



Sermon – 09/11/2022
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Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 14:17 - 24

Hebrews 6:19 - 20

Hebrews 7:1 – 3, 22 - 25

Psalms 110:1 – 2, 4

Let's open our Bibles together to Genesis chapter 14. Genesis 14. And as we shared earlier today, this is the 97th anniversary of our church. It was founded 97 years ago. And from the beginning, our church has been about one primary thing. Where we want our people to have a vision for every generation reaching the next generation. Pouring our lives into raising up the next generation through discipleship. And that's one of the reasons I'm really grateful that while we're gathered here, we're just a few miles down the road, we have the conclusion of our middle school retreat going on. And so, we've got 70 or 80 middle school students that have spent the weekend growing with Christ. At the same time we're here, we've got some of our church thousands of miles from here in El Salvador on a mission trip with Ship International, sharing the Gospel to those who need the saving message of Jesus. That's who we are. That's what we're about. So, if you're a guest with us in the room this morning, whether in the room or watching online, welcome home.

Here we come to God's word and what we saw last week when we begun Genesis 14 is that we saw that everyone of us faces three spiritual battles. There's a spiritual battle around us. There's a spiritual battle within us. And there's a spiritual battle for us. And what we're going to see now is as we turn our attention to the second half of this chapter as we see that it shifts our focus from those three spiritual battles to two ways each one of us has to choose in terms of how we live. We're going to find two kings, two kingdoms, two ways of life that this text sets before us. So, let's pick it up now. Beginning in verse 17 of Genesis chapter 14. Here's what Moses writes to us this morning. It says,

¹⁷After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) ¹⁹And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your

enemies into your hand!” And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. ²¹And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.” ²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ ²⁴I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.”

Let's turn now to God in prayer as we ready our hearts for this moment. Father, we're coming to You with one heart and one mind and here it is. Lord, we want to be changed by Your word. We want to be transformed by Your Spirit and we want to walk in the way of life that You've called us to, God. And so I pray that in this time as we get a clearer picture of Jesus that as we see Him more clearly, we might follow Him more faithfully. That's why we ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

Well our world has been gripped by some tragic news this week as Queen Elizabeth passed away. She was the longest reigning queen in the in the history of Britain. And reigned for over 70 years. And there's been story after story that's pulled in because over the course of this time as people have celebrated her life, it's easy to draw attention to her because she's arguably one of the most recognized people in modern history. But one of the stories that stood out to me came from one of her bodyguards, a man named Richard Griffin who told the story about two American tourists who came face to face with the queen and didn't even realize it. So, she is based obviously in London but there's a castle called Balmoral that's in Scotland that she would often go to as a retreat to get away from the chaos. And sometimes when she was out there in the Scottish Hillside, she would want to go out for a picnic and go for a hike. And in those situations, Richard would occasionally get to go with her as her bodyguard. And in one particular case, the two of them were hiking through the woods and two Americans approached them. And the queen always loved to stop and have a conversation in situations like that. And so, the Americans pause to speak with them and they were completely oblivious to who they were standing before. Just fosters every American tourist stereotype you can imagine, right? They got no idea who they're standing in front of. But when they strike up the small talk, the Americans ask her, “Well, where are you from?” And she says, “Well, I'm from London but we also have a place not far from here and I've been coming out here for decades, for about 80 years since my childhood. And there, the American's faces lit up when she said this and they looked at her and said, “Well, that means that you must have met the queen before, right?” To which she says, “No, I haven't ever met the queen but Richard right here, he's met her many times.” And so they strike up a conversation with Richard. “Well, what's she like? What, what does she act like?” And they take this deep interest and Richard says, before he knows it, one of the Americans has put his arm around Richard. He takes his camera and hands it to the queen and ask her to take a picture of them with him. And so he obliges. He takes a picture and then he says, well, let's switch and I'll take a picture of you with her. And they bid farewell to the Americans who were completely oblivious to who they had just encountered.

Now, imagine when they got back home and they're sitting there with the family and they're scrolling through the pictures and they get to the one with Richard and like, you'll never believe it. We met this guy who knows the queen. And they tell all about it and they're sliding through to the next thing that they're going to. And as they flip the pictures, they pass by this one with

an old lady and somebody says, “Well, who’s that?” “Oh, we don’t even know. Some old lady that was with the guy.” And they’re like, “Well, wait, let me get a closer look.” And at that point, it dawns on their friend. “That’s the queen. You took a picture with the queen and didn’t realize it.” Their faces probably melted in that moment. Can you believe it? They came face to face with royalty and didn’t even realize it. They were on a quest to find it. They asked all about it. They spoke to people who had encountered it. But when they were there in the moment, they missed it.

And we have we have the same danger when it comes to a passage like Genesis 14. You see, as Christians who come to the Old Testament, one of our goals, our priorities should be coming to the text, seeking royal representation. Those tastes, those moments, those signs, those indicators of a coming king. And the danger can be that when we get to Genesis 14, we can come to this king named Melchizedek and he seems insignificant. He seems pointless. We know that right after this is one of the most important Old Testament text in Genesis 15 when God makes His covenant with Abraham. And we can be tempted to just blow right pass this and miss the reality that it’s bringing us face to face with royalty. You see, in this text, it’s a tale of two kings. This king of Sodom, this king of Salem, this kingdom of darkness, this kingdom of light, this way of sin or this way of peace. And as we come face to face with Abram’s encounter with these two kings, it’s going to put in front of us a choice that everyone of us must face each day of our lives. Will we choose the way of sin or the way of peace? And so, what I want you to notice as we begin the first part of this is that the first big idea here is that the beginning of this text is calling us to resist the way of sin, to resist the way of Sodom. So, let’s look closely at is king of Sodom that’s here. Because what we find is that the life of Sodom as we see on display here is just a manifestation of a pattern we’ve seen in Eden, we’ve seen in Babel, and now we see it yet again. Because Satan drives us towards sin often in the same way. And this path towards sin appears with tests of our heart, of temptations of our desires in the same way we’ve seen before and that we will keep seeing throughout Scripture. So, if you look back in verse 17, we see how we need to resist the way of sin in terms of how it tests our anxiety through self protection. So, notice what it says in verse 17.

[¹⁷After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh \(that is the king’s valley\).](#)

So, where do we see anxiety crop up here in this moment? Well, think about this king of Sodom. He has been in the battle as we saw last week. His side has been defeated. He’s fled and survived but all his people, all his possessions are gone. They’re destroyed. What would you expect and hope a king to do when his people are captured in his possessions are gone? To go on the rescue. To seek after them. But instead of finding them, he hides. He is fear, his anxiety, of his self protection grips him so tightly that he turns inward in anxiety rather than outward in altruism. He doesn’t seek what’s best for others. He turns inward on himself. And notice that contrast between Abram. Abram, instead of running, he goes for rescue. In instead of fleeing from the danger, he fights to take the possessions and the people back. There’s this contrast here. And at the heart of it, it’s showing us that the way of sin tests us at the level of our anxiety and when that anxiety grips us, anxiety can turn and cause us to abandon our allies. To not seek what’s best for others but to seek what’s best for ourselves. That’s the way of sin that the king of Sodom displays here. But it keeps going because if you look down in verse 21, you also see how

we need to resist the way of sin as it tests our appetites through self-provision. So, notice this pull towards self-provision there in verse 21.

²¹And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.”

And so notice what happens here in Sodom’s reaction. When Abram finally walks up to him, he doesn’t greet him with appreciation. “Man, you really saved us. What could we do without you?” There’s not appreciation but a negotiation. He says, “Alright, here’s what we’re going to do. I’ll take the people you keep the possessions.” He wants to work out a deal with Abram. And at the core of this is something that he might find very appealing. If he gets to keep all the possessions, think about how much additional provision he is providing for himself. He’s making a way toward wealth and prosperity. What you would assume that he would want and perhaps even think he deserves. But notice what happens as verse 22 goes on. Abram anticipates this. He refuses this. He says, “I’ve made an oath. I promised God I would not let you pull me into this desire to provide for my appetites on my own.” In fact, verse 23 says, that he would reject it even to the point of the strap of a sandal. The smallest things he could possess, he doesn’t want it from an earthly king. He learned his lesson in Egypt. Remember, a few weeks ago, we saw that when the famine came, he fled to Egypt in an effort to provide for himself. But now, rather than turning towards an earthly king, he turns upward towards a heavenly King to meet the needs and desires of his appetites.

But there’s one more way that sin tests us that we notice here in this part of the text. We see down in verse 24 how we need to resist the way of sin as it tests our approval through self-promotion. so look at how verse 24 explains the reason why he refuses this negotiation that Sodom offers. It says, lest you should say, “I have made Abram rich.” In other words, he knows it’s a deal that would come with strings attached. And the pull of this deal, the reason it might be so tempting is because Sodom is going to tell him, “You can make a name for yourself. You can have worldly wealth. But even better than that, you can have worldly significance. Everything you’re looking for, I can provide for you if you just make a deal with me.” And how often is that the way that sin works to draw us towards that desire for approval from others in our life? We seek to make a name for ourselves. We have the spirit of Babel right here in our hearts just like he is trying to test with Abram. And that’s not something unique to humanity. Jesus experienced it himself. When he went out to that wilderness, when he faced those temptations from the devil. And that third temptation, he takes him up on the mountain top. He shows him the kingdoms of the world, and he says, these can all be yours, if what, you bow down and worship me. He’s offering him a deal, a negotiation. You can have all the approval, all the, all the anxiety will be gone. All the appetites will be satisfied. Everything you crave, I can offer you without the cost of the cross. And Jesus rejects it. He rejects the way of sin. He resists the way of sin in a way that this text is calling us to do precisely the same thing. That’s why for you men, I cannot wait until next Sunday for our Men’s Steakout. It’s happening at 6:30 over in the Family Life Center and when Dean Inserra comes from Tallahassee. He’s going to be speaking on authentic manhood. He’s going to tackle this pull of the way of sin and the lies the culture feeds us about what it looks like to be a man and the way we need to resist that with the truth of the Gospel. Because if we want to find ourselves flourishing as men in this church, we need to stand together as one community of men rejecting this way of sin and instead seeking the way of life that comes through Christ. That’s why I want to encourage you to pick up your ticket for

that for yourself and one of your friends today. Because we believe that God is going to meet us there and change our lives and equip us to resist this way of sin that Genesis 14 speaks about.

But there's another aspect in this passage I don't want you to miss. And man, I cannot wait as we watch for the word of God to unfold this for us. This text doesn't just call us to resist the way of sin. It also us to embrace the path of peace. To embrace the path of peace. And he does that by turning our attention away from the king of Sodom and now focusing it on the King of Salem. You'll notice this back beginning in verse 18. You see the reality is when we follow sin, it can lead to a restlessness in our lives. A guilt, a shame, a heavy burden. We feel heavy laden as if there's no escape. As if there's no hope. As if there's no peace. And I can't help but wonder this morning in this room if some of you might be feeling that exact way. Your life is not at peace right now. You're praying for peace. You're searching for serenity. And this portion of the text shows us what that path of peace looks like as it turns our mind to a prince of peace. This man named Melchizedek. What I want to do is we look at his life is just answer four simple questions about him. The first is, what type of king is Melchizedek? So, if you look back at verse 18, notice the way it begins. It describes him,

¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine.

If you were to show up here starting in the Saturdays in September here coming up. You'll see Central Sports in full swing. We'll have volleyball in the gym. We'll have football out on the fields. We have over 900 kids participating. And at the end of many of those games, there will be a parent who volunteers to bring snacks for the kid. Maybe it's the orange slices or if they're really awesome, it's the Oreos and the Gatorade. And they bring it out to celebrate the victory that's just been won. And it almost feels like, when you come to verse 18, that's what Melchizedek's doing. Abram comes back victorious. He busts out the bread and wine and says, "Let's feast and let's celebrate." But there's more going on here. Because the text highlights him as a king. And in this last half of the message, I want you to know, we're going to look at Genesis 7, but I'm also going to draw your attention to several other passages of Scripture. The first one is in Psalm chapter 110. You'll see it on the screen but you may also want to turn there in your Bible. And here's the deal. We see this one mention of Melchizedek here and then there's crickets about him for the next 1,000 year. And then all of a sudden in Psalm 110, King David is writing about his expectation and hope of a coming Messiah. And as he does it, you'll watch a familiar name pop up. So, notice what Psalm 110 says beginning in verse 1.

¹The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." ²The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!

Now, look down at verse 4.

⁴The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, get this, "You are a priest after the order of Melchizedek."

Do you see that name? Here it is popping up. And this isn't just some insignificant verse in the Bible. In fact, Psalm 110 is the most quoted Psalm in the entire New Testament. Why? Because it speaks about the nature of this king. Not just looking back to Genesis 14 to Melchizedek but

looking ahead to this one who would come who's a powerful king. Who will wage war with the scepter. He's a purposeful king. He will war until he has all his enemies under his feet as a footstool. And he's a priestly king. As verse 4 says, he is a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Which is why you also need to see another passage about the nature of Melchizedek's kingship in Hebrews chapter 7. And I definitely encourage you to turn in your Bible to Hebrews because we're going to look at several other passages there in Hebrews in verses, chapter 7 and chapter 6. So, hold that spot in Genesis 14. Turn over to Hebrews 7 and listen to the way that it talks about this king. This one we might be tempted to overlook. Notice how it describes him. Hebrews chapter 7, beginning verse 1 says this,

¹For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ²and to him, Abraham a portion a 10th of everything. He is first by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. ³He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

Wow. You just listen to the way it describes him. Neither father or mother, no beginning, no end. And that's why scholars for centuries have wrestled with, who is this man, Melchizedek? Is this some angel of the Lord? Is it a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Himself? Is he simply a human king? And the text isn't completely clear about the answer to that question. But what it is clear about is the nature of his kingship. Because you'll notice in verse 2 that Melchizedek's name gives us a window into his kingship. The word Melchizedek, in the original Hebrew, puts together two words. Melek which is the word for king, and Zedek, which is the word for righteousness. That's why Hebrews 7:2 says, by his name, he is the king of righteousness. But it's not just his name, but his location that's significant. Because verse 2 tells us he's the king of Salem. That's short for the king of Jerusalem. And that word Salem is the word in the original language for peace. King of righteousness, prince of peace that's who this king is. And what this text is showing us is it's pointing ahead to a convergence that's going to take place in Jesus. That he comes as that king of righteousness. He carries out a life of righteousness where we lived a life of sin. And he also is that prince of peace. Where our sin brings guilt and condemnation and shame. He stands in our place and offers us a path to peace. That's the kind of king we follow.

But when you look back at our text in Genesis 14, you're going to see a second question we need to answer. Not just what type of king is Melchizedek, but let's think about a second one. What type of priest is he? So look down at Genesis 14 at the second half of verse 18 and it describes that priesthood. It says, he was a priest of God most high. That's our first reference to any sort of priest in the Bible. It's hundreds of years before, God would establish the Levitical priesthood for the nation of Israel. And right here, it celebrates him as the priest of God most high. And if we want to understand what type of priest he is, we're going to go back to Hebrews in chapter 7 starting in verse 22 and see another picture of that. Because what Hebrews does in chapter 7 is show us how Melchizedek was a forerunner to Jesus. The whole story, the whole book of Hebrews is showing us how Jesus is better than everything the Old Testament used to anticipate Him. And one of the things he's better than is the priesthood of old. That, because those priests lived and died, they could not make a sufficient sacrifice for your sin or mine. But notice now in Hebrews seven, verse 22, the way it speaks about the nature of this priesthood for Jesus. It says,

²²This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. ²³The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. ²⁵Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

So, the text is showing us that here in Genesis 14:18 when it speaks about Melchizedek as a priest of the Most High God, it is anticipating another priest to come. Jesus Christ who would come and transform our path to peace. Because the only way we can find a path to peace is if we have a priest who can put us on that path. And the priest of old, they weren't enough. They couldn't do it. Their sacrifices were insufficient. In their lives, they died. And yet Jesus comes as a priest in the order of Melchizedek and He puts us on that path to peace in several ways. One of those is because the path to peace depends on a better promise. That's why verse 22 speaks about Him being the guarantor of a better covenant. You can count on the new covenant applying to you if you put your faith in Jesus Christ. Because He has made the down payment for your sin. He has taken the punishment that you owe. The wage that you deserve to pay for that sin and He has stood in your place. He has offered you a guarantee of a better promise. But it's not just a better promise, it's also a better sacrifice. Hebrews 7:23 and 24 is showing us that these priests were never enough. They died. Their sacrifices were insufficient. But now, here is one who lives forever. The foundation for His priesthood is not his descent from the line of Levi, the foundation for His priesthood is His indestructible life. He continues to stand in your place because He is seated at the right hand of the Father because of a better sacrifice. And as a result of those things, the text tells us that it fuels in us a path towards peace by bringing us a better hope. So, look back at verse 25 again when it says, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him. In other words, the path to salvation that you and I experience is not one of these where we just barely limp our way into the gates of heaven. It's not like the professor in your class at Texas A&M who gives you the grade you hope for because they rounded up on the curve. It says, it saves to the uttermost. It's complete, total, overwhelming, entirely. That's the kind of salvation He offers. Why? Because He offers a better sacrifice in place of our sins. And as verse 25 says, now, He still lives to make intercession for you and me. He is your advocate before the Father saying that when He looks at you, God no longer sees you if you're in Christ as a sinner in your sin. He sees you covered by the blood of the Lamb. And Jesus is standing before God every day of your life saying, "This one is Mine. They're with Me." And that's only true because we have a better priesthood.

But let's keep going. Back in Genesis 14 because there's a third question we need to come face to face with, which is to ask ourselves, what type of blessing does Melchizedek bring? This is one of the things that we might quickly gloss over because it doesn't seem important to us. But it would have shocked those when they learned about it for the first time back in that culture. Notice what happens in verse 19 of Genesis 14. It says,

¹⁹Melchizedek blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰and blessed be God most high who has delivered your enemies into your hand!

So, there's this pattern that emerges right here in the Old Testament of blessing. Where one person blesses the other. And the way that that pattern of blessing goes is that the pattern always is the greater blesses the lesser. And here we have Abraham. One of the most significant figures in all the Old Testament. The one that we would assume on the face of it would be the one pouring out blessings to others. But notice what happens. Which way does the blessing go? Is it Abraham that's blessing Melchizedek? No. It's Melchizedek blessing Abraham. The text is showing us that this priest, this king, is seen by Abraham as even greater than father Abraham. The one through whom the entire line would come. He brings an earthly blessing to Abram. And even as he does that, I want you to notice back in Hebrews, in Hebrews chapter 6, the way that this earthly blessing of Abram back in Genesis 14, anticipates the eternal blessing that each one of us are given through Jesus, the new and better Melchizedek. So, look there with me at Hebrews chapter 6 beginning in verse 19. Listen to this blessing that is offered for us in Christ. It says,

¹⁹We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

You see his name again? Earlier this summer, our family had the chance to go out to the lake with my sister. They got a lake house out there and they brought a new contraption out there. It's this inflatable slide. And I think we spent more time setting it up than it was ever actually used. It's one of those where you had to unpack it, you had to set it up, you had to air it up, you had to move it out. And we got it in the water the first time, we took it out, and then when we tried to put it in the second time, it popped on the way down, never to be used again. But in that short amount of time it was actually in the water, what we realize is the biggest problem with this float, this slide, is not how hard it is to put together, or how difficult it to keep from popping, it's the fact that this particular inflatable slide came with a net attached to a rope on it. And the purpose of this net was to serve as an anchor. What they wanted you to do was to fill this net with heavy objects in order to weigh it down and to hold this slide in place. And so we racked our brain about what we could grab and we grab the heaviest rocks and other things we could find. We put as much weight as we thought it could hold and we set it in there in order to keep this in one spot for the kids to use it over and over again. And just about every minute that passed, we would look up and the winds and the waves had blown the slide further and further away from where it was intended to go. On its own, it could not provide a sure and steadfast anchor that would hold it into place. It was only until we attached the slide to the dock, to something outside itself, something with a solid foundation, that it finally found that sure and steady anchor it needed. Well, think about the way Hebrews 6 is talking about the eternal blessing that God offers us in Jesus. He says, that Jesus is a sure and steady anchor for our souls. That in this world of many troubles, when the winds and the waves of adversity and anxiety bash against us, they crash into us, they seek to lead us off course. It's telling us there's an eternal blessing in Jesus as He makes a way toward the path of peace we can never find on our own.

Which brings us to one last question of Genesis 14. If all this is true, if this is the kind of king Melchizedek is, if this is the kind of priest he is, if this is kind of blessing that he brings, the last question we need to wrestle with is, what type of response does he require? And you'll see that response there at the end of verse 20. Notice, what Abram does in response to Melchizedek's blessing in Genesis 14:20. At the end of verse it says,

²⁰...and Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

And right here, in this one short sentence, we see the very first example of an offering being given in the Bible. He provides for him a tenth, a tithe. And as we move forward throughout the Old Testament, we see this pattern emerge where the people of God invest in the mission of God by giving to the work of God. There's this pattern that we give of our first and our best to invest in the mission. Because if you want to know if someone is truly committed to the mission, truly committed to the King, then just look if that commitment leads to investment. Even before Abram settles accounts with the king of Sodom, with his people, and his possessions, he gives to Melchizedek first. Melchizedek doesn't give his leftover, doesn't get his leftovers. He's not an afterthought to him. What happens is, when Abram comes face to face with the king, he can't but help to invest in the mission. That's the kind of response that God expects from us when we encounter the King. When we encounter the kingdom. To give of our first and best as I've heard some of my pastor friend say of your time, your talent, and your treasure. That your giving of your time, investing your life for the sake of the mission. That you're giving of your talent, pouring out your natural abilities, your spiritual giftings for an eternal impact. And of our treasure. That Jesus is getting the first and best of the finances that He provides for you. That it's not as if in a moment of heightened inflation that as you work through your budget you settle up all the accounts you owe and the bills you need to pay to everybody else and you see what's left over for God. Instead, he is saying to you and showing you here in this pattern we are called to give of our first and best. God has invited this church to live on mission with him for 97 years. There are very few things in this world that last for 97 years. Not least of which are churches like ours. And the way that that happens is when we respond as Abram did when he came face to face with the king. To invest in a way that exemplifies our commitment to the mission.

We talked about Queen Elizabeth at the start of our message today. The way that she's the most recognizable person in modern world history. But I came across a story that goes like this. Part of the pomp and circumstance of the queen's responsibilities is that each year, when the parliament would open for its legislative business, on the first day of the first session, the expectation was the queen would come. She'd come decked out in her robes, in her regalia, in her jewels, and all of those things, and she would enter into the parliament building. She would ascend the stairs, and then march down the hallway to bring a greeting in the House of Lords, equivalent to their congress, and a word to them to commission them towards the start of their legislature. Well, the story goes that as she began to age, she could no longer take the steps and so they made arrangements and an exception for her to take the elevator up to that floor towards that passageway. And so the first time they did it, she stepped onto the elevator and there was a man there operating the elevator. He hit the button to go up to the floor and when the doors open, he realized with horror, he had pressed the button for the wrong floor. That instead of ending up on the legislative floor, they ended up on the floor for all the maintenance workers. And while he was shocked when he realized that, the person who had been waiting forever for the elevator on the other side, barreled their way onto it. It was one of the cleaning ladies. And she just mindlessly stepped onto that elevator with her cleaning cart just like she would any other time when it opened up. And as she looked up, she realized that the queen was now pinned against the wall with her cleaning cart. And I can only imagine what that moment must have felt like for the two of them. This man who had pressed the wrong button, this woman who had

pinned the queen. They probably responded in horror and fear that the queen might look at them and in a throwback say, off with their heads. But instead of responding in horror, she responded in humor. She thought it was hilarious and instead of kicking this cleaning lady, who went by the name of Alice, out of the elevator so that she could descend to the proper floor on her own. She told her to stay on and to come with her. And so, imagine this moment, everyone's waiting for the elevator doors to open and the queen to emerge in all her glory. But first steps off, this woman that shouldn't be there. Who's not dressed for the occasion. Who didn't deserve to be in the place that she was. Alice steps off first. The queen coming right behind her. And the queen led her in a welcoming walk into that legislative chamber. Think about that. Someone who should never be there, who didn't deserve it, who hadn't earned a place in that path to peace, who hadn't earned a seat at the table, was able to be there because they were welcomed by royalty. Isn't that the picture we see of the Gospel that Genesis 14 is calling us to? That on our own, none of us deserve it. We all stand condemned before God. Judgement is what we deserve. And yet in Jesus, this new and better Melchizedek, this greater royal figure, God has made a way for us to enter not into the legislative chamber of parliament in England, but into the throne room of heaven. And the way towards that throne room is because we're now connected to a king by faith. Who calls us away from the path to sin and calls us to the path of peace.

Let's pray together.

Father, I can't help but wonder if there are people in this room restless, discouraged, distraught. The things that they've looked to in this world to satisfy them have failed. The people they thought would stand with them have turned their backs. The sin that promised to pay off and to bring them lasting pleasure has fallen short again. Lord and as we experience those moments, we turn to You, Jesus. Whether people are at a rock-bottom moment in their life or soaring in the heights of walking faithfully with You. I pray that You would use this time to help us see Your path to peace more clearly. So that we might love You more fully. So that we might pour ourselves out more completely. So that Jesus would be made much of. Not just in our lives but through our lives to a lost and dying world around us. That's why we come to You and the only name that saves, that of Jesus alone. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.