

Christ is Lord of All: A Forgotten Reality - Church and World

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Date: 11 January 2026

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[0 : 00] Normally, if the reading is from Hebrews chapter 1, you'll know I'm going to do an exposition of that passage.! Or if the reading is from Revelation 19, you'll know that I'm going to do an exposition of Revelation 19.

But I'm not going to do that today. Today is more a topical sermon. And so these two readings are to focus on Jesus as King.

So the title for this morning is Christ is Lord of All, a Forgotten Reality.

And the subtitle is Church and World. So we would tend to say Christ is Lord. That's incomplete.

What we should say is Christ is Lord of All. Furthermore, even amongst us Christians, it's largely a forgotten reality.

[1 : 05] We love the fact and we focus very much on the fact, and that's not wrong, that Jesus is Savior. It's because of Him that we are justified.

And that's massively important. That's an indispensable aspect of the gospel. We will never change that. But the Lordship of Christ over all is a forgotten reality by us Christians.

Maybe not in word, and maybe not in song, but certainly in action. Our complicity. Our complicity. When I say our, I mean mine and the denomination to which I belong and which you also belong.

Our complicity in apartheid and our ongoing complicity under the ANC bears test me to that sad truth.

So the subtitle is Church and World. Because you see, most of us Christians are dualists. We separate the spiritual from the material.

[2 : 17] The sacred and the secular. And we think, okay, the Lord Jesus is King and He reigns, but that's over the church. That's over the spiritual. He doesn't reign over the world.

Oh no, no, no. He's got nothing to do with the world. Donald Trump reigns over the world. Not Jesus. That's absolute rubbish. Now, if the Lord Jesus reigns over all.

Do you remember as Sunday school kids we were taught, Jesus is Lord of all or He's not Lord at all. Such an elementary lesson, but not so easy to live out.

The reason why we were so silent during the evils of apartheid. And the reason why we continue to be so silent under the evils of the ANC is because we haven't actually understood that Jesus is Lord of all.

And whether you are an individual or whether you are a government or whether you are the state of a country, you are actually accountable to Jesus. You cannot do what you want.

[3 : 25] Now, that's a lot easier said than done. So, we are going to be working together this morning on Christ is Lord of all, including South Africa, which is our great concern as South Africans.

But first, let's pray. Heavenly Father, it's just so wonderful, wonderful, wonderful to be together with your people. Thank you that we are numbered amongst your people.

We belong to you through Christ our Lord. Thank you that we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth. Thank you that we look forward to resurrection bodies.

Thank you that we look forward to an eternity in your presence and in the presence of your people in a new world where justice and righteousness and love will reign supreme.

Because your reign will then be finally enforced, even upon those who want to reject it. But meanwhile, we pray that you will help us to understand what it means that you are Lord of all for us here in South Africa.

[4 : 39] And we ask it in your great and worthy name. Amen. Well, just two quick introductory comments, if I may. For the last 15 or so years, I have been more of a lecturer than a preacher.

So if this is going to sound more like a lecture this morning, please forgive me. That's why. And the second thing is, as we know, but I just want to remind you, because it's partly where I'm coming from today.

The Bible, God's Word, is full of promises and encouragement. And God knows that we need that. This life can get very hard.

And as Christians, it's hard to acknowledge and to live under the Lordship of Christ, both private and public.

So the Bible has many promises and encouragements. And there's great hope, even in the face of death. Psalm 23, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

[5 : 44] We who are believers, we have enormous hope, even when that day comes for us, the day of death. But the Bible is also full of correction and rebuke and discipline.

Because God is a loving Father who cares for us. And today is more a correction and a rebuke and a discipline. You remember all God's Word is God-breathed and is profitable for what?

Not only encouragement, but rebuke and correction and training in godliness. And we're going to focus today, what does that mean with regards to Christ as King?

I'm going to use four headings, and I'm abbreviating the sermon because it's quite a big subject. So I'm not going to give you the whole sermon this morning. It's going to be abbreviated, but if you would like my full notes, you are most welcome.

I will send Dylan the notes, and then you can just ask Dylan if you're interested and would like to complete the sermon in your own quiet time, it'll be there for you.

[6 : 55] I'm going to use four headings. Number one, Christ reigns. Revelation 19 and Hebrews chapter 1. We could have used lots of passages in the Bible, and we had that lovely psalm, Psalm 103 or Psalm 130, I can't remember now.

There are many such passages about the fact that God reigns. In Revelation 19, we read of a rider on a white horse who is called faithful and true, and he rules.

Did you notice these words? He rules with justice, and on his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He's not just the King of the Church. He is King of all kings. He's not just Lord of your individual life and my personal life.

He is Lord of all lords. In Hebrews chapter 1, we read that God appointed the Lord Jesus heir of all things, through whom also he made the church.

[8 : 08] No, it doesn't say that. Through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining the church.

No, it doesn't say that. Sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, of course by his death on the cross, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

Jesus reigns. Note, all things. The universe, sustaining all things. And he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

The right hand of God the Father Almighty. How can that be? God is spirit. He doesn't have a right hand. It's anthropomorphic language.

It's a metaphor to help us understand. The right hand is the place of supreme power and authority. You know, we talk about he's my right hand man. Or he's my right hand woman.

[9 : 12] She is the right hand of the company. Or whatever the case may be. It's a metaphor which is saying to us, Jesus is seated in the place of supreme power and authority.

And as you know from the book of Revelation, what is he seated on? He's seated on a throne. He is the king of all kings. The Bible is very clear that Christ is Lord of all.

Church and world. Our private lives and our public lives. He's Lord over the spiritual and the material. Over the sacred and the secular. He is seated at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

And he reigns over all. And he reigns forever. Jesus is Lord. It's a very, very powerful phrase.

We as Christians recently celebrated Christmas. The incarnation. The birth of our Lord Jesus. And in many of the Christmas carols that we sing, we acknowledge that Christ is Lord.

[10 : 16] For example, you know this one so well. Oh, come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant. Let me read it. Come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold him. Born the king of angels.

He is the king of even the angelic world. The hosts of the angelic world. Who rules them? Jesus does. So don't think so much of Christmas.

Don't think so much of gentle Jesus, meek and mild. He is the king, even of the angelic hosts. The devil is very, very powerful.

Demons are very real and very powerful. But Christ rules over them. Oh, come let us adore him.

Christ the Lord. In Luke chapter 2, a favorite Christmas verse. We read, How did we ever miss this?

[11 : 23] Christ the Lord. Christ the Lord. But, do we really believe it? Do we really believe that Christ is Lord of all?

And do we live as those who believe that Christ is Lord of all? Not just Lord of the church. Not just Lord of my personal private life. He is Lord of that, very much so.

But he is also Lord of politics. He is Lord of economics. He is Lord of society. He is Lord of sport. He is Lord of our entity. He is Lord of all. And we need to live accordingly.

The evidence here in South Africa suggests that we Christians don't really believe that Jesus is Lord. We simply pay lip service to the Lordship of Christ.

We are mere nominal Christians. Do you know, I remember being, in 1987, Lindy and I arrived at St. James. Some of you would have been at St. James in 1987. And I can remember after a Sunday service or Bible study, I can't remember exactly which, I was astonished by the crowds.

[12:32] Remember in those days, I mean, the crowds were massive at St. James. And I remember going to Frank and saying, I feel quite overwhelmed. I will never be able to preach here. It's just, there's too many people.

I feel completely overwhelmed and out of my depth. And he looked at me and he said, Ross, most of them are nominal Christians. That's why I do evangelism. And he was right.

That is the tragically true, that this is tragically true, is seen in our view and practice of the church's relationship to the world. Our relationship to society. Our relationship to the government.

Our relationship to the state. Our state. The South African state. Secondly, Christ reigns. That's number one. Secondly, so the question we are asking today is, what should the relationship be between the church and society?

Or Christ and culture? Or church and state? Or church and nation? Or church and world? These are used interchangeably by theologians, although they are not actually quite the same thing.

[13:37] What is the role of Christians in South Africa today? What is the role of the church in South Africa today?

Well, it's a vast and complex subject. And it's an important issue. So much so that a number of our universities have centers for the study of public theology.

And of course, I have the privilege of teaching missiology at George Redfield College, in which we touch on some of these very, very important issues. So that's the question for this morning.

That's number two. What should, if Christ is Lord of all, what should the relationship be between the church and the world, society?

In our case, South Africa, South African society. Number three, my third heading. I think in our South African context, certainly in my lifetime, there have been and still are two misunderstandings of what the church is.

[14:41] Now, this is very important because how you define the church will determine how you understand the church's relationship to society.

What does it mean to be a witness to the world? What does it mean to be light to the nations? What does it mean for us Christians to be salt and light in South Africa?

Well, I think you'll never be able to answer that question, nor will I, unless we are clear on the church's relationship to society.

So these two misunderstandings, let's look at them. 3.1. The first misunderstanding is based on the assumption that world, the world, South Africa, and church can be neatly distinguished from one another.

Now, that view manifests itself in two ways. A, the church may be characterized by isolation. It's a horrible word and it's going to shock you.

[15:46] And I don't even like to use it, but it is partly true. The church may be characterized by isolation, a ghetto mentality. We build dikes to keep the world out instead of going into the world with the gospel of Jesus.

It builds barriers. So you see, on this view, the church builds barriers to keep the world out. And it's forever issuing cautions, like a benevolent grandmother or grandfather addressing boisterous children.

I know you can't do that in your private life. You can't do that. You're a Christian. You can't behave like this. But then we completely ignore the rest of society. Its emphasis lies in the past rather than the present or the future.

And so the status quo, according to this view, that is the existing state of affairs, especially regarding biblical justice and social issues and political issues, the status quo, according to this view, is adhered to at all costs.

And change, confession, and especially repentance are avoided. Because that takes us out of our comfort zone. The church becomes a caretaker.

- [17:01] It becomes an institution. It becomes an irrelevant religious club. B, this misunderstanding of the church may also result in aggression.

So this misunderstanding of the church, where you separate the church from the world and they've got nothing to do with each other, first, it results in a ghetto mentality. We withdraw from the world.

That's why we could tolerate apartheid. That's why we can tolerate ANC corruption. Because we feel, but that's the world. It's got nothing to do with me. I'm a Christian. The second result of this misunderstanding is that the church starts to use the language of aggression.

The world is an enemy. This world is seen as something to conquer, to overcome. Many metaphors have been used of the church to express this aggression.

For example, the church is an army. We have a crusade. We talk about our marching orders. We talk about an evangelistic campaign. We talk about conquest, etc., etc.

- [18:06] Without us even knowing, we are using the language of aggression. Whatever happened to God so loved the world that He gave His Son? In this first misunderstanding of the church, that is the assumption that the church and the world can be kept completely separate, the church becomes irrelevant.

Because you see what happens is we neatly bypass all the real issues. Thus the church becomes worldly in its very attempt to be otherworldly because it never challenges the sins of the world.

In its lifestyle and priorities, the church simply mimics the world. That's what happens when you separate the church from the world and think Christ is Lord, oh yes, but He's only Lord of the church, not of the world.

Ramaphosa can do what He wants. The government of national unity can do what they want. Donald Trump can do what He wants. That's not right. They can't do what they want because Christ is Lord of them too.

He's not just Lord of His church. That's 3.1. That's the first misunderstanding where you completely separate church from society. Secondly, the second misunderstanding of the role of the church in society implies the absence of any tension between church and world.

- [19:30] In other words, the world swallows the church. So now they're not separate. Now the church loses its identity and the world completely swallows the church.

The church becomes identified with the world. You've seen this, for example, with the World Council of Churches. The church becomes identified with the world, assimilated and conformed to the world.

It adopts the world's agenda. This has tragically been true of the evangelical church in South Africa during apartheid. We were swallowed by apartheid.

And now again, under the ANC, I know it's now the GNU, but that's only very recent. And who knows what that's going to lead to. We allowed, we allowed the apartheid government and the ANC government to swallow and to dominate and to control the church and what it does in society.

The church adopts the world's agenda. The church becomes secularized. Let me briefly mention five or six fallacies of this approach. A, the church becomes redundant because it only offers what any other organization can offer.

[20 : 44] Christianity is then offered as simply a program of social and political reform and not as a religion of redemption. In this case, the church will fail.

It's the exact opposite of the first misunderstanding. See, it's funny how we go from one extreme to the other. Why can't we rather just be biblical? B, a second fallacy in this approach is that humanity's greatest need is easily bypassed.

And here you really do see this. In the 1960s and 1970s in the World Council of Churches, it's tragic. Not everything's bad in the World Council of Churches, by the way. But in this regard, they failed.

People need to be saved from sin, from Satan, from the judgment of God. And from the reality, the awful reality of hell.

But this is forgotten when the church is secularized. A secularized church will never engage in evangelism. That's the World Council of Churches today.

[21 : 49] See, another danger in the second misunderstanding of the church is that all the guilt for the wrongs of society can be so easily located outside the church.

See, we've now become assimilated. So, the world has swallowed the church. So, because we are guilty, we blame the world, you see, for leading us astray.

D, perhaps the gravest danger in the second misunderstanding of the church is that the ambiguities of our words and deeds may be so easily forgotten. You know, dear friends, well, of course we do know.

The church is not perfect. The church constantly needs to come back to Jesus, to reform, to repent, to confess. The church is always a mixture of righteousness and sin, obedience to God and disobedience, faith and faithlessness, light and darkness, life and death, weeds and wheat, goats and sheep, nominalism and troop discipleship.

So, let me recap before we go on. Two misunderstandings of the church and therefore of its role in society.

[23 : 05] The first misunderstanding of the role of the church in South Africa assumes that world and church can be neatly separated, distinguished from one another.

And so the church ignores the issues in the world and withdraws from the world. And we become a ghetto. We become a holy huddle. And all we do is read our Bibles and pray and listen to sermons.

Now, those are very important things. Make no mistake. But we must remember Christ is Lord of all. The second misunderstanding of the role of the church in society implies the absence of any tension between church and world.

And so the world swallows the church. By completely secularizing its message, the second misunderstanding, think of the World Council of Churches, the church invalidates that message completely.

But the first misunderstanding, where you withdraw from the world, is much more veiled and can appear quite pious and respectable.

[24 : 14] But precisely because of this, its seduction is perhaps much more dangerous. And it's this misunderstanding, separating the church from society, withdrawing from society, remaining silent during the horrific evils of apartheid, remaining silent during the shocking corruption of the ANC.

It is this misunderstanding of which we, the evangelical church in South Africa tends to be most guilty. In the words of Professor David Bosch, probably South Africa, Africa, and the world's leading missiologist of all time, Professor David Bosch wrote in 1991, neither a secularized church, that is a church which concerns itself only with this worldly activities, World Council of Churches, nor a separatist church, that is a church which involves itself only in evangelism.

Neither can faithfully articulate the mission of God. We need to remember Christ is Lord of all. And that brings me to my final heading, number four.

What then is the responsibility of the church to and in South Africa? What is our responsibility as Reach SA? What is your responsibility as St. Mark's Plumstead?

What is our responsibility to South Africa today as the church of the Lord Jesus? How does the church avoid these two misunderstandings which I've tried to paint for you?

[25:56] Well, following the lead of David Bosch and John Stott and World Evangelical Missiological Conferences, I'm going to attempt an answer in eight brief points.

But there isn't time so I'm only going to do three or four. But the rest, Dylan will have the rest on his computer. Are you still okay? I know it's like a lecture, I'm sorry, but I've been lecturing for the last 15 years, I can't help it.

So let me tell you two quick stories. Some of you will remember this from St. James. When my son Bruce was a preschooler, not even primary school, preschool, as always, we had those magnificent nativity plays at St. James up on the stage and Bruce was a shepherd.

And one, maybe one of your children at the time, I can't remember who it was, one of the young boys was King Herod. And at a certain point to show the audience that he was King Herod, somebody came up and put a crown on his head.

My son Bruce could not take it. He jumped up in front of those thousand people at St. James and he shouted at the top of his voice, No! Jesus is King!

[27:13] Now, if a little boy could understand that and could be incensed when somebody pretended to be King, why are we not doing that?

Why? A second story. I know this is not comfortable and I know, I tell you, it's hard for me to preach on these things because I'm more guilty than anyone.

I mean, I was rector of St. James, as you know, for me, Linda and I served there for 23 years and I hadn't then fully understood this theology, this biblical theology.

So I'm more guilty than anyone. But it's important that we engage with it and see where we may have gone wrong and come back and own Jesus as Lord, not just as Savior.

He is Savior. He is Savior. Thank God He is our Savior. But He's also Lord. And we've got to live accordingly in South Africa.

[28:16] Second story, I remember the first time I went to the dentist and I heard stories about dentists. And I'm part of a very big extended family.

My mom was one of eight. Yes, my dad was one of five. And we grew up in touch with all our aunts and uncles and cousins. There were hundreds of them.

Now there's thousands of them. And I can remember people talking about the dentist and the pain and the drill and some uncles saying, no, they didn't even have an injection when they had their filling, blah, blah.

And you know, as a little boy you hear these things while they're chatting. You're running around with your cousins but you hear stuff. And then I had to go to the dentist. And I can remember going to my mom and saying, I don't want to go to the dentist.

I'd rather put up with a toothache. And she looked at me and she said, my boy, sometimes we have to be cruel to be kind. And you know, the Bible is like that.

[29 : 16] And God is like that. He's our Father. He loves us. We may think he's being cruel by rebuking us like this and reminding us that his son, our Lord Jesus, is not only Savior, he is Lord.

And we've got to live accordingly in church and in society. Apartheid would never have happened. Colonialism would never have happened. ANC corruption and abuse and maladministration would never have happened if we really lived out the Lordship of Jesus.

So, what does it mean? How, what is our responsibility to South Africa then? I've got eight, eight suggestions but I'm only going to mention four.

A, intercession. I think that's our first responsibility. I suggest to you that the first role of the church in South Africa is to pray for South Africa.

It's people, all the governments, you know, local governments, municipal governments, provincial governments and, what's it, national government, the state.

[30 : 25] We must pray for our country, dear friends. We must pray. When last did you pray and weep before God for South Africa? here's just one biblical example.

You know it well. 1 Timothy chapter 2. Paul says to young Timothy, well, not so young, I urge then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all those in authority.

We must pray. Dear friends, we must pray. I sometimes wonder if the slow progress towards real peace and reconciliation and hope and equality in South Africa is because of the prayerlessness of God's people.

If local congregations were to bow down before God every Sunday for 10 or 20 minutes pleading for our country, what might God do in South Africa?

But I think this needs to be said. In order to give credibility to its intercessory prayer, the church will have to repent in more ways than one.

[31 : 46] The tragedy is that the church usually only starts changing when pressure from outside forces it to change, whereas such change and repentance ought to come as a result of the very nature of the church.

We are meant to be characterized by repentance. To put it in Old Testament prophetic language, change ought to come because of the repentance of Israel rather than because of the batterings of Assyria.

You see, it's no good saying I'm praying for South Africa if we are not a repentant people. How can you pray for South Africa? How can you expose the sins of the ANC if you were complicit during apartheid?

People will say to you, you're a hypocrite. You're an absolute hypocrite. I don't want your prayers. But if we are genuinely repentant and people see that, that we are committed to Christ as Lord, our prayers will be valuable to them.

There's an authenticity about them. It's a little bit like James. Remember James in the New Testament? James says if a brother comes in and he's hungry and starving and you say, oh, God bless you, I'll pray for you.

[33 : 05] James says, don't do that. That's hypocrisy. Give him something to eat for goodness sake. It's the same with us. But the first responsibility, I think, the first thing we should be doing in a correct understanding, a biblical understanding of the role of the church in South Africa is we should be praying for our country.

B, suffering. That is a willingness to suffer for the lordship of Christ. Now, suffering is a test of our authenticity. Both evangelism and commitment to kingdom justice, God's justice, as it's revealed in the Bible, what Tim Keller calls generous justice.

Generous is a play on grace. In other words, God's justice. Both evangelism and commitment to justice in South Africa is a costly activity.

And it may cost you your life. People do not want justice. They don't want God's justice. for both the gospel of Christ and the kingdom values of Christ are unpopular.

They challenge the status quo. They challenge our selfishness. And so, you will suffer. Think of what happened to Nelson Mandela.

[34 : 26] Because he was simply fighting and speaking up for anti-racism and equality and dignity and for all people to acknowledge that we are created in God's image.

Yet he was chucked away in prison, called a terrorist. What happened to Steve Biko? What happened to Frank Schikane? Do you know that Frank Schikane, when he spoke out against apartheid, ended up in prison and he was tortured?

Do you know who one of his torturers were? a fellow member of his church. You will suffer.

If we, you see, that's why, that's why this is an issue. It's nice to talk about Jesus as Savior because there's no cost. But the moment you start talking about Christ as Lord and Ramaphosa, you cannot do just what you want.

Well, then you're going to suffer. You see, we in our middle class comfort, in our pursuit of leisure and pleasure and treasure, we are no longer willing, so it seems, to suffer for Christ who is Lord.

[35 : 36] And so we conveniently but simply cease to be salt and light in God's world, God's South Africa.

See, evangelism. Prayer, suffering, a willingness to suffer for the truth. Evangelism. Evangelism is a central dimension of the church's witness.

But the ultimate aim must be constantly kept in mind. So what is the purpose of evangelism? Why should we evangelize? Why should we share our faith? Why should we tell others about Jesus and long that they should come to faith in Christ?

What is the reason? Here's the reason. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 15. And he died for all, that those who live, listen carefully, should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.

The whole point of evangelism is discipleship. That we live for Jesus every day, everywhere. And who is Jesus?

[36 : 46] He is Savior and he is Lord. And then finally, and with this I end, you've been so patient, I'm sorry, the time has gone, Dylan. But I'll send you the notes, so don't worry.

And because of time, I'm not going to recap. They used to laugh at me at St. James because I'd always end my sermons with, let me now recap and summarize. So I'm not going to recap and summarize today.

I'm just going to make this last point and then I'm going to stop. Prophetic preaching. Number one, prayer. We should be praying for our country. If Christ is Lord of all and we want to live under his lordship, we are going to confront authorities.

There's going to be suffering. Thirdly, what is the third one? Evangelism. And fourthly, prophetic preaching. With this I end. The fourth role of the church in South Africa is that of prophet.

Now prophecy, as I use it here, distinguishes itself from evangelism. It doesn't address people in order to convert them. That's evangelism. And it's critical.

[37 : 51] We must never stop evangelizing. But prophetic preaching rather aims at unjust situations and laws and institutions and practices in South Africa that are contrary to the will of God for his world.

The church must confront the powers that be and challenge them to employ their power for the greater sake of justice, peace, freedom, equity, humanity for all.

You see, the state is not Lord. Christ is Lord. Otherwise, the church becomes a foreign enclave with no relevance whatsoever to daily life.

every church must speak prophetically into its culture, challenging the culture's unbiblical assumptions and norms and lifestyle.

We must speak out prophetically. I thank God that South African theologians and preachers like Bayes Nordi and David Bosch and Yop Durant and Frank Shikane and Desmond Tutu and many others challenged the National Party government on its evil policy of apartheid at huge personal cost.

[39 : 15] They were prophets in our midst. And my people, the white, middle class South Africans, very interesting. when Tutu spoke out against apartheid, my parents and sisters and extended family all said, oh, he's becoming so political.

But when in his old age, Bishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu spoke out against the ANC, we all hailed him as a hero.

Friends, we are hypocrites and we've got to stop it. Christ is Lord of all or don't call him your Lord. The United Nations called apartheid a crime against humanity and yet for the most part we evangelicals said nothing.

We did nothing. We didn't fight against evil and wickedness. A complete contradiction of God's kingdom. Then in 1994, the ANC came to power.

A new state, a new government, a new beginning, new hope, a new South Africa. So we all hoped. But sadly, 30 years on and South Africa is on its knees due to many individuals in the ANC government as well as many structures in the ANC that are riddled with corruption, greed, theft, maladministration, inefficient administration, dishonest administration, mismanagement, abuse of government departments, the abuse of state resources for party political purposes and self-enrichment which has crippled our country.

[41 : 01] It's left the poor poorer and fed the South African fire of racism instead of snuffing it out and building a common sense of nationhood.

South Africa is broken. So much so that some of the party political campaign posters during the last elections, you'll remember them, read, and I quote, Red State Africa, rescue South Africa, fix South Africa, we need new leaders, we can rebuild South Africa, stop the suffering and so it went on.

Hardly a month goes by without a senior ANC official facing major charges of corruption. Fraud, money laundering, racketeering, intimidation, violence, assassinations, theft from the poor, the list goes on.

But, the evangelical church is dead quiet. We don't say a word. If you love someone, if you love your country and you see things going wrong, surely you're going to speak up, but we don't.

We don't believe, you see, that Jesus is Lord. This is in direct disobedience to the Lord Jesus' command command, that we should be salt and light in South Africa.

[42 : 19] You know, when you've got a wound and you put salt on it, it burns. Of course, you're going to suffer if you speak out because people don't like to be burnt. If people love darkness and you suddenly bring a bright light into the midst, they'll hate you for it.

But we are called to be salt and light. We must stop tolerating, if we are Christians, the evils in our society. For too long, we have seen the erosion of South Africa's political center.

South Africa needs a new round of honest engagement about its unfinished post-1994 business. And surely, the Church of Jesus Christ should be making a positive contribution.

Why? Because Christ is Lord. Not just of the Church, but of the whole world. world. I'm going to read something that's going to shock you. At a campaign event last year in Itaquin, Durban, Ramaphosa told a church gathering, and I quote verbatim, it is God's will that the ANC governs this country.

End of quote. Now, I think that's shocking. Yes, good government is God's will, but to use theology to promote your ideology and the rule of a particular political party is both very wrong and very dangerous.

[43 : 44] And the Church is silent. Why is the Church so silent? The famous journalist and political scientist R.W. Johnson writes, all the powerful groups in the white, Indian, and colored communities scrambled to stay on side with their new masters, referring to the ANC when they came to power.

The press, the churches, and the universities all followed suit. Well, the press, that's one thing. The universities, that's another thing. The Church, how on earth could the Church follow suit?

We always knew that Christ is Lord, not the National Party government, not the ANC, not the GNU. Christ is Lord. So when things were wrong, why didn't we speak up?

Because we don't really believe that Jesus is Lord. R.W. Johnson continues, after 1990, the churches fell into a deep somnolence from which they don't seem to be able to wake up.

Dear friends, we need to repent. Sorry, I know. Remember, the dentist. You've got to be cruel to be kind. God's word is not all, just promises and comfort. We are His people.

[45 : 02] We are His people. We need to live lives that honor Him, or we mustn't claim to be His people. Where are the prophets in the Church today?

May God raise up again such men and women. Dear friends, it's been a monstrous victory for Satan that those who believe in Christ have so often aligned themselves with the sinful structures of the world and the vested interests of the powerful.

God calls us to be salt and light in South Africa. That's the gospel. That's the good news. Christ is Savior and Lord.

The Church should make a strong impact on society. And with this, I end. Listen to the sociology professor, Robert Bella. Quote, I think we should not underestimate the significance of a small group of people who have a new vision of a just and gentle world.

The quality of a culture, this is a leading world, international leading sociologist, the quality of a culture may be changed when only 2% of its people have a new vision.

[46 : 20] Now, surely there are more Christians in South Africa than 2% of the population. If just 2% of us really take to heart that Jesus is Lord of all, our country will become way more God-honoring.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we don't really know how to respond, Lord. These are very big truths and Lord, we're all aware that we are sinners, we are not perfect, we have failed in many regards, but we want to say today, O Lord Jesus, we do love you with all our hearts and we love your church.

We are members of your church and we will be for all eternity. Please give us grace to live our lives in South Africa under the Lordship of Christ for your greater glory.

Amen.