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**Jesus Is**  
**Part 6 – Jesus is King**  
**Pastor Ted Cunningham**

I was in the back during worship for a little bit because I want you to know we're keeping up with the no more than 10 people in a space and keeping social distancing or, as we're calling it, physical distancing. Amy's sitting in this service. She's here for the first time in four weeks because she thinks I'm emotionally fragile, but I'm doing a lot better this week. She's going to laugh, but Katie made me a button. That's the fake laugh that she uses for when Matt Gumm tells a joke around the house, so she doesn't have to work as hard. So, I'm going to hit that button if I feel like I say something funny.

Let's start off celebrating like we do often around here – couples who have anniversaries. We often celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversaries, but I want to show you a picture of Gene and Norma; they are celebrating 73 years of marriage. I think this picture describes them so well. You'll notice Norma is holding the microphone. And as her son Darren said, "This picture is perfect because Gene is smiling, as he always does, and Norma is the one with the words." I know if they were here right now and I were to ask Gene, "What does it take to have a marriage go 73 years?" I'm sure he would yell up, "Don't die!"

Some people wanted to send messages. I hope Gene and Norma are watching right now. This comes from your church family and I know family beyond the Branson community. Kay says, "Keep loving together and inspiring all of us." Paul says, "Well done." I just want to shout out to Paula. We are mourning with you as well during this time all the way from California. Thank you for sending that in, Paula. My mom said, "Norma and Gene are a great inspiration to those of us who have only been married for 50 years." Bonnie said, "God bless you. You are an inspiration to the younger ones. Wishing you many more."

Ruth Ann says, "What an inspirational couple you are. Congratulations on 73 years of wedded bliss. Love you guys, Ron, Ruth Ann, Cody, and Sierra." R.P. Harrell says, "Norma is my girlfriend. I have permission to say that, granted by Gene. Love them both." Sandy says, "Norma, you will always be our special recon girl." I'm assuming there is some inside humor there. Karen Aker says, "What's their secret?" Sue says, "A very special anniversary to you both. We remember our time in Kimberling City from a long time ago." Sue and Dick. Steve Willoughby says, "Two of the finest people I know." Jennifer says to Darren who made the comment that Gene was smiling, and Norma was talking, "I was thinking the exact same thing." Carla says, "We've known Gene and Norma for about 30 years. Norman taught all my kids in Sunday school. They sure love Nani. We love you, Gene and Norma. Happy anniversary."

Then we got this one yesterday. The Coopers, Clay and Tina and their family. As you can see they are dressed in their Sunday best. Clay and Tina gave this message to Gene and Norma, "The two of you

mean so much to our family. All the nights I look out from the stage and there you all sit. Always the same seats – back row, left section, close to the ladies room. Our boys’ basketball, baseball, and football games that you travel to, visits at your home, meals we’ve shared, memories we will treasure forever. With much love from The Coopers.” Gene and Norma, happy anniversary; we’re grateful for you.

We’re grateful to everyone who is tuning in. To show you some of those pictures of families. I think this is the Jenkins. I think they are probably having breakfast right now. We posted this picture last week. We appreciate all of you who are praying during worship for those in our community and around the nation. We have people with theaters, so this one. Just grateful that everybody is tuning in. We would love for you to post pictures online, maybe in the comment section of Facebook or just on your timeline, and if you don’t mind letting us know it’s okay to use those. We’re trying every way we possibly can this month and into next to stay connected to you. We would just love to see how you continue family worship together that we can share that with one another.

We’re Part 6 on this Palm Sunday, talking today about *Jesus is King*. We’re going to start right off with Matthew 21: 1-11. Jesus is riding into Jerusalem as King. ***1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”***

***4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you...’ We get that from Zechariah 9: 9 ‘...gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”***

***6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,***

***“Hosanna... which means save now ...to the Son of David!”***

***“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”*** That was quoted from the Psalms 118: 26. This passage is speaking and foreshadowing the coming of Christ and reigning in the millennial kingdom. ***“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”***

***10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”***

***11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”***

What we want to do this morning is just look at the scripture and what it means that Jesus is King. When we talk about the King, we have to talk about the kingdom. After we go through about four points of what the kingdom is and how to be a part of it and how we function in it, we also want to just

talk about the longing we have as a church family. We want to apply *Jesus is King* to what we're going through right now as a church, as a community, as a nation, and around the world.

**1. The Kingdom of God is now, later, and forever.** I love this and I can't spend too much time on it because in the very last part of this series, Part 8, we're going to be talking about *Jesus is Coming Again*. So, we're going to introduce it here, but we'll spend more time with it the Sunday after Easter. If you are a brand new believer and you read about the Kingdom of God and you haven't studied all of the scripture yet, you can get this idea of kingdom of God, kingdom of Heaven and you're like, "Is it now? Is it later?"

One of the best ways I ever understood this came when I was in seminary. We were studying the kingdom of God and spent a couple of months on it. I'll never forget a professor of mine... He used this word and this drawing, and it stuck in my brain 25 years ago and it's never left. He simply said the kingdom of God is unfolding. I love that word *unfolding*. And then he went up to the board and drew what looked like a roller coaster. He just drew a small circle and then a little bit bigger circle and then a bigger circle. He said, that's the understanding we have of the kingdom.

Let's look at what Jesus said about this idea of the kingdom is now, it's here, it's later, it's coming, and it's forever.

In Luke 17: 20-21 we read, ***20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed..."*** This is very important. ***21 "...nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is...'"*** In other words, people are asking at this time, "Is this the time that you're going to overthrow Rome, that Israel will be vindicated, and the kingdom established?" Jesus is telling them, "It doesn't look like that now, but it is here now. ***"...because the kingdom of God is in your midst."*** How is the kingdom of God in our midst yet Rome is not being overthrown, Israel is not vindicated, yet, and the physical kingdom is not set up? Jesus is saying, "The kingdom is here because I am here. The kingdom is in your midst because the King is in your midst."

When the Angel Gabriel appears to Mary, he's going to talk about how the person of Jesus fulfills the promise that God made to King David. ***31 "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."***

We read in 2 Samuel 7: 16 this promise that God made to David. ***16 "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."*** The Kingdom of God is here, it's now, it's present, but partly. It's unfolding. It's in our midst, but we know we're speaking of the first coming of Christ, but we're looking forward to the Second Coming of Christ. When Christ returns the second time, he is going to return to earth and then we believe that the millennial kingdom will be established, a physical, literal kingdom, one you will be able to say, "There it is" or "Here it is."

I have to tell you something. In what we're going through right now, I know all of us are excited to get back to our way of life. I've never longed for non-essential things more in my life. This week, Amy was watching videos on how to give haircuts. Okay, my Father in Heaven... I promise one more week without a hat, but after Easter, all bets are off. I don't know what it's going to look like. I long for theaters to be packed in Branson. I long for our hotels to be full. I long for the Chick-fil-A dining room to be open. The Lord's chicken.

In all of that, I'm longing for that way of life. I hear people online saying, "Maybe there are some things we don't want to get back to," and I agree. This is a great time. The grief and the loss that we're going through right now; it's a great time for recalibration. That's what mourning is, that's what grief is. We should be asking good questions. I long for a lot that we don't have right now, but, follower of Jesus, as we talk about the kingdom of God being now and later and forever, I hope you're longing for the return of Christ more. Never more in my adult life have I said, "Lord Jesus, come quickly." Is the longing of your heart for the return of Christ, follower of Jesus? I'm talking to Christians. **Is your longing for the return of Christ greater than your longing for retuning to our way of life?** Hear me. I know the pain and the struggle that you're going through, but this is a time for us to recalibrate and know what our priorities are.

**2. The kingdom of God is for those who are born again.** When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, Jesus made it very clear to him about the kingdom. He said, ***"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*** -John 3:3 I believe I speak on behalf of Woodland Hills Family Church when I say we are longing for the return of Christ more than returning to our way of life.

I believe I speak for our church family when I say we are longing... **We want YOU to be a part of the kingdom of God.** We want you to be born again. I've been hearing pastors lately... Every pastor is different, and every leader is different. My pastor friends who are more evangelists are loving this time because they know through this... I know there are people right now watching us, sitting in their church parking lots. There are people watching us around the country. I've always had more of a heart for local church. I'm not an evangelist; I don't have the giftings of an evangelist. My friend Alex Himaya is a great evangelist, Joe White is a great evangelist, I think it's why I get emotional when I come into this empty place; it's more the pastoring side of it for me.

But I get the value of what we have right now. There are thousands of people watching, thousands of people tuning in for the very first time. Family members of our church members who are watching, I'm going to plead with you on behalf of your family. You have family that wants you to be a part of the kingdom of God. They have shared the good news of Jesus Christ with you over and over again and you're going through a difficult time, you have uncertainties, you have fears, you're mourning, you're in grief... all the loss. I would encourage you. We don't have an altar call right now, obviously, but we can do it over the world wide web as my kids know I love to call it. We can do that, but I just want to encourage you. If this is a time, if you still don't know what it means to be a part of the kingdom of God, leave us a comment on Facebook and let us know. Send us a direct message; we'd love to connect with you. Call a family member or a friend who you know has shared the gospel of Jesus with you and say, "Hey, I'm watching right now and Ted is talking about the kingdom; I want to be a part of the kingdom. Help me understand that more. Would you talk this through with me? Would you pray with me? I want

to become a Christian.” Now is the time and our church family desires... We long for the Second Coming of Christ and we long for you to be a part of the church, to be a part of the family of God, so when the rapture takes place, you are a part of that.

**3. The kingdom of God does not function like the kingdoms of this world.** We learn from scripture that the kingdom of God, with Jesus as King, does not function like the kingdoms of this world. So many great texts. We need to understand we are not a power grabbing people. We shouldn't be a power grabbing people. Here's what we read in John 18: 36 – ***36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest... We are in Holy Week right now. ...by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”***

Jesus is going to explain. Remember when James and John were trying to figure out who was going to be at the right of Jesus and who was going to be at the left of Jesus in this kingdom, ***24 A dispute also arose among them...*** when the other 10 heard. The other ten heard what was going on. ***...as to which of them was considered to be greatest.*** Jesus had to set them straight. As we talk about the kingdom, it looks different than what you're seeing in the kingdoms around you. ***25 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them...”*** They love position, they love power, and they love prestige.

If I can encourage my evangelical leader friends who may be watching, let's be very careful for the power grabs that we want right now, politically. Yes, we can lead, yes, we can guide, but we are not power grabbing people. We are servants. This is what Jesus is going to tell them. We don't function in the church like the kings of the gentiles, ***“...and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.”***

Matthew 20: 25-28 - ***25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you.”*** That's not how you are going to function. That's not how you are going to lead in the church. ***“Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”***

We long for the kingdom of God to come. We long for the return of Christ more than returning to our way of life. We long for you to be a part of the kingdom of God. Understand that when you are part of the kingdom of God, we leverage our authority. **We leverage our authority, gifts, resources, and health for the benefit of others,** not ourselves. Boy, do we need to be reminded of that during this time. I know it's difficult and it's challenging.

I heard a great story this week. I had a friend who lives on the West Coast and her parents are on the East Coast. She put out a quick message to anybody saying, “My parents don't want to leave their home. Is there anyone you know around Melbourne, Florida?”

I had been to a church in Merritt Island, Florida for an event. I said, “Yeah, let me just call and check.” I loved that within an hour or two, someone who didn't know my friend on the West Coast, someone who

didn't know the parents that she would be delivering to went and did the grocery run. That's the spirit. Our motivation for getting up in the morning right now should not be ourselves, "What do I need? How much toilet paper do I need? How many eggs can I buy?" "What's the limit on this next thing I can purchase?" Are you taking care of the people around you? What a great time of ministry this is for our church that we would minister to one another.

We just took an offering. We're taking a mercy offering. We put it out there and we want you to know. We know there are going to be many needs in this church and this church wants to be ready to meet them. Your resources are not meant for hoarding. Be prepared. I get it. Yes, we want to be prepared. I've got toilet paper at home. Everybody sitting here I know has toilet paper at home. We have eggs at home. But don't move from preparing to hoarding. What resources do you have that you need to be leveraging right now to help someone else?

Some of you right now are like, "I need to conserve my cash." I love what Travis Brawner said a couple of weeks ago. He's a doctor, yes, but you also need to realize he's a business leader. He employs people. Right now is a time employers are deciding what to do about their employees. I want to encourage you, employer, to the best of your ability, knowing that it's going to be different for everyone, leverage the authority you have, leverage the gifts and the resources. Your like, "I have to conserve it for when we open back up in the summer." This is our time, church, to serve. It's our time to leverage what God has given us to serve and to help other people.

**4. The kingdom of God is our priority and it's the antidote for worry.** In Matthew 6, you've got to read what Jesus talks about when he's talking about worrying about where everything is coming from and worrying about the next day. Talk about a passage we need to hear today. Talk about a teaching from Jesus we need to hear. But then it's all summed up in the kingdom. If you're worried right now about your job... You asked the question... I've asked the question. When are we going to open? When are the theaters going to be full again? When are the hotels going to have 80% and 90% occupancy? When will restaurants be back to 90%? When are we getting back to a bustling economy? When am I going to be able to provide for my family? This week, I've seen people asking, "Which bills should you pay first?" "What should I do with the stimulus check?" So many questions. Let's rest in the kingdom today as we learn from Jesus.

Matthew 6 – **25** *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? **26** Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? **27** Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"* You've heard me say this a hundred times at Woodland Hills, but it's my favorite thing about Muriel Blair... And Pat Kershaw – we have a picture of her sitting in her seat down here. Whenever I talked about worry in a message, Muriel used to always tell me... She would come up to me and in a kind of snarky, sarcastic tone, but I knew she was being funny. She said, "Ted, stop telling me I shouldn't worry." I said, "We kind of have clear teaching on this; we shouldn't worry." She said, "Everything I worry about never happens." That was her way of saying there is value in worry, but of course you know she was joking.

**28** *“And why do you worry about clothes?”* And I would argue right now. This is a very practical point. As I was studying it this week... Your food, four walls, transportation, utilities and all that are very important right now. Probably not a time to be thinking about your summer wardrobe if money is tight. **See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field...** So, look, from the birds to the grass. ...*which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?* Boy, do we need to hear that today?

**31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.** Hear that today. Your heavenly father knows what your needs are. Speak them clearly, cry out to your Father in heaven, as the lament psalms do. Share your hurt, share your fear, share your frustration, but come back to the confession of trust. Here’s the confession of trust in the passage Jesus is giving. Don’t be worried about all of that, don’t fret over that today. Give that to the Lord, the one who knows you and loves you, the one who is all powerful and the one who can meet all needs. Your job right now and my job right now is to seek first his kingdom. Isn’t that something. Seek first the kingdom. Make the kingdom your priority if worry has been your pattern for the last few weeks.

**33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

Woodland Hills Family Church, we are not guided by the ways of this world and we are not gripped by the worries of this world. I want to leave you with this last thought. I’ve been trying to figure out... I pass everything by Amy. I’ve had some moments where I’m like, *Man, this sounds harsh*. Somebody will email me or send me a message and have a question and I want to give them truth. I want to validate the hurt and the pain they are going through, but I want to make sure they know the truth of God’s word and that they will be fine through this in the end.

I said it last week and I’ll say it again. I can’t promise you we’ll meet back in this room. Oh, I long to meet back in this room. But I can promise you we’ll see you again – if you are a follower of Jesus – here or in heaven. I don’t know. I have all sorts of opinions on what could happen, but I want to be clear as I say this. I want you to hear this, so if the words aren’t exactly right, please hear the heart of this behind it from a pastor who loves you. If we lose everything... I mean everything – job, income, home, health, and life. If we lose everything, we will still worship the King of Kings. You have to know how important that is.

I shared this with my family this week. I have a low percentage chance of getting COVID-19. Although I have friends who have contracted the virus. I have a low percentage chance of getting it. I have a high percentage chance of recovering if I do get it. All of that is uncertain though. But what I have 100%... not a small percentage or large percentage. What I have 100% confidence in is that I know where I’m going if I die from COVID-19. And I want you to have that as well.

I’m going to close us in prayer. Follower of Jesus, I want you to know you are loved. Woodland Hills Family Church, you are loved. Amy and I care deeply for you. We think of you often. We pray all

throughout the day for you. We can't wait... We pray, we hope, we long to be back in this place with you. We hope it's one day soon. I just want to end with prayer, and as I do, as I'm going to encourage those who are not part of the kingdom, those who have never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day they are born again. I ask you to bow with me where you're at – family rooms, cars, minivans. Some are gathered around a phone and some tablets and some television and some desktops and some in theaters with projectors. Quiet your heart for just a moment.

For the one who has never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day you confess your sin. Just do it right now. Just say, "Jesus, I am a sinner. I've been going at this all my whole life and then up through this crisis, it's all on me. I've been trying to control it and today, I remove myself as the one in charge of my life. I ask you to be my savior. I confess with my mouth that Jesus is lord. I believe in my heart that Jesus has been raised from the dead. I ask Jesus to be my Savior."

Father, I pray right now that many people are making decisions to follow Christ. I pray for the family of Woodland Hills Family Church that right now many are stressed and fatigued by this. There are parents who are home schooling their kids right now and they are tired. I pray that we wouldn't go online and be that person that says, "Oh, this is the greatest thing..." I pray that we would try to empathize with people where they are, that we would honor people wherever they are over the last three or four weeks with this.

And in the weeks to come, as it looks like we will have more weeks in front of us... It's our fourth Sunday of meeting online. Father, I'm asking that next week, Easter... I feel more people will tune in than ever. I pray for decisions to be made for Christ. I pray for the believers who are studying and praying now more than ever. I pray believers would have a confidence in you like they've never had before. I pray they'll be secure in the promises. I pray they wouldn't make up promises saying you said that... No, that they would know clearly what you have promised and what you have not promised, and they would rest in the promises and not the non-promises, they would rest in the promises and the truth of your Word.

I pray that you continue to bless this church financially. I know there are going to be so many great needs coming out of this. I think our church needs to be ready, Father, for the grief and the mourning and the loss that's going to come out of this. I don't even feel we've really gone into it yet, but it's coming, and we know that.

I pray for our town of Branson. I pray for each member of Woodland Hills that their opinions online would subside, that we would pray more for our leaders than posturing ourselves with the name calling. I speak specifically for Branson with the snarkiness online. I pray that subsides and that our leaders can focus and do their jobs well and that the rest of us who have absolutely no idea about infectious diseases would be at peace and calm down and if we see it, we would not engage it. I'm praying this more for myself than anyone that what I post, what I say, what I do would be helpful and full of hope. May that be true of our church family during this time.

I thank you for our leaders. I thank you for our president and vice president, all 50 of our governors, who I can't even imagine what they are going through right now to manage all this. I pray for the leaders and the scientists and doctors and all of them in the CDC and the World Health Organization who

are trying to find vaccines for this. I pray for our mayor. I pray for our local leaders as they make decisions right now for what's in the best interests of this community or our state and of our country. Give President Trump wisdom, give Vice President Mike Pence wisdom, give Dr. Fauci and all of them on the task force wisdom as they think through the effects of this, the cure, and the virus. The decisions they have to make, I've never had to make, so all I can do is pray that you give them wisdom through it. I pray that be the heart of each member of our church family. We end by saying what I know is in the hearts of so many. We long for the return of Christ. Come, Lord Jesus. And it's in the authority of that name that we pray, and everyone agreed and said... Amen.