



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Epiphany 6
February 16, 2025

Life in Two Kingdoms

Jeremiah 17:5-8

In the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Christian lives in two kingdoms. Two kingdoms that do not think alike, do not act alike. The kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God. One kingdom that will not last and one that will last forever. One that we know by experience and one that we know only by faith. Two kingdoms with often conflicting values and goals. And as we heard today, two kingdoms with very different ideas of what it means to be blessed. So, to live in both is not an easy thing.

Yet every Christian does. But it is perilous. We are to live in the world and not separate ourselves from the world, but also not let the world influence us so much that we become like the world. We are to see and use and enjoy the things of this world as good gifts from God, while at the same time not becoming too attached to them, not living for them, not relying on them. Whether they be people, things, or accomplishments. Which, as you know, is not an easy thing.

If that happens, if the thinking of the world so infiltrates us that it changes our thinking and values and ways, then woe to us! And not just woe, but Jeremiah said, ***“cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.”*** But how easy it is to do this. We are bombarded with the words and wisdom of men every day. We are seduced by the things of this world and its promises. And our minds and hearts are influenced. Little by little. We may not even realize it. Until we hear a Word of God and turn away from it. Or doubt it. Or think God can't . . . or won't . . . Adam and Eve found out the hard way. And we've been living in their world ever since.

But the word of man . . . *who knows?* Promises are made but never kept. Things are believed - even for a very long time - that later turn out to be wrong. Sometimes it is on purpose, to deceive and get for oneself, but sometimes they are honest mistakes, until more data is received and so the “truth” changes. No matter the motive, if you trust in man and make the things of man your strength, you are hitching your horse to a very uncertain wagon.

It's one that cannot last. For even the brightest and rightest minds this world has ever seen or known stop, go out, and are buried under six feet of dirt. And then what? They can no longer help this



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Epiphany 6

February 16, 2025

world. They may even later be re-interpreted and deemed an enemy, when the thinking of the world changes and goes against them. Here today, gone tomorrow. Honored one day, belittled the next. And it's not just the word of man but the things of man, too . . . *who knows?* Everything wears out. Things come and go. What pleases us one day doesn't the next. What we think so important one day seems so trivial the next.

Off balance. Maybe that's a good way to describe it. Unsure. Unsteady. Confused. That's what Satan wants. For you to wonder: What is true, what is not? What should I believe? How shall I live? Who should I be? What should I want? What's going to happen to *me* when I die? Because you will. Die. . . Sooner or later. One way or another.

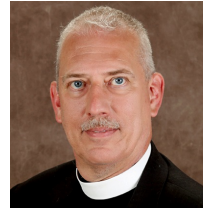
Satan promised Adam and Eve the world and gave them Hell. He promised them knowledge and gave them confusion. He promised them life and gave them death. And we've been living in their world ever since.

But there's another way . . . Yes, "***cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord . . .***" but then Jeremiah also said, "***Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.***"

But that's Adam and Eve's world, too! For into the world, they caused to be cursed and plunged into Hell, confusion, and death, came a different word . . . a word of truth, a word of hope, a word of forgiveness, a word of resurrection, a Word of God. That God would not let them, or this world go to Hell in a handbasket, but would come and save it. He would come and save *them*. And believing that Word they were blessed, *even* living amid the mess they made. In good and joyful days, like when their children were born; and in bad and sorrowful days, like when one son killed the other. They were living in two kingdoms - one of their own making, and one of God's now *re*-making. One of experience, and one of faith.

And when that Word of God became the Word made flesh, when that Word of God was fulfilled in the sending of His Son into the world, when that Word of God began His working in the world to renew and restore it . . . *that's* what the people in Jesus' day saw and experienced. People were ***healed of their diseases***. Those ***who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured***. ***Power was going out from Him***. Power that changed things. Power that changed life. Power over the sin, death, and Hell in this world. Establishing a *new* kingdom.

A new kingdom very unlike this old kingdom. For Jesus was not interested in replacing one earthly kingdom with another, or in making new and miraculously healthy people to live in an old kingdom that is passing away. Those were *signs* - signs of what this coming kingdom would be like. And signs



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Epiphany 6

February 16, 2025

of what it would take to get there - no less than a new creation; a resurrection from the sin and death of this world.

So that's what Jesus did. Coming into a world of sin, death, and Hell, He took our sin, died our death, bloodied and beaten by the world, and then descended into Hell to overthrow it and establish a new kingdom with a new king. A kingdom of truth. A kingdom of certainty. A kingdom with a firm foundation - namely, His empty tomb. His empty tomb which testifies that what He speaks, and promises is truth, that His life is real and eternal, and that what you need He can provide.

That's what the apostle Paul pointed to today, and said that if Christ has not been raised, if His tomb is full, not empty, then we have nothing. Then we should be off balance, unsure, unsteady, and confused. Then there is nothing you can count on - just hope for the best.

But if Jesus did, in fact, rise from the dead, if his tomb is empty, that changes everything. And, Paul said, he could produce some 500 witnesses who could testify to the fact not only that the tomb was empty, but that Jesus was alive - a number that would make any lawyer envious, and so make every person rejoice. That in this world that Satan has invaded and planted his flag and set-up his kingdom of confusion and untruth, there is one who has invaded *his* kingdom and given us a firm truth and place to stand. On Him. The one who speaks, and it is so. The one who died and rose again. The one we can rely on, in a world where there isn't much you can rely on.

That when life knocks you off balance, there is one here to steady you. When you're not sure of the truth, there is one here who speaks the truth. When you find yourself following the world, there is one here to forgive you. And when you die, there is one here to raise you to life.

And so blessed are you when you are **baptized** into Jesus and His death and resurrection, for you have a life that not even death can end. And blessed are you when your sins are **forgiven**, for you have a life that Jesus heals from the disease of sin. And blessed are you when you eat and drink **the Body and Blood of Jesus**, for you have a life fed and strengthened by the one who has all power and authority.

In the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.