Alright, so let’s begin with our first point. And that is to...

I. Know Your Identity

In 2004, there was a news story about a man who was found beaten and bloody behind a dumpster at a Burger King in Georgia. He had no identification on him, and upon waking up the man had lost his memory and could not even identify himself.

At the hospital the man was taken too, they gave him the fake name “Benjamin Kyle”, which stood for “BK” or Burger King where he was found. The police and hospital did what they could to identify this man, but their search appeared unsuccessful.

As the media heard the story and began sharing it, they tried calling the public to participate in the search of identifying “Benjamin”. Eventually, the FBI even got involved... but all of that was to no avail. “Benjamin” as he was so called did not have any finger print or dental records matched up anyone in the system...

“Benjamin Kyle” was a man with no identity. Every morning he woke up with not knowing who he is, until finally in 2015 a DNA test provided him with the answer he was looking for.

In that same sense, I believe that many Christians are battling with what I’d like to call “Gospel Amnesia”. Christians who wake up every day forgetting the important truth of who we are in Christ.

We will work tirelessly to make a name and identity for ourselves in our workplace with our accomplishments. We will try to identify ourselves in our own personal success or the success of our family. We will make the perfect social media posts and profiles...

As Christians, we believe in Jesus, but we so easily forget about the new identity that we have been provided by Jesus through his grace and redemption.

The ironic truth is that in our society that talks so much about identity and identifying ourselves... we as Christians seem to be so confused about who we really are.

So, what can we do to begin knowing our identities in Jesus as Kingdom people? First, we must recognize the fact that we are...

A. Sons and Daughters of the King

Many would agree that one of the things that shapes your identity the most would be your family. Even though we like to think that we are in control of many different aspect of our lives, there are still many things that we simply do not control.

We did not get to choose the family we were born into. We did not get to choose our DNA. We did not get to decide who our birth parents would be.

These different things shape who you are. Your physical appearance, your personality, the quirks that make you...you! And whether or not you like your family, whether your just like your parents or the complete opposite, they will always have an impact on your identity.

But do you know what is amazing? By God's Grace, we are adopted into His family as His children. Adopted into a family that can provide far more identity-shaping change than what anything biological can provide. We are the Sons and Daughters of the King.

From the very beginning, we have been created and viewed in this special way. For example, in Genesis 1 it writes,

26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us... 27 So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

I touch on these two verses often with our students because this is life, identity changing truths we are talking about! The God of the Universe made us in His image... wow!

But the best part is that it does not stop there, because if we continue reading in Genesis a few chapters later we find something that explains this truth even further.

This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings, he made them to be like himself. ² He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.” (Genesis 5:1-2)

Once again, as we’ve been talking about we read that we as humans were created in the image of God, but the next verse is where it hits home for me a little more...

³ When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth.

Adam became a father to a son who was what? Like him—in his very image.

Just how we would say a child is just like their parents—made in their image. We, as the Sons and Daughters of the King, are made in His image. What a special, identity changing truth that is.

As we understand this truth, this should then lead us to being able to identify ourselves using just these two words...

B. In Christ

We find Paul using this phrase often throughout his letters in the New Testament as he writes to the churches he served at or to the young men he helped to mentor. Paul often used the phrase, “In Christ”.

For example in 2 Corinthians, Paul wrote,

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Cor. 5:17)

In a different letter to the Colossians he wrote,

²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. (Col. 1:28)

So what exactly does it mean to be “In Christ”? Paul seemed to think it was pretty important, so what exactly does that look like?

Theologian Jeremy Treat summarizes it like this...

“If we are united with Christ—one with him—our identity is rooted not in what we can do for God, but rather in what God has done for us. If you are ‘in Christ,’ your identity is not something you have to work for or wait for, because you are already a son or daughter of the King. Ironically, it’s when we stop obsessing over ourselves and start looking for Christ that we discover who we truly are.”

Placing our identity in Christ is when true life change begins, and it’s then that we can begin to find answers to the questions we all face... who we are in this world, what is our purpose, why we were created.

Paul understood this well as he wrote this in his letter to the Ephesians,

[3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.](#)

As I read this verse, I started to think of some of the spiritual blessings that we find written throughout the New Testament and began adding the phrase “In Christ” to them. For example...

In Christ, I am the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)
In Christ, I am the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)
In Christ, I am a child of God (John 1:12)
In Christ, I am forgiven of my sins (Colossians 1:14)
In Christ, I am dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11)

That’s pretty awesome, wouldn’t you say?

Understanding your identity as being a son or daughter of the King and knowing who you are In Christ is one of the first steps in becoming Kingdom People. It’s so important.

The next point in becoming a Kingdom People is that we must...

II. Adopt a “Kingdom First” Mindset

This means that whenever we are looking at the world around us, the way that we respond and the actions that we make must be ones that first and foremost represent the Kingdom of God.

I will admit, this is something that I know I struggle with... Adopting a Kingdom First mindset is something that may not or will not come easy to us, but it is absolutely essential as we become a Kingdom People.

So, what can we do to adopt this Kingdom First Mindset? We must...

A. Place Our Allegiance in the Kingdom

When looking at my life, I realized that have placed my allegiance in many different things.

I am a graduate of Greencastle-Antrim High School, and even though it has been quite a while since I was in High School, I am always cheering and supporting their sports teams. Why? Because I wore the same jersey many years ago! I have an allegiance to G-A.

I currently drive Hyundai Elantra as my car, and whenever I see other people driving the same car as me on the road I think, "Oh yeah, they know what they're doing! They're driving the right car since they are like me!"

And the interesting thing is that whenever we place our allegiance in these different things, they make a major impact on the decisions we make in life. We may choose:

Chick-Fil-A over McDonald's
Starbucks over Dunkin' Donuts
Sheetz over Rutters
Apple over Android
Hyundai over Honda
Greencastle over Waynesboro (Had to throw that one in there!)

However, if we are going to create a Kingdom First Mindset, we must first place our allegiance to the Kingdom! Our allegiance to Jesus should outweigh anything else. It should be at the forefront of the decisions we make in our life.

When you are faced with difficult decisions and situations in life and you are trying to figure out how to respond, we must always remember our allegiance to God's Kingdom.

One particular example that I've personally be wrestling with a lot over these past few months is the concept of...

B. Placing the Kingdom over our Country

Now this might sound a little confusing, so allow me to explain it a little further. When looking at world affairs or various political topics, we will often first think about it from an American mindset.

You might be thinking, "Well yeah, of course, we are indeed American after all!"

That is certainly correct... but if we are truly intent on creating a Kingdom First Mindset, we need to begin challenging ourselves to think differently.

What I've personally been wrestling with lately is trying to avoid looking at the world around us from an "America First" mindset, but a Kingdom First mindset, a mindset that is dedicated to our allegiance to the Kingdom.

What's interesting is that this is something that God has been calling of His people to do for thousands and thousands of years.

Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, we find Moses providing many commandments to the Israelites on things they need to be mindful of.

During the many chapters of Moses providing these commandments, one particular set of commandments has recently stood out to me. It begins in Deuteronomy 24:17 where is Moses telling this to God's Chosen people of Israel,

17 "True justice must be given to foreigners living among you..."

And he then continues to state these commandments as well...

19 “When you are harvesting your crops and forget to bring in a bundle of grain from your field, don’t go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigners, orphans, and widows. Then the Lord your God will bless you in all you do. 20 When you beat the olives from your olive trees, don’t go over the boughs twice. Leave the remaining olives for the foreigners, orphans, and widows. 21 When you gather the grapes in your vineyard, don’t glean the vines after they are picked. Leave the remaining grapes for the foreigners, orphans, and widows.

Our God has always been the God of the entire world. Although the Israelites were His Chosen people throughout the Old Testament, he constantly reminded them to take care of the foreigners around them.

As the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 98,

“He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with fairness.”

It is our instinct to hold our allegiance to our country, and it’s certainly not a bad thing to do so, but we must be careful to never let that overpower our allegiance to the Kingdom of God. That should always be our highest priority.

Alright, so that is the second point we need to aware of when becoming a Kingdom People. Making sure we have a “Kingdom First” mindset.

The third and final point is that we need to know how to...

III. Battle Through the Tension

...of putting off the Old Self and Putting on the New Self.

There was a man in the 1700s known by the name of John Newton. When looking at his 82 years on Earth, we would say that Newton embody both the best and worst of humanity during that time.

You see, during younger years he was the captain of slave ships and soon after retiring from that, he became a major investor of the slave trade. Profiting over the dehumanization and the abuse of others.

But during all of this, John Newton would encounter God in an incredibly real and life changing way at the age of 23. Immediately, he gave up profanity, drinking, and gambling. And a few years later he removed himself entirely from the slave trading business.

And soon after that, for the rest of his life, devoted himself to serving others and working towards the abolition of slavery.

It's a pretty incredible story, and one of Newton's famous quotes is whenever he was looking back at his life and said this...

**I am not what I ought to be,
I am not what I want to be,
I am not what I hope to be in another world;
But still I am not what I once used to be,
And by the grace of God I am what I am.**

John Newton understood something and experienced something that I suspect every Christian has gone through in their life. Battling the tension between the "Old Self" before we knew Jesus, and the "New Self" after we've come to know Jesus.

Part of becoming the best Kingdom people that we can be is learning to battle with this tension. That's why I'd like to encourage us to remember these two keys points when we feel we are battling that tension.

We need to Put Off the Old Self and Put on the New Self.

Let's first talk about why we need to...

A. Put Off the Old Self

In Ephesians 4:21-22, Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus to not be like their corrupt neighbors. As he is trying to encourage and push them he writes this,

21 Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.

So what exactly does this “churchy” phrase of “putting off the old self” mean? Because personally, I’ve been a Christian for as long as I can remember and did not have a crazy conversion story like John Newton or even like the Apostle Paul, so what exactly does this mean?

To best answer this question the answer resides in selfishness. The Old Self is completely and entirely focused on “me, me, me”. Author Thomas Scott put it like this,

The old self desires power, approval, comfort, and security at its root, and will engage in sinful behavior that it thinks will fulfill those desires. To gain power and approval, the old self engages in risky behavior, rooted in a desire for self-confidence. To achieve comfort and security, the old self will promote themselves and use others for their own benefit, whether they realize it or not.

I can remember the first time I ever experienced what it was like to put off “My Old Self” in regards to setting aside my selfish desire in place of my love for Jesus.

I was around the age of 4-5 years-old and I was playing a game with my older brother Evan and older sister Shyanne in the bedroom that Evan and I shared. Well, as it sometimes happens when siblings play together, we started to fight and in my anger I climbed up to the top of our bunkbed to sit and pout.

It’s crazy, but I can clearly remember sitting there cross legged with my arms folded, huffing and puffing. And while I sat there I started to think of ways I could get back at them for being mean to me.

Now, I used to love watching some of the classic cartoons back in the day, Tom & Jerry being one of my all-time favorites. And so here I am thinking of how Jerry

would get back at Tom and I get the idea that I should get an anvil and drop it on them from the top bunk.

Soon after I thought of this cartoonish plan, I can clearly remember reality sinking in and realizing that they wouldn't get flattened like a pancake to then popping back to normal, but it could seriously hurt them! And I then began to cry at the idea of them being hurt.

I love my brother and sister, and even if I am mad at them, I don't want to see them hurt! It was the act of putting off the "Old Self", because I know that's not what my parents or Sunday School teachers were telling me. They were teaching me to respond in love like Jesus does, and Jesus began to transform me.

I was being taught and transformed to...

B. Put on the New Self

That's what we must do in order to become the best Kingdom People we can be. Put off our Old Self, our selfish and sinful desires, and put on our New Self.

But again, I want us to ponder the question, "What does it mean to put on the New Self? What exactly is this New Self being referred to?"

Simply put, it is the complete opposite of the Old Self we just discussed. While the Old Self is all about focusing on our selfish desires, our New Self is focused on transforming our lives to the teachings of Jesus and being transformed by Christ in us.

As Paul put it,

24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

25 So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. 26 And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

28 If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. 29 Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

30 And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:24-32)

This is the life change that we are talking about! This is what we are to be striving for each and every day as Kingdom People.

And I will add that while we may not perfect all of what Paul calls us to do each and every day, we can remember his encouraging words to the Philippians,

12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. (Philippians 3:12-14)

I wholeheartedly believe that we can achieve this. That we can become the Kingdom People that we are called to be.

A Kingdom People that knows our identity is In Christ as the Sons and Daughters of the King.

A Kingdom People that is always has our minds focused on the Kingdom of God before anything else.

A Kingdom People that understands the battle and life change that we are called to have.

And when we do this, we will begin to see God's Kingdom come all around us.

Would you pray with me?

Benediction:

As we close our service this morning, I'd like to ask you to join me as we read this prayer together on the screen behind me.

Heavenly Father,

May Your Kingdom come in my life.

May Your Kingdom come in my family.

May Your Kingdom come in our church.

May Your Kingdom come in our town.

May Your Kingdom come in our country.

May Your Kingdom come in our world.

Amen.

Thank you all for joining us, have a great week and a happy Thanksgiving!