

## A Permanent Kingdom

Hebrews 12:25-27

Sunday, August 21, 2022 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

Today's sermon is called "A Permanent Kingdom" because one of the purposes of church is not only to point us toward what will never change but in gathering as church, we participate in it. What you do with regards for Christ never ceases to be relevant. Business endeavors, social mores, political intrigues and all the rest will become dusty relics of history. The kingdom of Christ remains when all else falls.

### the world then and now

Governments and empires that appeared invincible and carved in granite back in the days when the Book of Hebrews was written have long since fallen, as still do today. People lived their lives; they worked at jobs, they ate dinners at their homes with their families, they went to school, and they paid taxes. But even the everyday things that we still do have long since faded away for those who lived in that time.

### shaken vs. not shaken

Our passage today speaks of that which can be shaken-is temporary-vs. what will not be shaken and continues on into eternity. One of the considerations is the longevity of nations. So, how many ancient nations are still around? Well, there's Egypt, which was called "Put" in some Old Testament texts. Libya has been Libya for generations on end, and China is a very ancient country. Other nations of ancient times, formidable in their day, do not exist now. Assyria, Babylon, the Roman Empire, all relegated to history now. Other nations are brand new in comparison. The United States, in its current configuration of 50 states, has only been so since 1959, and some would like to change that configuration to at Puerto Rico as the 51<sup>st</sup> state. Cultures, habits, family lines, nations, all thing great and small to can be shaken, can fall apart or is temporary. So what can't be shaken?

12:26 "Yet once more I shake not only earth but also heaven"

Verse 25-26 says, "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did

not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’” This is a quote from Haggai 2:6, where the prophet, around when the Second Temple was being built, spoke of the time the Kingdom of God would be finally established on earth and that it would never fall away. It would never be shaken. So many things that seem permanent and indestructible today will be gone forever but anything relating to the Kingdom of God will remain.

The word for “shake”, which is the root for “seismograph” speaks of shaking that can be emotional, personal, or literal. It shows up in several points in the New Testament. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Good Friday, all the city was moved, or “shaken”. He caused quite a stir (Matthew 21:10). When Jesus, dying on the cross, cried out and gave up His spirit, Matthew records that “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many” (Matthew 27:50-51). At His Resurrection (Matthew 28:4) “the guards shook for fear of Him and became like dead men.” And finally, there is Revelation (6:12-17) in which the entire created order is shaken, and the wicked will have nowhere to hide.

12:27-28 What remains?

What remains? According to verse 28, the Kingdom remains. Everything does in service to Christ remains. Prayer remains. Worship remains. Teaching Scripture to children (VBS) remains. Grace remains. Love remains. A hundred years from now they will still be relevant.

Everything else fades away; the great governments, the immovable institutions, even the everyday matters that full so much of our everyday lives. Even those things fade away. When we meet in church, we meet as part of a kingdom that will never end, never become irrelevant, never fails to matter. It is unshakeable and permanent, and it is the only thing in our lives that is so.

## Children's Sermon: Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17)

I have a challenge for you that will help you understand the woman in our Bible passage for today. Ready?

Stand up nice and straight. (Pause.) Now, bend at your waist so you're looking straight down at the floor. (Demonstrate, and then guide kids to follow you. Explain to kids that they'll remain in that position until you tell them to stand up straight again.)

The woman in our Bible passage for today had a disability that caused her to have to stand like this all the time. She couldn't stand up straight like you were before. She was bent over like that for eighteen years. (Lead children to consider 18 years, by naming how old they are.)

It wasn't easy for her. Think about this: What if you went to the store and you needed something from the top shelf? (Pause for responses.) You would have to depend on someone to find and get the items you needed.

- What other difficulties might you face if you had this disability?

(As a class, decide whether kids can continue to hold the position for the rest of the children's sermon, or if they need to discontinue.) In today's Bible passage, Jesus was teaching in a place like a church called a synagogue. It was the Sabbath—the day when everyone was supposed to rest. Jesus saw the woman with the disability. He knew she'd been like that for 18 years. He called her to Him, touched her and said, "Woman, you're healed!" Instantly she could stand up straight. (Allow children to stand up straight.) (Luke 13:10-13)

She was so happy that she began to praise God! (Lead kids in praising God!)

But everyone wasn't happy that the woman was better. The leader of the synagogue was very angry that Jesus had healed the woman on the Sabbath. He told everyone listening, "There are six days of the week for working. Come on those days and be healed, but not on the day of rest." (Have kids bend back over to show that the synagogue leader didn't want the woman healed that day.) (Luke 13:14)

Jesus answered the leader of the synagogue, "You hypocrite! All of you work on the Sabbath! Don't you untie your ox or your donkey and lead it out for water? Doesn't this dear woman deserve to be healed, even on the Sabbath?" (Allow the children to stand up straight again.) (Luke 13:15-16)

The people watching were happy and rejoiced at all of the wonderful things that Jesus did. Jesus knew that rules are important, but He knew that the needs of people are more important.

We, too, can remember that people's needs are more important than rules. Whenever we see someone in need, the most important thing is to help them.

God, help us to follow the example that Jesus has set for us. Help us to place the needs of others ahead of any rules we may have. In Jesus' name, amen.