

Sermon August 27, 2023 Kill the King

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Among top news stories last week was the plane crash and resulting death of the founder and chief of the Wagner mercenary Group. Yevgeny Prigozhin's private jet crashed on its way from St. Petersburg to Moscow. Aviation accidents happen every day. Indeed, this particular plane crash may have been an accident. However, when Prigozhin was sickened by the lack of military leadership in the Russian army during the war in the Ukraine, coupled with the excessive death toll of soldiers, he led his group in a mutinous coup against the Kremlin, downing a number of Russian helicopters with their crews and wreaking major havoc in his advance toward Moscow. He never made it to Moscow. He never decapitated the heads of Russia. He never took power. Instead, Putin cut a deal with Prigozhin where they would both keep their heads, Putin remained in power, and Prigozhin would not be tried for treason.

There is great value and wisdom in learning from history. History will teach you that if you are going to make a run for the king, you'd better finish the job. Otherwise, the one you let remain in power will finish you. This truth is summarized in the simple phrase *Kill the King*. Many suspect that is exactly what happened to Yevgeny Prigozhin. He ignored the Kill the King rule. There are three things you need to make sure you do. Call your mother on Mother's Day, brush your teeth before bed, and when you make a run at the throne, be sure you Kill the King.

Well Satan either knew intuitively or from history that if he was going to thwart Jesus' plan of removing him from power he needed to kill Jesus, or Jesus would kill him. He needed to kill the king. Actually, he needed to kill the King of kings. That's quite a task. When Satan's masterfully orchestrated plan was coming to fruition, it didn't look good for Jesus. The crowd shouting crucify him was against him. The leaders of Judaism were against him. The Roman government was against him. As he became our representative, even God the Father turned his back on Jesus. And Jesus died hanging there on the cross with the sign above him that said he was a king. Through his operatives, Satan killed the king. Mission accomplished!

Well not so fast. We know the rest of the story. It's hard to keep a good man down and Jesus is the best. After his Sabbath rest in the tomb, Jesus rose from death. He lives to all eternity never to die again. This is bad for the devil. It is good for us. It's bad for the devil because he failed to kill the king. Well, he thought he killed the king - and he did. We confirm that when we confess that Jesus died for us. However, he who was once dead didn't stay that way. Back from the assassination attempt, Jesus removed Satan from power and is headed his way to take care of him once and for all. Think *lake of fire*. It's good for us because even though Jesus died, he rose again. Baptized into his name we will also rise again and belong to Jesus forever. Satan has no hold on us anymore.

General Prigozhin didn't follow the Kill the King wisdom, and perhaps because of his error he is now dead. Satan thought he had done away with Jesus but was mistaken. He will be destroyed. Now it's our turn.

Jesus actually teaches us to use the kill the king principle. In Colossians 3:5 it says, "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Paul doesn't say here that we should talk against all these things. Or negotiate with them or vote against them. He doesn't say we should run up and give them a good spear wound in the gizzard and then flee in retreat. Paul says to *put them to death*, KILL THEM. If we attack them but let them live, they will come back to fight another day. They will return to overpower us once again. They can kill our faith rather than our faith killing them. This is the warning Jesus gives the church in Laodicea. He warned them they had become comfortable in their lives, but they were lukewarm in their commitment to Christ. They hadn't done away with evil. They weren't even trying. As a result, it says, Jesus was going to do away with them. Let us consider ourselves warned!

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13 Again it says for us not to play footsie with all these evils, but to kill them, bury them, put a heavy stone over them, lock them in a crypt. By no means ever let them back up or they will turn on you and devour you. Then Jesus will finish you off on judgement day. If and when you thought you had them killed but they come back for you, repeat the process. Remember who you are as a soldier of the Most High. Remember

your purpose to live according to the principles of Christ. Remember the plan to put evil to death in your life.

Yevgeny Prigozhin was quoted as saying, "We are all going to hell. But in hell we will be the best." He was talking about himself and those in his group. If he only knew what he was saying! What does it mean to go to hell and be the best? What constitutes being the best in hell? I suppose it means that among all those in hell he felt his group would be the most capable of doing whatever it is they do in hell. He was wrong, though. The one who went to hell and was the best is Jesus. Jesus is the sinless Son of God. Through him all things were made. When he bore our sins in hell, he released us from that debt to God's justice. Now he is the King of the universe. Jesus was the best in hell. He was so good hell couldn't hold him. Now we are delivered from even the most capable beings in hell. Hell still wants us. There is plenty of room. Remember the Kill the King rule. Jesus killed death and the power of hell. He is on his way to put an end to Satan. When the devil comes calling in your front yard, hit him on the head with the garden shovel. Knock him out. Put him down. Kill him to bother you no more. Always remember how important it is to kill the king.

**The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in him.
Amen.**

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