

Our Church Values - Dependent on the Lord

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[0 : 00] The theme of tonight, the thing that we're going to try to talk about is our church values.! And some of you were here a week ago Saturday when we had a bit of a vision day where we gathered together.

We talked through some of these and the values were named at that point. But you might remember what we're trying to do with the values is the nice thing about thinking about a church as opposed to another type of organization is that we don't have to start from scratch.

The Bible, God gives us scripture and his outline for what we're to do. So we don't have to wonder what's important to us or what should be important to us.

So when we think about the values of West Kilburn or of any number of churches that may be out there, it shouldn't be something that surprises us, I guess, is a good way to put it.

It should be things that we know. And so I think the interesting thing is, so why are we putting values out that we're naming six things or seven things or whatever the number is?

[1 : 18] So why would we do that? And it's really sort of, I think maybe, you know, the gospel outlines all these things and the Bible tells us. But sometimes it's helpful to have a little bit of like gospel shorthand to remind us to have like, you know, a few phrases, a few things to help us hold on to those things that we know that God has taught us and teaches us in his word to tell us what to do as a church and how to think.

And so it's helpful to have a few of these. And so what the leaders have done and what we are proposing is sort of just let's pull out a few things that are, we know are important because God has said they're important, and will help us as a church body together kind of have language that we share and be able to say, yes, no, this is what we stand for.

And to remind ourselves kind of on a regular basis, like, what are the things that we stand for that God has pointed out to us? So we have a variety of things. We'll be going over them.

But the one we're going to talk about today is that effectively we depend on the Lord. And this is where the text from Daniel earlier came to that.

But that's our topic. That's the value that we're starting with today. And I think as Christians, this shouldn't be a surprise, right?

[2 : 42] I think particularly those of you in this room, right, we know we're to depend on the Lord, right? And so what I hope today and tonight is is not me teaching you anything particularly new, certainly.

But it's not to convince you that this is something that we should value. But it's just sort of to guide us and to help us think collectively about what this is, how this might be true of us, right?

It's one thing to say I depend on the Lord. It's another thing to actually depend on the Lord. And so that's what I want us to do. So we're going to start with a couple of questions. I want you to talk about it.

So this isn't going to be me giving you all the answers. But let's start here, and this will help us frame what comes next. So in the groups that you had or something similar, I want to talk about these two questions.

What does it mean for a church or an individual, for that matter, to depend on the Lord? And to kind of push that one step further is what would a church look like if that wasn't the case?

[3 : 51] What might it look like if a church did not depend on the Lord? What would those things look like? So two-ish minutes.

Go move relatively quickly and just address those two questions. And then I'll come back. Nice. So I hope that was helpful. And I'm not going to get you to bring or to say what you said out loud. I just think it's helpful to have some context and to be thinking around. So, again, my hope is that

we've got kind of three episodes, moments, sort of scenes that happen in Scripture that I'm going to raise for us to consider.

And I'm going to resist the impulse to make a lot of conclusions and applications.

And I want you to do that in a bit. And then we'll talk about those. So I hope you're thinking tonight and not just letting words hit you in the face and you do nothing.

[5 : 08] So you're going to have to engage with this a little bit. So I know I'm asking a lot. It's Sunday evening. You're probably trying to think about Monday morning already. But let's engage with what God has for us this evening.

So I've got three. Three different things. And put those up there, Seth. So there's three characters or three episodes, three kind of moments that we'll look at.

One is this guy, King Hezekiah. That one may or may not be familiar to you. There's a scene from the book of Acts with Peter and King Herod.

And then some words directly from Jesus from the book of John. But I just want to raise each of these three things, kind of consider them together. And then we'll talk about kind of the application and implication for us in terms of dependence on the Lord.

So King Hezekiah. So you find his story in Two Kings and also in the Second Chronicles.

[6 : 14] If you can go ahead and flip there. I'm not going to read both chapters. I'll paraphrase it for us. But it would be helpful to have it out because we will look at a couple of the verses that are there. So King Hezekiah is king of Judah, which is the southern kingdom.

He's in Jerusalem. And when you get to 2 Kings 18, it says that he became king when he was 25 years old. And he reigned in Jerusalem for 29 years.

And it says in verse 3, He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done.

And he removed the high places. He smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. So these were foreign gods, foreign idols and things that had found their way into the community in Jerusalem and in all of Judah.

And previous kings that had come had sort of let these things happen. And Hezekiah comes in and because of his belief in the Lord, he removes these things.

[7 : 23] And he brings, basically this is, he's bringing the nation back to looking at the Lord and saying, We need to praise and worship the God and not just whatever God we feel like is coming up.

So we have this Hezekiah. He's a good king. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. And he pointed the people back. And so there, we get in 2 Kings and in Chronicles, it kind of covers the stories together.

But we basically get kind of 2 episodes, 2 moments of his life as king that the recorder of his life thinks is valuable enough for us to look on again in our scriptures.

So we've got 1 sort of moment where it shows him depending on God and 1 where he does not. And so let's look down to verse 13.

So look with me there. It says, In the 14th year of King Hezekiah's reign, this guy Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

[8 : 38] So Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent this message to the king of Assyria. So he's sending a message to the other side, to the other king. And he says, look, I've done wrong.

Oh, this is... Oh yeah, I'm doing this in the right way. He says, look, I've done wrong. Withdraw from me and I'll pay you whatever you demand.

Right? So Lachish is another city in Judah. And this Assyrian king is sieging it, is demolishing it.

And he's done this now for several cities. Interestingly, if you've been to the British Museum, there is a tablet on the wall, a relief, you know, where they've carved into a piece of stone of this siege of Lachish.

And so you can see it. It's historical record. I don't know. I find that interesting. You may or may not. But, so Hezekiah sees what's happening in his nation, in these cities that they haven't gotten to Jerusalem yet.

[9 : 42] They're coming in, and one of the cities they get to is this Lachish. He sees Assyria, the king of Assyria, just demolishing it, burning it to the ground, basically. And he says, he sends a message.

And he says, you know what? Whatever we can do to stop you, I'll do it. And so what does he do? Keep reading. He says, the king, he says, I'll pay what you demand of me.

So the king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah 300 talents of silver, 30 talents of gold. And so Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and the treasuries of the Laurel Palace.

And at this time, Hezekiah stripped the gold off of the doors of the temple and gave it to the king. Right? So you see what's happening?

He's going into the temple, into the place where God is manifested. And he's taking the gold and pulling things out of the treasury.

[10:45] That's akin to, I guess, Steve opening up the box back here, pulls out any cash and says, you know, don't come in here. I'll give you what we've got. And so he's stealing from the Lord, effectively, and trying to pay off this king.

And what we see is he's using whatever thing he can come up with, his own power, to try to hold off this evil king that's attacking. Right?

And what happens, as you keep reading, in verse 17, the king of Assyria sent his commander and his chief officer and his field commander from Lachish to Hezekiah in Jerusalem.

And they came up and basically they start attacking. And they're ready to attack Jerusalem. Right? So they didn't stop. They didn't stop him. They gave him all the money.

They gave him all the gold that they'd stripped off the doors of the temple. They had ransacked their own house of worship to pay this man off. And it didn't stop him. Right? Because, obvious.

[11:49] So we have this episode and we look at it and we're like, man, Hezekiah. Yeah. It had just told us that he was one who did right in the eyes of the Lord.

So thankfully, it keeps going on. So we flip to 2 Kings 19. And we've got another story about this Hezekiah. So in 19, so the king of Assyria now moves on from this Lachish, which is somewhere else in the country.

And now he's moved to Jerusalem. So he's standing kind of outside the gates of Jerusalem. And everyone sees them coming and they know exactly what's happening. There's some 200,000 soldiers, warriors, standing outside, getting ready to besiege Jerusalem.

In the same way that they had just besieged Lachish and burned it to the ground and killed everyone in it. Right? And so they know what's coming. And what happens is Hezekiah, it says in verse 14, Hezekiah received this letter from the messengers.

He knew what was coming. He went to the temple of the Lord and he spread it out before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord. Lord, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of earth.

[13:02] You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, Lord. Hear, open your eyes, Lord, and see. Listen to the words that this evil king of Assyria has sent to ridicule the living God.

It is true, Lord, that this king, they've laid waste to these nations and their lands. And they've thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them. For they were not gods, but of only wood and stone.

Now, Lord, our God, deliver us from his hands so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God. So this has echoes of what Daniel prayed earlier.

But the part that I didn't tell you earlier was this Assyrian king, he says, he looks at Hezekiah and he says, Do you think your God is going to protect you?

Like the gods of the people that I've already destroyed? They thought their God was going to protect them. And guess what? They're now my servants or they're dead. So do you think your God is going to do this? Basically, he's mocking the Lord.

[14:05] And so Hezekiah comes to this prayer and he's like, You hear what he's saying. You know what he's doing. You know what he's about to do. He is mocking you, God. Will you let this stand? And so he comes to the Lord and he prays.

And in the other account in Chronicles, it says that he tears his clothes and he lays down in ashes and basically calls the whole nation to pray.

And says, Look, we can't do this. Let's pray. And so the nation prays and Isaiah is the prophet during this time. And so we get this prophecy that somehow the Lord's going to come through.

And what we see just at the end here in 19, verse 35, it says, That night, so this is the same night that they've prayed. That night, the angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 in the Assyrian camp.

And when the people got up the next morning, it was all dead bodies. And the king, the Assyrian king, had run and returned to Nineveh and stayed there. The Lord delivered.

[15 : 14] And ultimately, the king gets killed as well as a response for his mocking of the Lord. So we've got two episodes of King Hezekiah.

In one time, he depends solely on what he has control over. He pulls the money out of the box. He strips the gold off the doors and tries to pay off and make things happen in his own power.

And in one, he looks at the Lord and says, I can't do anything. We can't stop these people. God, you have to move. And you've got these two things. So let's look at another story.

This one's from the book of Acts, Acts chapter 12. You can flip to that one. I don't have the page number, but we can try to find it together. It looks like it's 1106.

1106. So in Acts, you've got Peter and you've got King Herod. And what we have here is a prayerful posture versus a prideful posture.

[16 : 20] You've got two characters and they'll be juxtaposed against one another so you can see the difference. And so what happens in this, it says Herod is the king and he's the great grandson, I believe, of the Herod that is from when Jesus was born.

Maybe just the grandson. In any case, it's King Herod. And he's attacking the church. He's fearful of what this movement might do. And so he's decided that it would win him favor with the Jews that are in power and sort of the others that if he were to squash this movement of it, it would keep things in peace and he would retain his power, basically.

And so he has James, the brother of John, killed. And he puts Peter in prison. And so we've got this moment where you've got James, one of the apostles, has just been murdered.

And you've got Peter, who is, you know, arguably one of the leaders of even of the apostles, is now imprisoned. And it looks bleak and dire. And you've got the church and they look at and you see what are they doing.

And as Steve mentioned earlier, you see in verse 5, it says, Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

[17 : 45] The funny thing about, well, yeah, the funny thing about this is that they have no idea. So we know, I'll read ahead, Peter's released, like in the night, he's able to get out of prison, miraculously escapes in the night.

And it turns up, funny enough, he turns up at the house where they're praying, and he knocks on the door. And the lady who answers the door doesn't believe that it's him, but then realizes it is, she hears it, and runs back to tell everyone, doesn't open the door.

And Peter's left outside, like, hey, come in, they're going to come get me. Anyway, but, so we have this church that gathers to pray. Their first instinct is to gather and pray.

They, you know, they don't believe that, you know, there's nothing that would tell them that Peter would be released. That God would move and pull him out of prison, right?

In fact, they probably resigned to the fact that Peter would die because James had just been killed. Right? They're thinking, gosh, this is another one of our guys now gone.

[18 : 55] And so they gather to pray. And they pray earnestly, as it says, and continually over the night. Which is amazing, right?

And then Peter is released, and so God moves. He hears their prayer, and he moves, and it's an amazing thing. And so then it talks about Herod at the end of the chapter. It said, Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there, and he was quarreling, blah, blah, blah.

And in verse 21 it says, on the appointed day, Herod, he's wearing his royal robes. He sits on this big throne and delivered a public address to the people.

And the people shout, this is the voice of a God, not of a man. And immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God continued to spread and flourish. Right? Herod accepts the praise in his pride, and he ends up eaten by worms. The church prayed, and Peter is miraculously released.

[20 : 04] We see prayerlessness springs from pride, because pride is the opposite of prayer. So that's a second one that we can consider. How about a third?

In John 15, let me flip to that one, Seth. John 15, we have Jesus. This one will be familiar to most of you.

He's speaking to his disciples, and he frames this moment about abiding in Christ versus going it alone.

He says, I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off the branches in me that bear no fruit. While every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, so that it will be even more fruitful. You're already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

[21 : 01] I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. But apart from me, you can do nothing. Two positions.

You can remain in the vine, that is Christ, and you can bear much fruit. Or you can be separated from the vine and be completely fruitless. So we've got these three scenes, three episodes.

One from the Old Testament, one from Jesus telling us himself, and one from the New Church in Acts. And we see how people respond and what might happen.

And so what I want us to do, I want us to think with these in mind, with these texts in mind, what we've looked at. And I want us to answer these questions together. And so I want to take a few minutes, talk again with your group.

But what are the markers? What are the key things that we notice about people who are depending on the Lord, who truly depend on God?

[22 : 07] So what are those things? And so then, application. How might we, as individuals, grow in our dependence on the Lord? How might we be marked by dependence on the Lord?

Right? And then, as a church, because I think it's slightly distinct, how might we, as a church, grow in our dependence on the Lord? Let's talk about these. These I will get you to speak back to me in a minute.

So be prepared. But go ahead. Talk through all three of those. We'll give you a few minutes to do that. And then we'll come back together. You can keep talking later, but I'll stop us here just for time's sake.

I don't know what time do we even end. But, so, so, let's, let's share some of these, right? So, what are, what are some of the markers of the people, particularly in these stories, but you can go beyond that.

What are the markers of those who are dependent on the Lord? Yeah, they have a relationship with God.

[23 : 16] What else? Prayer. Prayer. Prayer. Prayer.

Yeah, absolutely.

I think, you know, prayer in particular, it's the ultimate act of humility, right? And there's a reason I used the term posture earlier.

I mean, when we think of praying, particularly if you sort of stereotypically characterize it, right? It's a person on their knees, right?

And there's a reason we do that, right? And there's a reason we do that, right? It's a symbol. It's a significant act to submit, to say, I am not in control.

[24 : 58] I don't have power here, right? You think of the other times people kneel. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. It's surrender, right? It's, you know, you think of someone, you know, I've got a painting in mind that I don't know the name of, but it's someone surrendering, you know, in a battle, at the end of a battle.

And they're knelt in front of the other side, and the other side is holding their sword, right? And they're knelt there. And it's a complete surrender because at that moment, the other guy could just end it.

And yet you've surrendered yourself. And this is what we do when we pray, right? We surrender. We submit ourselves to the Lord. Anything else before we move on to the next question?

You see that these people really have the word of God. They know God's word. That's right. They know the promises. They know who God is.

So they will just head back to God's word. Yes. So now it's time for their life. That's good. Yeah. Yeah. They know God's word. They know his character.

[26 : 08] And so they can return to it and trust, right? They can be surrendered because they know who he is. Which is helpful. So as individuals walking in faith and trying to work this out in our own lives, what does that mean?

How do we grow in our dependence on the Lord? If we now believe that this is the thing that we should value, that should be true of us.

So how do we move from wherever we are now into more dependence on God? Follow his laws. Read the Bible. Read the Bible. And pray.

Follow his laws. Read the Bible and pray. Tick, tick, tick. See problems as an opportunity to see the Lord work on things. Hmm. See problems as an opportunity for the Lord to work rather than something we need to solve.

Absolutely. It's a perspective shift, I think, in that. It's good. Yeah. I always turn to try to solve it first. [27 : 15] I should learn at some point not to try that first. And then only when I get to the end of that and I realize, oh, I can't solve it. I'm just like Hezekiah, right?

I probably would have sold the gold off the doors before I realized that I need to turn around. So. Depend on him in all things.

Yeah. What does that look like, Jeff? Prayer. Prayer. So simple. Not trying to go out alone. You're trying to go out and think for a lot.

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Mike? But also you have to recognize that everything that comes up is a subject of prayer. Hmm. Sometimes things come to mind that they're going to happen in the day or things that, or you know that things are going to arise, you can actually say, well, I think that needs to be brought to prayer as well.

Because we sometimes take the rest of the things that really needs prayer and things are done.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely. And then that also in the church that everyone's doing that, and of course it becomes a corporate effort.

[28 : 27] Right. So yeah, bringing everything, looking at everything and saying, you know, this is something worth praying about, and not just the big things or the ones that you already know you can't solve.

Right. Which is good. It's also praying to the Lord to help you. Pray to the Lord to give your desire to grow and to be a good thing.

Let's... And wanting to be a good thing. You always want it. You ask them to be a good thing. You accept that. You don't want to be a good thing. You accept that. So that you can't be a good thing.

Yeah. Because if you pray that way, then God is going to bring you. It's going to be a problem.

Right. When you have to sort of say, I can't give up, or I need your help, Lord.

Yes. So it's not an easy prayer. It's not an easy prayer to pray. But if you're serious and want to go in our dependence of the Lord, then you do have to ask him for it.

[29 : 30] And ask him to give us the faith and the trust that he knows the beginning and the end, and therefore be able to submit to his will. That's good. That he would...

We would pray that God would grow our dependence on him. Right. And it's a... As you said, it's a dangerous prayer in the sense that he likes to answer those.

Right. He... When he says, ask and you shall receive, like ask in my name, it's ask these sorts of things, things that I want, and I'm happy to answer those.

And so when you ask things like that, that you know he wants to answer, he's very sure to answer. So you should be ready. Sorry, what was that, David? Not to grow weary.

That's right. Because it's happening. But it's still not to grow weary. That's it. Charles? We should just let him have his way. Let it be his way and not...

[30 : 27] Let it be his will and not our will. That's good. Yeah. His will and not our will. How hard is that, right, when we think we know what he should do? Right? We think, you know, I'm actually trying to trust you, and I think you should deliver me from this thing.

Or I think you should, you know, make your name great in this specific way. And yet, our ways are not his ways. And so sometimes what we think would even be glorifying to him, and it might, but he has another way about going about that, and we have to submit and say, Lord, your will and not mine, as Jesus prays.

And it kind of gives you a request, even if you're not sure, and when you get the answer or not, so there's rejection, and you know that you misprayed, so you can't do it.

Right. Prayer is, it's not just question, you know, request and answer, and it's sort of like this one thing, but as you ask for something, and he's answering in a different way, it's growing us to learn more about who he is and what he's doing, right?

So we shouldn't just look at those things as like, well, he said no to my request, and I'm done. It's no, well, why did he do that? And Lord, what are you up to here? And I want to know more about this. I want to understand why you're moving this way.

[31 : 43] And so that's how it becomes this, like, conversational moment. It's a delay. It's a delay. It's a delay. It's a no. It's I'm doing it a different way. I'm doing something else. There's so many different things it could be, but it's trusting and being in it.

Yeah. He does. Yeah. That's why we have Psalms of Lament. And. Amen.

Amen. Yeah, right.

That's right. That's right. Much more. It's an understatement. That's right. There you go. Let's move to the last one, Charleston, just in terms of time.

But it might result. So, separate from individual, because I think, obviously, as we're growing as individuals, that's part of our work as a church.

[33 : 23] But collectively, I think, Steve, you alluded to this earlier. It's like there's unique bits about doing these things as a group, as a body of believers that are together in this church environment.

There's a reason God put us in this. So, how might we as a church grow in our dependence of the Lord? If this is a West Kilburn value, how does that work itself out?

Worshiping together. Worshiping together. Praying together.

Being taught. Yeah, that's right. All of those things. It's the reasons why we gather. You know, so the purpose, and the, not the purpose, but the means, right?

Is that the right? The means of how this thing works, that we glorify God collectively, and the means of that is by gathering and worshiping and pre-reading and being taught from the scripture.

[34 : 25] What else? It's going way back. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, that's like, sort of the result of a church that's dependent upon the Lord is that you have full prayer meetings, that you have robust, you know, evangelism and those sorts of things, right?

Yeah, people want to be there. They're not coming up with excuses to do other things. That's right. Confession. Confession. Amen.

Amen. Yes.

Yeah, amen. So, yeah, to be honest and confess and have some accountability amongst one another in a healthy way that allows us to corporately confess our sins and come back to the Lord as Daniel did.

That's right. We don't have any of those. Yeah.

[35 : 59] That's right.

That's it. That's true. Final thoughts on church-wide dependence on the Lord? We have to...

We have to... We have to... That's good. We have to be humble. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's right.

Vanessa, did you have something to add to that? That Steve should be humble.

Yeah. I was going to say that this is saying about asking for the Lord to do this. Mm-hmm. It's more tentative to impersonate. It means that we're in situations in which we will not be able to do what's happening at.

Yeah. So I wonder, as a church, too, if we pray for it, we should be expecting to bring us problems to solve it down. Don't make us pray.

[37 : 18] That's it. So, Vanessa said that we should pray for opportunity to grow in our dependence, which means that the way God tends to answer those sorts of prayers is by giving you opportunities to practice.

And so, he may give us things that we can't handle on our own and we need to depend on him. But that's what we want, right? Ultimately, because that's what grows us. That's what moves us toward him. That's what brings us back.

It's a, it's, what is it? Paul says, it's our, it's by grace that we have these things, too.

I'm butchering the actual translation, but I know he says it and I believe it. But anyway, it's grace.

Possibly, we don't rely on our, especially as we are, our own church.

We look at how we're still supposed to take some weight. Amen. um yeah that's right that's right that's right that's right that's the opposite of what herod does right herod receives the praise and says oh i must be great right but it's uh a person or a church that's dependent on the lord turns it and says may god be be the glory right uh he's great he's given us these things uh shall we i think i want to send you back to pray uh briefly and then i'll close us uh so if you would just turn to your neighbors once again pray that we might be a church and that we might be individuals that are dependent on the lord that this value would not be something that we say but that would be true uh of us as west kilburn pray for just 30 45 seconds and then i'll come back and close us god we we pray that you would hear the prayers and the petitions of your servants tonight lord and for your

sake you would not delay listen lord forgive us lord hear and act and move and and we pray as we've discussed that you would grow in us a dependency on you that we would recognize our limitations that we cannot save ourselves but god you have provided christ to do the work and lord we it is sufficient for us and you are sufficient in us god and maybe we delight in what you've done and that we may not have to um to do anything else lord and that um we can trust in your character as you've proven over and over again and ultimately in christ father we want to be dependent on you lord we need to be dependent on you so lord we ask that you would make us dependent on you in your name and for your glory amen thanks guys amen