

God's Two Kingdoms

Let us turn to our Bibles to, yes, Psalm 72. It's a lot going on here. And as you can see, it's the one main theme of the Kingdom of God, both at the time of David and now as we find ourselves today and into the future.

So, Psalm 72, I think, verses 8 through 11 will express my themes here this evening, as well as Ephesians 1-22. So, Psalm 72, verses 8 through 11. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before him, and his enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents.

The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him. Let us go to Ephesians 1-22, or I'll just go there, you can listen.

And he put all things under his feet, that is Christ, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Let us pray. Precious Spirit of light and illumination, may we see again more clearly this evening than last week.

Of course, there's a lot of, as it were, moving parts in this idea of your kingdom. For part of that is because of the breakdown of sin, relationship that the world has and we have with each other and with you. Father God Almighty, therefore may we learn in more clarity this evening, I pray, and God, in my lips and illustrations and the like, to understand what it means to have your two kingdoms, God's two kingdoms, and how we live in both domains, and that we would do so for your glorious namesake.

Amen. Although not talked about much, nor explicated in detail, in our confession, our catechisms, there's not a separate chapter on the kingdom of God, for example. The teaching of two kingdoms is relatively important, nevertheless.

It is a structural way of describing and talking about living in the real world. Like the doctrine of the covenant is teaching that undergirds much, if not explicitly and outright, written or thought about in the history of the church, in the Bible, in our confessions. After all, since kingdom is about sovereignty and rule, the Lord and Creator and Sustainer of all things must have a kingdom, just by virtue of His existence, a domain or rule and reigning of all things, and indeed He does, and I call that His natural kingdom.

What we know of Him being the Creator God, both Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all three are involved in this. They created all things at the beginning, they sustain all things right now, and it's all done to their glory at the end of all time and creation, right? That's His kingdom, that's the broadest idea of kingdom or domain, the natural rule that He has as virtue of Him being divine, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible also describes another kingdom, one given to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the God-man.

There's a difference now, right? Now we have the man side here brought into existence 2,000 years ago and united with the divine person of the Son of God, body and soul on one

hand, conceptually right, and the divine God on the other. I preached about that last week, that there is a twofold kingdom under that rubric of the Son of God, that is the God-man, more precisely, Jesus Christ, the God-man, because often in theology, the Son of God emphasizes His deity, for example. So I may go back and forth, but I'm emphasizing the God-man, right? The answer is yes, sorry.

There is a twofold kingdom. He is equal with the Father and, of course, the Holy Spirit in the ruling of all things. That's the natural rule, the natural kingdom.

He rules over them directly and expressly as their Creator for His glorious end. The other kingdom I talked about is equally His, but as the God-man come to deliver His people and guide them to heaven. So there's a difference.

That's because of the sin that makes us break now. As Jesus Christ, He is what? The head of the church in a unique way that He's not the head of creation, a redemptive way. This is the supernatural kingdom, I call it, often known as the mediatorial kingdom.

There's not a consistency of language, as I found out. Emphasizing it's what? Redemptive nature, explicitly and pointedly redemptive nature. As Christians, we live in both kingdoms, obviously.

We are under the Creator, His domain as creatures, just as much as the unbeliever. And this is why marriage is the same, whether you're a Christian or not. That's a natural institution.

That's a natural thing that's part of His domain and how He set things up with humans. But being in His mediatorial kingdom, we are under His rule in a way not found amongst unbelievers or in the natural kingdom. As they say, super added, we are born again.

We are spiritual men and women under His spiritual kingdom with a spirit within us for spiritual ends. But what makes it complicated is it's not only spiritual ends, right? We still have a body and deal with bodily concerns. That's what the sermon's about.

Further, I described the spiritual kingdom, the mediatorial kingdom in a twofold manner. Natural, supernatural. Supernatural now has a twofold manner, the kingdom of power and the kingdom of His grace.

The former, the kingdom of His power, of Christ's power, the God-man, is a way of describing the universal and all-powerful rule of Jesus Christ, the God-man, over all things that didn't happen before. There wasn't a man in charge of all things. That wasn't until 2,000 years ago.

But not just a man as such, but the God-man together. But that's significant. The second member of the Trinity there representing His church as what? The second Adam.

He has a body. He has a soul. He suffered.

He slept. He was hungry. And He's now in heaven.

That's the kingdom of His power here. That is, He is over all things, Ephesians 1.22. And He put all things under Jesus as the God-man and gave Him what? To be had over all things to the church. But not everything's part of the church.

It's to the church or for the end of the purpose of the church or redemption. So Jesus Christ, the God-man, is now over all things in this universe, living and unliving and created everything else for the purpose of the church, for our good. That's the kingdom of His power.

He directly acts and works through history for the good of the church that way, in that domain. And then, of course, what we typically think of here, the kingdom of His grace, the church. What we have here and now, we think of kingdom of God often.

We read, maybe whenever we read the verses in the New Testament, for example, you read kingdom of grace, excuse me, kingdom of God, kingdom of Christ, kingdom of heaven. You think that must be the kingdom of grace. It's not.

And I'm giving you an example of that in Ephesians 1.22. That's clearly something beyond the church, those who are saved, those who are elect, with spiritual purpose and spiritual end. This is everything in creation. Even the animals are under Jesus Christ, the mediator, for the good of the church.

So they're not in the church, but they're still part of that kingdom. It gets confusing. I can understand that.

This is some of the debates you're going to perhaps hear about in the future. But I want to lay the groundwork for us here. This is important.

So the kingdom of His grace is that same mediatorial kingdom of all things. But of course, it's a narrow focus. It's about His people, the church.

That's the kingdom of grace. And that's what we often think of, comprises of every Christian. Such distinctions explain the many texts in the New Testament describes Christ as being given a kingdom, that He also has a kingdom, and that kingdom is over all things.

But it's not just over all things as such, but especially and for the purpose of His people. And then, of course, then your question is, okay, pastor, obviously that's not what you mean by two kingdoms here in this sermon. And that's exactly right.

I'm not referring to the natural. I am referring to the supernatural, but I'm kind of referring to the natural in a second here. This is what I mean.

It is the teaching, two kingdom teaching, is a teaching about the relationship between the supernatural kingdom of Christ, that is specifically the kingdom of grace, the church, not the kingdom of power, that's the kingdom of grace, the church. And the natural kingdom of this world that God has erected and set up amongst mankind. And by that, I mean not just Him ruling as, this is the first point,

God's Two Kingdoms

God's two kingdoms, God's natural kingdom, not just ruling as the triune God over all things in Providence, but specifically ruling in a particular manner through the institutions and relationships that we have with one another, even if we're not Christian.

That's what I mean by natural. And the best example of that is, again, marriage. Marriage is a natural institution.

We don't look at an unbeliever and say, oh, you're not a Christian, that's not a real marriage. No, marriage predates the fall. It's built into, it's fallen, it's broken, that's true.

That's because of men, not the institution as such. The men and women in it that break it, the morality or lack thereof affects this. And so not just what I preached on last week is God's natural kingdom in general over all things as God as such, not the God-man, and here it's a particular how He rules in that kingdom the institutions and the relationships of life.

That's the first kingdom. The two kingdoms are the church and everything else. I hope that makes sense.

It's the church and everything else. State, businesses, family, whatever, society, wherever there's relationships and authority, structure, and everything else. That's the first kingdom.

So He rules through the natural kingdoms of the world. Sometimes they'll describe it as the kingdom of the world versus the kingdom of the Word. And by world, they don't necessarily mean this fallen world, just not the church.

I know it gets confusing because sometimes, often, we use the word world to mean that evil place out there. It just means the institutions outside the church. That's all it means.

Everything outside the church as a whole, the outer life is sometimes described as, or the natural things, or the body as opposed to the soul, or earthly things as opposed to spiritual things, or common things as opposed to the uncommon things of the church. That's the kind of distinctions they use in the history of the church in describing this distinction between these two kingdoms. And I'm going to typically just, I think it's easier to say natural kingdom.

But you're going to run across the kingdom of the world versus the kingdom of the Word, the outer kingdom, the natural kingdom, the bodily kingdom, the earthly kingdom, a lot of different descriptions here. It's the way God rules through everyday life. He uses what means, the church, society, etc.

That's how you rule. That's how you live. It's not sinful as such, as I pointed out.

Sin affects and influences and corrupts it, of course. Families and communities feel the sting of sin and, of course, death itself. And they die as well.

Families die, communities die, nations die. But that doesn't change the fact that they're good and proper the way they are, save sin. Nothing wrong with family, everything good with family.

Nothing wrong with states and nations and communities and everything good with them, short of the sin involved in them. And this, of course, answers the complaints of the Anabaptists during the time of the Reformation, where they're like, Christians becoming a magistrate. That's, there's something wrong with that.

It's kind of icky, it's dirty, it's sinful. No, it's not. It's a good thing, if used for good ends.

These are natural, good things. God called everything good, didn't he? It's sin that destroyed it, not the institution itself that's sinful. And so they're misused for selfish ends by selfish people.

But, of course, there are times in which they're used for good. And that's a glorious and wonderful thing. Now, I use and emphasize the word natural insofar as we are part of it by natural birth.

You're born into society, you're born into a family, you're born into a state, you're born into a city. And that's expressed often in legal terms, but not always historically. It's just kind of applied historically, like you're in a tribe, for example.

It maybe wouldn't use the idea of legal, but it's there implicitly. You're one of us, you're not one of them, and we're going to have a trial with you in a different way we wouldn't have with a stranger, for example, or a foreigner. And I may use the word common sometimes, common kingdom, to again emphasize what we share with the world.

We share marriages, we share schools, we share businesses. That is, we interact with them. We may actually literally share them legally.

You may have a partner who's an unbeliever by providence, or if it works out for you, whatever the case may be. And of course, that's the one kingdom. So by two kingdoms, I don't mean Satan and God's.

That's another way of looking at it. Let's make it more confusing, right? Satan's kingdom and Christ's kingdom. No, I'm talking about the natural kingdoms of the world that Satan tries to take over, of course, with the sinners.

And then the supernatural, i.e. the church in particular. It's the church in particular. And so the Son of God as Jesus, the mediator, rules over his people for their salvation.

This kingdom is described as the inner life versus what? The outer life. The spiritual things versus the carnal or earthly things. The soul versus the body.

Spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of the word versus the kingdom of the world. And this versus is only in terms of description, not necessarily in conflict. They're not in conflict, in fact.

That's the next point I'm going to come across soon. As they're in harmony in the best of times. And God designed it that way, to have a perfect harmony.

But, of course, what ruined it? Sinners. They ruined those relationships. So by versus, I don't mean they're in conflict.

Although there are Christians who teach this, they are wrong. I just mean it's a contrast of distinctions. Christ Jesus, His throne is where? What did He say? It's in heaven.

If it was on earth, my followers would pick up a sword and come after you because it's not an earthly, outwardly, worldly kingdom. It's a spiritual kingdom. He's in heaven ruling among us and ruling our hearts is what He's ruling in particular, although not exclusively because He also controls our body.

That is, He directs and guides it. But He rules our hearts by what? The word and the spirit in a way He doesn't rule the rest of the world. They don't get the Bible.

And if they happen to get it, they don't want it because they're not part of our church. They're not part of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of His grace, the meditational kingdom in that sense. Our warfare is what? Spiritual, not with flesh and blood.

That's what Paul is referring to. In Ephesians, our worship is what? Spiritual, an honoring of God. He gives us spiritual gifts, blessings in the heavenly places.

So this clearly is a distinction. There is a distinction of the church. It's a spiritual institution versus the carnal or the earthly, worldly institutions of everything else, including the family.

There's a difference in the end goal and part of the nature of these institutions. And one of the most obvious ways in which we see this distinction is that the church does not have the sword. And it's not just the sword.

I don't have the power to spank you. The parents have the power to spank their children. I may have the power to do that if I'm a friend of the family, but it's not because I'm the pastor as such, but the family trusts me or I've been around for a long time, like you have the authority to spank the kids in my place, right? In parenta locus, local and the place of parents.

That's different. I'm already making a distinction between what, being a church officer and also wearing the other hat. What confuses this whole matter of the two kingdoms is we wear lots of different responsibility hats, don't we? That's what's going on here.

So no sword, no spanking. You're like, that's a good thing. The church is the kingdom.

Our confession says this in chapter 25 on the church, the visible church, which is also Catholic or universal under the gospel where before it was one nation consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion and of the children. It is the kingdom of

our Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. That's paragraph two of chapter 25.

Ephesians 2:19 is one of the proof texts. It's close to the one I read earlier. 122 now, therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but what fellow citizens with the saints and the members of the household of God citizens is the language of kingdom of a nation.

Isaiah nine, seven of the increase of his government and the peace, there will be no end upon the throne of David over his kingdom to order and establish it with judgment and justice. From that time forward forever, the zeal of the Lord of the house will perform it, which is clearly Christ and his church. Now I want to point out here because there's another confusion, not only how we use the word kingdom.

Now you can see there's five or six different ways if you have the right kind of adjective describing kingdom, but you also have this problem with church in terms of communication. What do I mean by church? I mean both the structure or the organization of the body known as a church as well as the people within it or the organism, right? So this is the way to describe it. In other words, it's not reducible to Sunday Christians.

It's both organized and organic. Organized of course is the denominations, the church officers, the courts and the like, the book of church order, all that. Organic of course is that you simply exist and even if your church falls apart, you're still a Christian, you're still part of God's kingdom.

Even in the midst of war and all the churches are destroyed, all the organization, the outward forms are gone. You're still part of that. That's the organism and we recognize this between denominations.

You're a fellow Christian, although we have, I think you're a little weird over there or whatever the case is, we still have loving mutual understanding. That's the organic relationship of the church. The church is also a group and an individual as well.

And this is important with respect to how to apply this principle of two kingdoms. What does it look like for the church as an institution to interact with the state, with the family, with the school, right? You see all this question comes up now, how do these two kingdoms, because I live in both. I still go to the schools.

I still go to the businesses. I'm still a citizen but I'm also going to church. Now what? Right? That's the debate in our circles.

That's the debate in our circles. And I hope I'm trying to give a little more clarity here in making proper distinctions. So you're going to act differently as an individual Christian as opposed to a church officer as opposed to an organization called the church.

Three different ways and nobody thinks of it as, well there's a bunch of contradictions. We just realize there's a difference between organized, this or an individual and group and things like that. That's all I'm saying.

The summary here is that God rules human relationships both through natural means, i.e. family, state, community, businesses, schools, and then of course the supernatural, the church. We live in all of them. There are overlapping jurisdictions often, aren't they?

God's Two Kingdoms Related

Secondly, God's two kingdoms related, related to one another.

And this is more broad strokes. And even here, there'll be disagreements in our circles on these broad strokes. And that's where it becomes more serious in terms of debates and the like.

Because I can agree that you can have differences in details. I mentioned that this morning. And okay, you think it should look a little like this, a little bit like that.

So the way they're related to one another. First of all, the importance of relating them in the right way. To confuse the relationship can lead on the one hand to states ordaining pastors and establishing churches.

King James wanted to do that, right? We heard that in Sunday school class. Arguing for the divine right of the king. So now you got politics and religion really mixed up here.

Or the church is reduced to Sunday-only Christians and not considered a public institution as such. And we have that in our circles, unfortunately. It is a public institution.

There's no way around it. The commission we are given is not an imaginary commission that we just kind of back down on, the Great Commission, and just say, well, our society doesn't think the church is a public institution, so I guess we're going to be a little shy about preaching the gospel as pastors. It's a public institution.

Whether the public acknowledges it or not is irrelevant. And that's where the Sunday laws become very significant right now, for example. And between these two extremes, I think there's a very broad range of application.

And I want to emphasize, first of all, that they're designed because it's God's world. He designed the state. He gave us the state.

He gave us the family. And by extension to those two major categories, you usually have something along the lines of describing businesses and schools. Schools are sometimes described as the community or the family getting together.

Whatever the case is, there's still places of responsibility. There's still human relationships. They're still natural.

And we interact with other people. It's the commonwealth, with the unbelievers as well. We don't deny any of that.

And God put it all together for a reason, not to have them in conflict. I don't believe that for a bit. I don't think any Christian really does.

And generally, the way they uphold and are related to one another by their particular nature and goal. And here's a couple of examples by what I mean by nature and goal. The state is over the church in a certain way.

If we make proper distinctions, the state is over the church. In what way? Well, if I murdered somebody, you better hope the state is over the church. Everyone agree with that? Right.

You're like, yeah, you murder, you can't just say, hey, I'm the exception. That's what the Roman Catholic Church was doing. We have our monks, we have our priests.

They're the exception. You can't touch them. Oh, no.

That's not what we mean by two kingdoms. Oh, no. So there is this mutual interaction with them already.

You can see that by the negative example of murder. The pastor doesn't get to get away with it. On the flip side, the church is over the state.

And what I mean by that, for example, historically, King James, the sixth of Scotland, when he met with the Puritans, we heard about this morning in the early 1600s, he's about to become James I of the King James Bible. He hears their demands. He's like, I don't want this.

I don't want this kind of relationship where I have to sit in the pew and listen to the pastor, tell the king what to do. That is morally speaking. You can't be a tyrant.

You can't be a murderer. You must support and protect the people and be just. King James didn't want that.

That's what he got with the Presbyterians. So in that sense, I can say the church is what? Over the state, where they're morally commanding them, commanding them, and, of course, pointing to Jesus Christ. You must repent and believe in him.

So it all depends on how you define these things, isn't it? It's not enough, right? We're an American. It's all about advertisement and get to the point and bypassing arguments with clever little jingles or quips. And one of the quips we have that's lost its historical meaning is separation of church and state.

I don't even know what that means anymore half the time. I'm trying to give you an understanding of more nuanced and, I hope, concrete way. Specifically, even more specifically, I want to point out here what the natural kingdoms, the states and the like, can and cannot do.

So in particular, the state, that's usually what people focus on historically, the state and the church. The Confession, chapter 23 again, verse 3, we read, "...the civil magistrates may not

assume to themselves the administration of the word and sacrament." Oh, that should be obvious, Pastor. Of course, yeah.

"...or the power of the kings of the kingdom." We can't have senators and judges excommunicating people out of the church. "...or in the least interfere with matters of faith." Yet, as nursing fathers, so that's what they can't do. That's part of the relationship.

But the other part is, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of the civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons, whatever, shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger. That's in the American Westminster Confession of the Faith. That's in our confession in the OPC.

That is what I've sworn to uphold and to teach. And I'm teaching it here. And it's quoting Isaiah 49, 23.

Isaiah 49, 23 is one of these verses I read so many years ago. Wow, I missed this one. "...Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers.

And they shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth and lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed to wait for me." This is in description of the church of Israel and their future, us, and how God will bring kings, and they have historically, to the church for the good of the church, to assist the church. I mean, clearly the imagery here of a queen being your nursing mother isn't just a queen holding you off like this.

Okay, here's the church. Stay away from me, please. That's the relationship we have today.

I guess we kind of have to deal with the church. It's a kind of an IRS kind of a thing. No, it's a nursing mother.

What does a nursing mother do? Take it to her breast. And the word here for foster fathers is just the female form of nursing mothers. You could say nursing fathers.

I mean masculine form, excuse me. It's the masculine form of the feminine. It's the same word.

It's just the masculine form. They're there to help protect the church. It's the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord.

Now, the American establishment, we can call it that, perhaps, is of course much broader than the English one or the great British one, which specified either the Anglican church or the Presbyterians. We were like, we don't want to go down that route. It's just anybody who's Christian has this kind of protection in there.

Our state laws reflect that at the beginning of our formation in 1776. You can find the constitutions online. There's actually only one place that has them all.

Thropp, I think his name was. Put it all together and you can read that they had vows before Jesus Christ or Christianity and things like that. The confession continues on here.

And to take order that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies to be held without molestation or disturbance. We ran across that, I always forget, Minnesota or Michigan just this year, right? This year or late last year. They came running into the church, harassing people, scaring them spitless, shutting them out, disturbing the peace.

Romans 13.4, for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Now that's the state, what they can and cannot do are some illustrations of it. And the question is, whatever things can or cannot be done.

Here, the church, what can and cannot be done. During the rise of the Roman Catholic religion in Europe, of course, as I mentioned before, they often exempted the priests and monks from secular courts. We got to get out of jail free card.

And you can imagine how that was abused. So the church as a whole was arguing they were above the law. That is wrong.

On the other hand, the church does not run society. We are not a theocracy, nor do we believe in a theocracy. In fact, Geneva was never a theocracy.

It was not run by priests slash pastors. It never was. It's just a slur atheists and haters throw at the Christians.

It was run by the large and small council of Geneva. That's who made, that was the people who voted and called the shots, not Calvin. He had influence as a what? Advisor.

We have advisors today. We don't run around saying it's a theocracy. We just recognize they're advisors.

That's it. Christ's mediatorial universal reign. That's why I was highlighting that before.

Not as kingdom of grace, but the kingdom of power over all things as a God man for the good of the church. Jesus is not simply there as God, but as the God man, Ephesians 1, 22, and he put all things under his feet and gave to him to be the head over all things to the church. And again, Matthew 28, 18, Jesus came and spoke to them saying, all authority has been given to me on heaven and earth.

And that's what he's commanding the church and protecting the church and giving them the great commission. His universal reign as a mediator means he directs all things outside the church for her good. Of course, inside the church as well.

But they are useful for the good of the church, all these things outside, both in regard to discipline in the church, like the Israel of old, where states and nations and bandits would come after and hurt the Jews. God used it to punish them for their false worship and idolatry. Or that's the negative part.

In other words, the church was disciplined by God's providence and evil men outside. Or in advancing and protecting the church, like the Old Testament, Hezekiah, early America and the Reformation. Romans 8, 28, we read, and we know that all things work together for good, for those who love God and to those who are called according to His purpose.

All things, all things of Christ's mediatorial power, kingdom over all things outside the church. And so that natural or common realm and institutions of the family, of the business, of the schools, of the state, are under Christ's mediatorial rule for our good. That's what our teaching is.

That's what's in the Bible. That's what it says. That's the clear application.

It's everything for our good. I think this makes all the difference in the world. What does that look like? Larger Catechism question 181 as I finish up here.

Larger Catechism question 191. What do we pray for in the second petition? In the second petition, which is, Thy kingdom come. Well, it's already there, pastor.

Right. That's the natural kingdom. That's the divine.

But here we're talking about the natural kingdom now under the auspices of the God man for the purpose of the church. We pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed. That's another axis, right? There's the kingdom of Satan who's in the world trying to take over all of God's natural kingdom as it were and usurp it for his own evil purposes.

We pray that it would be destroyed. If we're going to pray if it's going to be destroyed, we're going to pray instead to fill that void. The kingdom of God would be expanded and grow.

The gospel would be propagated throughout the world. But not just the gospel propagated throughout the world, but the church to grow in its place. And in particular, the prayer of the American confession of faith, the Larger Catechism 191, the gospel would be propagated throughout the world and the church countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate.

That's the language of our own American confession. Not the Scottish. The American.

Those are pretty explicit. We're countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate. What does that look like? In history, it looks like a lot of different things.

In New England, for example, with the congregational Puritans during the 1700s, 1600s and the like up until about 1830 or 1833, their monies, their taxes went to the local Puritan congregational church, whether you were a Baptist, Congregational or Presbyterian. That's the way they express maintaining or maintained by the civil magistrate. In America, after 1776, a lot of people are not aware of that today because we've gone so far away from our kind of relationship that was much closer between Christians and the church and society and the leadership, etc.

And again, Isaiah 49, 23 must mean something. And kings shall be your foster fathers and queens your nursing mothers. That can't be heaven, brothers and sisters.

That must be between before heaven and now, shouldn't it? Because in heaven, it's God who's our foster father. He's our father. We don't need kings and kingdoms to protect the church anymore.

Clearly, it's a prophecy of now. There's no way around it. Not that people are converted by the sword, but that the church is protected to do her job so that collectively and individually, even the basic things in life may be protected so they would prosper.

So we make a distinction in theology in discussing these matters of the essence of something. And things beyond the essence or just the mere existence. Yes, during a wartime, you can say the church is just existing.

You can't do much. Pastors are dead. You can't meet anywhere.

It's just between you and your family and God, and you have prayer time. So it's like the church is dead. But you're still alive.

The church is still there, just barely. Or the church could be what? Prosperous and have plenty of buildings, have plenty of money, have great outreach programs. So it's a scale, isn't it? And I'm going to argue and I am arguing right here and now from our own confession alike that God, Jesus Christ, the God-man, works it in providence, as we saw in early America, so that the church isn't just barely existing.

She even prospered and thrived, had the first and second great awakenings under the auspices of a civil authority that's friendly towards the church. More than friendly, as we know, if you know some of the history of early America with our laws and the like. And that's not a bad thing.

I think that's a good thing. And we may not get there. It doesn't negate the fact that it's a good goal.

Living in God's Two Kingdoms

Lastly, living in God's two kingdoms. We live in the natural, of course, common kingdom. That's the one hat.

And the other hat we have is living in the supernatural. That is the church. The natural kingdom is the family, community, the state, the schools.

But we do it as Christians. Again, this is where it makes it a little more complicated. You're like, well, I live in the common world, one argument is.

And so I do everything the unbeliever does short of sin. Kind of, sort of, usually, that's true. We also do it for a different purpose.

I school, I teach as a teacher at a college, for example. I'm a business engineer or whatever. I do it for the sake of the business.

I do it for the sake of my customers. But ultimately, it's all what? For the glory of God. That's what the rest of the world does not have in that domain of God's kingdom rule.

The common rule, we have an uncommon goal that they don't have, but we're still there. So we're still affecting what's going on around us, hopefully by God's grace and by his power. And that begins in the heart.

By the same movement of the heart, the glorified God, we are called to love and trust each other and our neighbors, even those who hate us. Both inward and outwardly, we are guided by God's moral law. Living in the supernatural or uncommon kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of his word and the like, we do it by faith and love in Jesus Christ, the love of the saints.

Again, both inward actions and the outward actions are guided by the law and the gospel. Whereas, of course, society outside the church is guided by just simply the law of God. They don't have the good news.

We live in both under Christ, our great redeemer and mediator, brothers and sisters. The two are combined, it seems to me very clearly, in 1 Timothy 2.2. And I went over this however many sermons ago, preaching through the first book of Timothy. 1 Timothy 2.1 and 2, in particular, we read, pray, he says, dot, dot, dot, for kings and all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.

And that's common, we all want to, unbelievers want this. But it continues, in all godliness and reverence, that's the supernatural aim that the rest of the world doesn't care about. They want the peace, but they don't want the godliness.

See that? So Paul's prayers for both, how can you accomplish both if you think the magistrate should completely ignore the church? There's this hermetic seal between the church and state, which is what's being taught in some of our circles. And so, we pray to God for the earthly authorities that the natural kingdom, magistrate, the schools, the business leaders, we were directed in such a way that we live in peace with all godliness. May the spirit guide us in our efforts to live in his two kingdoms by his strength, let us pray.

Father God above, we're thankful for your word, we're thankful for the power given to our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. It's not a power narrowed down only and focused upon us in the church, but he rules over all things for the church and to the church, for our good, both the good of our soul and even the good of our body, for God cares for that as well. Precious Lord and Savior, may this encourage and strengthen us as we live in both kingdoms and guide us with wisdom, we pray and zeal to honor you in all that we do.

Amen. Let us arise.