

Game of Thrones

This morning I want to talk to you about the Game of Thrones. For the record, that is the name of a popular show, one that I've never seen. I know it's on HBO so I assume it's probably not my kind of show but consider the words of that title: Game of Thrones....

A game is for entertaining but it's also a contest, often a competition that involves strategy. Some games people work together but most are teams or individuals opposing one another. There can be arguing or disputes, you can find yourself feeling one way then based on a change of events you feel another way. Games can be complicated.

Then if you think about a throne, a throne is a seat or chair for a ruler or power....more specifically a sovereign power, meaning a supreme power or authority. A throne by itself is just a fancy seat, it may be made of gold and velvet with people bowing down before it but the power is the authority that is in the seat. A throne simply hosts the ruler who hosts the power.

So when we play this Game of Thrones, we indulge in this contest of rulers, a contest of powers, and it's not about the throne you are going before, it's more about who is on that throne. Because when you come before a throne, you bow in submission to that ruler. You serve that ruler.

I want to look at three different thrones we turn to in this game...

Romans 10:9 (HCSB)

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

I LOVE this verse, it's an amazing verse, one that you should memorize and be able to share with others.

But there is some real depth to this little verse. You see some people really believe and teach that it's as simple as saying the words that Jesus is Lord and then believing that He was raised from the dead and BAM, you are saved.

But if you look at the words.....confess.....NOT SPEAK these words, but CONFESS them. This means to agree with, to declare, to profess, and to celebrate that "Jesus is Lord".

Anyone can say the words "Jesus is Lord" and it may not mean a thing. Those words can be empty and meaningless to the person speaking them. But if you confess, you are admitting it, you are declaring, not that Jesus is someone's Lord but that He is YOURS!

When you confess you concede, you give up any other view or argument. So when you confess that “Jesus is Lord” you are proclaiming that for yourself, not for others.

What is Lord? The Greek word here is *kyrios* (ku-re-os) meaning He to whom a person belongs, a sovereign power, supreme ruler.

When you are making that proclamation that “Jesus is Lord” you are agreeing with the fact that you now belong to Him, that He is your ruler, the supreme power in your life. And you don’t just proclaim it, you celebrate it!

Psalm 11:4 (HCSB)

The Lord is in His holy temple;
the Lord’s throne is in heaven.
His eyes watch; He examines everyone.

See when we are celebrating “Jesus is Lord” in our life, we are celebrating the fact that as the supreme power, we acknowledge that He is on the throne. He is in the ruler’s seat in heaven but also in our lives. It is HIS throne that we will commit to. HIS kingdom we will enter into and reside in.

43 of 195 countries today have a monarch (a sovereign or supreme head of state, like a king, queen, or emperor) although most are constitutional monarchies so they have limited powers as they rule with a governing body.

Being in the USA it can be hard to picture a throne room since we haven’t had a government with a ruler on a throne...

I guess some look at the Oval Office as a kind of a throne room but no matter who occupies that seat our country is so divided and so much lacks honor that we view the president as a hired hand. And they don’t have supreme power just like most modern day governments.

So I think this skews our view of Jesus on the throne. We lose sight of the fact that He wasn’t voted in and He doesn’t have a governing body that He has to get approval from. He’s been handed ALL of the power!

Matthew 28:18 (HCSB)

Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

How much authority? ALL
Where? In heaven AND on earth

And this isn’t the only place we see it recorded:

John 3:35 (HCSB)

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hands.

1 Peter 3:22 (HCSB)

Now that He has gone into heaven, He is at God's right hand with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him.

Colossians 2:9-10 (HCSB)

For the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ, and you have been filled by Him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

In society today we see supreme rulers as dictators or tyrants. And justly so, they are humans so they are not totally good, they have a sinful nature and selfish desires. But God is not like us!

In Jesus there is NO sin, there is NO selfishness, NO unrighteous thoughts or desires whatsoever. He is good, entirely good. And if you know that, you like it. You worship at His throne and submit to His rule....

But as you go through different seasons in your life, you play this Game of Thrones where, depending on how life is going, depending on how you feel, you choose the throne you want to bow before that day....

We see a good example of this in Genesis chapter 3....

Adam and Eve worshipped at God's throne. They walked with Him and talked with Him. They lived in His kingdom and had all they needed, all they could want.

Then they were tempted....satan comes lurking and dismisses what God had said....

Genesis 3:1-7 (HCSB)

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. 3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "No! You will not die," the serpent said to the woman.5 "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of

them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They had it all at God's throne. Then they were tempted, they were presented with an alternative. Satan lies to them and tells them that they won't die but in fact they will obtain this great wisdom and be LIKE God. (When in fact they were more like God before they ate of the fruit)

So they bow before satan's throne, they give in to his power and come under his authority of sin as they make the choice to eat of the fruit. They knew what God had said, but they bought into the lie, they saw the fruit to be desirable, it looked good EVEN THOUGH they were told NO. They made the decision to bow before another throne and eat the fruit.

1 John 2:16 (HCSB)

16 For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Satan tried to trick Jesus the same way, with these earthly temptations. Using the words God said but twisting them to sound like they were true. But Jesus resisted. He knew the truth and stood fast in it. He chose His Father's kingdom and throne.

We spend seasons of life at different thrones

- Need God? Come to the throne of grace
- Feel like fulfilling the lusts of the flesh? Go to the throne of satan
- Feel like building your own kingdom? Go your YOUR throne

We find ourselves playing this Game of Thrones where we go from one throne to the next, to the next, whichever one provides what we want that day or whichever is easiest to access that day, whichever one seems to give us that thing that makes us feel good that day...

Man, it's easy to go before satan's throne. He appeals to that lusts of the flesh and eyes and pride in our lives. It's easy to go there and can be hard to leave there.

And when we walk away from satan's throne and he comes looking for us, it's not something that is obvious, it's not the devil cartoon with a red jumpsuit, pitchfork and horns, it's something that looks good and appealing, that satisfies our sin nature....how often do we hide when HE comes looking for us? It's not that often that we hide, in fact we may even run to him and say "yeah, that looks fun, that feels great, that makes me feel good"

We all have to battle the temptation to return to satan's throne where it's easy to find temporary pleasure but temporary pleasure is temporary. Hurt and pain, guilt and shame, regret and despair follow temporary pleaser and they hang around much longer than the pleasure does!

Revelation 2:13 (HCSB)

I know where you live—where Satan’s throne is! And you are holding on to My name and did not deny your faith in Me, even in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness who was killed among you, where Satan lives.

See satan has a throne, it’s here on this earth. But let us be like the church in Pergamum here in Revelation 2, let us continue to hold on to the name of Jesus and faith in Him.....resisting the devil’s throne and it’s pleasures.

It can be hard to do. I’m not saying it’s always going to be easy. But when what people say takes precedence to what God says....we find ourselves in a world of hurt.

Satan is out to destroy every person he can get to believe the lies that he tells. The biggest one is “It’s not so bad” just like he told Eve “He didn’t really say you’d die. I mean, come on, that can’t be what He meant, it can’t be that bad.....”

Here we find ourselves beginning October, satan’s favorite time of the year. When witches and monsters and other evil things are made out to be cute and “not so bad”. Evil is evil no matter how you want to spin it. Witches, wizards, magic, monsters and other creepy things are still satanic, even if you make them look “cute”.

When you take this season to say they “aren’t that bad” you are taking a season at satan’s throne.

On October 29th, we are having another Impact Sunday where all the MA churches will gather together at the grade school for one service to glorify Jesus. The pastors have been praying weekly, we’ve been waiting for satan’s attack and this past Wednesday I saw it....

The day before this service, on Saturday the St. Elmo Community Park District is hosting a Halloween carnival. No big deal you say? Just a little fun for the kids? *“Eat delicious foods and shop at local vendor booths. Crafts-**fortune telling**-petting farm-face painting and more”*

Not no big deal, not just a little fun for the kids.....fortune telling? I don’t care how it’s spun, what it looks like, that is the devil’s work and it’s for the kids???? If you go to this thing you are taking your kids straight to satan’s throne room. It’s evil I don’t care how good the intentions are of those organizing it.

Romans 16:19-20 (HCSB)

The report of your obedience has reached everyone. Therefore I rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise about what is good, yet innocent about what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

You want satan to be crushed under your feet? You want a world that's better for your children and grandchildren? Be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. Flee from satan's throne.

Other times we just long to sit on our own throne, to do what's best for us, to be happy. We may not see it as harmful to others or harmful to ourselves, but we want to take care of us and what we want to do. And when we have been following that path, or making our own, again when God comes calling and asks where we are, we find ourselves hiding in the bush!

Luke 1:52 (HCSB)

He has toppled the mighty from their thrones
and exalted the lowly.

It's only a matter of time before your kingdom crumbles. No matter how high you get, it can all come tumbling down.

We play this game over and over.....and the more we do, the more we will find ourselves away from God's throne. And as we are out wandering about, God comes looking for us and wants us to come back to the throne room, but sometimes we are so ashamed because we have been unfaithful to Him as we have spent time at satan's throne or sitting on our own throne, so we hide from Him like Adam and Eve did in the garden.

Don't hide from God! He wants you to return to Him. Jesus is always waiting with open arms for your return no matter how many times your have failed. Repent! Ask for forgiveness and the answer will be YES.

Hebrews 4:16 (HCSB)

Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

It's not a question of IF Jesus will offer mercy and grace, it's a question of WHEN will we return to His throne to receive it!

What we need in our lives is the presence of God. We must approach His throne, we must come back to His rule and authority in our lives. Forget the lies of the devil, forget the ways of the people, turn back and worship at the throne of the living God....Jesus Christ!

Revelation 19:4 (HCSB)

Then the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who is seated on the throne, saying:
Amen! Hallelujah!

When we stray and we hear His voice calling for us “where are you?” instead of hiding in the bushes we should run to His throne to receive that mercy and grace, singing Hallelujah, praising Jesus

The throne of God is where we find the victory...

Revelation 3:21 (HCSB)

The victor: I will give him the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I also won the victory and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Who is ready for the victory today? Stop playing the Game of Thrones and come to the throne of victory, where THE KING reigns. He is good. He is love. He is all you need and more....

Psalms 103:19 (HCSB)

The Lord has established His throne in heaven,
and His kingdom rules over all.