



RULING WITH CHRIST

(re)Imagine Heaven | 5.10.26

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Libin Abraham 0:01

One of the things that I think is amazing about a mom is that moms have a way of shaping their children for the future their kids have yet to see moms, you have this cunning ability of seeing potential and cultivating patterns that help children reach their potential before they even see it. I remember the prayers my mom was praying for me that I will be a minister of the gospel long before I had anything to do with ministry. She saw it way before I did. And so many moms, you are beautifully shaping character daily. You are shaping your children to be responsible, teaching them in everyday moments what it looks like to be faithful in the small things, so that one day they can be faithful in great things and in similar ways. God uses everyday moments of our life, even mundane, ordinary moments, to shape us for our future in heaven, a future, a destiny that we cannot quite see. So today, in this series that we've been on about reimagining heaven, I want to talk to you about our destiny, our future. Then honestly, we have a little hard time getting our mind around. For many of us, when we think about heaven, we can imagine the harps, the clouds, maybe even an endless, Lazy River. Maybe that's just me. I don't know. We have a category of heaven where we will see Jesus, and that's true. We won't suffer anymore, and that's true. We will be reunited with our loved ones, and that is true as well. But the vision of heaven that Scripture gives to us is even bigger than that. Heaven is not just comforting, heaven is compelling. Heaven isn't just peaceful. Heaven is actually really exciting. In fact, here's what I want you to know, that God did not save us merely to escape earth. No, He saved us to reign with Christ in His redeemed creation forever, not just to leave this earth. No, there's more than that. He saved you to reign with Him, to rule with Him. Sometimes we think about heaven, we get excited, because it seems like that's the escape of responsibility. But what have I told you? There's actually more responsibility, responsibility waiting for you. The Bible says you are going to reign with Christ. You are going to inherit the earth, you and I mean every single one of you who are in Christ, you are going to govern cities, judge angels, and steward creation for all eternity long. I know you're thinking, Who spiked our pastor's coffee this morning, because that sounds like a made up fantasy, but I assure you it's not, and we're going to see it. And that isn't even like a fringe, obscure teaching of the scriptures. It's not just found in a few buried passages. No, no. The story of God from Genesis to Revelation is of a people reigning with God. Genesis opens up with humanity reigning under God, and Revelation closes with guess what, humanity reigning with God. So here's the first thing I want you to notice. We were created to rule under God. This is the very genesis of our creation. We were created to rule under God. Genesis, 126, 28 Then God said, Let us make man in Our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth and the creatures that crawl on the earth. So God created man in His own image. He created him in the image of God. He made them male and female, God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky and every creature that crawls on the earth. When you look at this account of creation, humanity was not created to merely have a passive kind of existence. No, we were created to rule and reign with God. God says, Go, build, go, rule, go, cultivate, go, Steward, go, lead and reflect my character and my nature across creation. This is our design for why we were created. But then sin happened, and sin corrupted our ability to rule under God. And now, because of sin, instead of ruling with God, we began to selfishly rule against God. So sin made leadership abusive. Kingdoms became very. Violent and power became oppressive because of the effects of sin, and every human government since then has carried this effect. And yet, when it comes to humanity's call to rule with God, God did not abandon his original plan. God, rather, chose to redeem it. He didn't give up on the vision of reigning on the earth with humanity. He chose to redeem it. So in the Gospel, when Jesus comes, he doesn't just come to forgive us of our sins and then to take us out of this earth. No, no. He comes to bring a new kingdom where Christ physically, visibly, will be reigning on the earth with His church. Why? Because we were always created to rule with God. Jesus came to rule the Earth along with his saints. If I put a period at the end of Jesus came to rule the earth period, you'd be like, yeah,

that's good. I'm good with that. But he came to rule the earth, along with, beside the saints, the Church of Jesus. When you read the Old Testament, prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, when these scripture writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, have a vision of the Messiah, what they see is a King who's coming to bring a kingdom so that he can reign with his people. For instance, look at Zechariah nine. Verse, nine to 10. Zechariah says, Rejoice greatly. Daughter Zion, shout in triumph, daughter Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. May I ask you a question, Has this been literally fulfilled? Yes, it has on Palm Sunday. This is what the gospel writer said. It was Jesus rode into Jerusalem riding on a donkey to fulfill the words of Zechariah. But the prophecy doesn't end there. Then Zechariah says the bow of war will be removed, and he will proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion will extend from sea to sea, from Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. Look the first part of that prophecy has literally happened. And if it happened like that, I'm led to believe the second half of that is also going to happen, not just metaphorically or spiritually, but literally. Jesus will bend every bow of war. And today, we're not there yet. Creation isn't there yet. The nations aren't there yet. Wars still rage, but there is coming a visible rule of Jesus on the Earth, where from sea to sea over every nation Jesus, and Jesus alone is ruling and reigning as the prince of peace. Amen, that's actually going to happen. And then Daniel says, in his vision, look what Daniel says in chapter two, verse 44 in the days of those kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will itself endure forever. The picture that Daniel has of the kingdom of Jesus is not of a kingdom that coexists with other earthly kingdoms, which is the case today. Today, the in breaking of God's Kingdom has happened, but his kingdom coexists with earthly kingdoms and rulers and powers. But there is coming a day where visibly and literally, the kingdom of God removes, Daniel says, crushes earthly powers and systems and kingdoms, and there will only be one kingdom that's here to stay. It is the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Daniel says again in Daniel chapter seven, another vision. In verse 13, Daniel records, I continued watching the night visions, and suddenly one, like a son of man, was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him, he was given dominion and glory and a kingdom so that those of every people, nation and language will serve him. Now we're getting a little bit more color to the kingdom vision that this kingdom is going to be so unique because it brings in every people, nation and language into this kingdom. Then he says, Every His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed. I love how honest Daniel is. He says, As for me, Daniel, my spirit was deeply distressed within me, and the visions in my mind terrified me. Be careful. You ask for visions. Sometimes they are terrifying. Then he says, I approached one of those who were standing by and asked him to clarify all this. So he let me know the interpretation of these things, these huge beasts, four number are four kings who will rise from the earth, but the holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever. Yes, forever and ever. So here's what Daniel sees, okay, this king is coming to establish a kingdom inclusive of every nation, tribe and language. But Daniel's got a question. When is this going to happen? And the interpretation is, look, these four beasts are four kingdoms, or four kings. And from Daniel's perspective, it's Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. And the angel is saying, After these four kingdoms, the Ancient of Days is going to come on Earth. He's speaking of the Incarnation, which happened during the Roman Empire. And he's going to come, and he's going to establish, he's going to bring in a kingdom that will reign forever. And that's why, when Jesus arrives on the scene, his first message, and his main message is the kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus is saying, The Four Kings have come and gone, and now I am fulfilling the words of Daniel a hand, the Ancient of Days who is arriving to bring the lasting and true kingdom. But don't miss verse 18 of what we just read for Daniel is told but the holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever. So here's what it means. Jesus isn't just bringing a kingdom for all for himself. He's bringing a kingdom for his holy ones to possess, to enter into, to reign and rule within forever. In fact, Daniel repeats this in verse 27 the kingdom, dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to who the people, the holy ones of the Most High His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey Him. Jesus didn't just come to bring a kingdom where we're invited into it. He came and he said, I'm making you the kingdom. I'm making you those who will part reign and rule in My Kingdom. Why? Because from the very beginning of God's design for creation, for humanity, this was always the plan that we will be called rulers with Christ and us fast forward all the way to Revelation, as John begins to see a vision of both what is and what will be about the nature of the kingdom and how we take part in it. Notice in Revelation two, verse 26 Jesus tells one of the churches the following words, and he says, The one who conquers and who keeps my word to the end, I will give him authority over the nations. Notice the tense it's I will right now the church has spiritual authority because we have the Holy Spirit of God living in us to declare the gospel of Jesus. But one day, those who endure to the end, they're given full authority over the nations. Jesus says, I will give him that day, authority over the nations. Chapter Five of Revelation, verse nine to 10, these this is the living creatures and the elders. They have a song to sing, and here's their song, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slaughtered and

you purchased people for God by your blood from again, every nation, every tribe, language, people and nation, you made them a kingdom and priests who are God and they will reign on the earth, these elders are singing the same song that Daniel captured in his vision, the lasting Kingdom is made up of every nation triumph and language, and now they become God's kingdom. And what are they going to do? They're not just saved forever and ever. They are reigning with Him forever and ever. The Book of Revelation comes to close with the last image, the last chapter of the last book in the Bible, Revelation, 22 verse five, notice what it says, night will be no more. People will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light. And again, they will reign forever and ever. Who is the day? It's the church. It's you. I want this to settle in for you. Everything we have read, from Zechariah to Daniel to Revelation, that's not just good theology. Say that's your future. We thought about that, that's your and my future. This is the destiny of the church to reign and rule with Jesus forever. Because sometimes we wonder, does my life count? Do I matter? Is there significance to my story? And God will say to you, oh, you matter more than you can even fathom, because the story that he invites you to is not just to be saved forever, but it is to reign forever. Jesus not only came to save our soul, he came to restore our calling to rule and reign with Him. Hear this, the gospel is not just a rescue mission. The Gospel is a restoration plan to bring you back to your design, yes, of intimacy with God, sins forgiven, but also the restoration of your call to rule and reign with Him forever. I know it sounds like it made a fantasy, but it's here in the text, isn't it? This is the future of the church. But this is also so liberating now, because so many people fight to gain and keep earthly power while compromising their Christ centered gospel convictions and identity, because they are convinced that earthly power is all there is. Now, if God blesses you with earthly influence and governmental powers, praise God. Use it for the good of others and for His glory, but never compromise your unique identity as a child of God as a saint, to fight and grab for and keep earthly power, because every earthly power is fleeting and it is temporary, but you have been grafted to reign and rule with Christ in the only kingdom that will far Outlast every and any earthly kingdom. Amen. This is our invitation. This is our calling, not just that we are saved forever, but that we are reigning and ruling with Jesus and on that day, on the redeemed Earth, we will finally see leadership without corruption. Think about that, don't you? Dream of that day. We will exercise authority without pride. We will have meaningful work and responsibility without exhaustion or injustice, because the Earth is covered in the glory and righteousness of Jesus. So what would it look like to reign and rule that day? Here's what it looks like ruling on the Earth looks like serving like Jesus, ruling on the earth, both then and spiritually, reigning with Christ. Now, you know what it looks like? It looks like serving like Jesus. I think we have a hard time getting our mind around ruling and reigning with Christ, because in our worldview, ruling looks like domination. It looks like politics, like campaigning, it looks like abuse, it looks like corruption, you name it. If that's what ruling is, we don't want that. But that's not how God defines what it means to rule and reign with Him. Jesus, in Luke 22 redefined leadership and service in the kingdom, and here's what Jesus said, I'm going to read a few parables for the rest of our time, because I want you to not just hear from the prophets of the Old Testament or even what John records in his vision. I want you to hear from Jesus' own mouth of what he thinks about you and the invitation to rule with Him. Jesus said in Luke 22 verse 24 onwards, then a dispute also arose among them about who should be considered the greatest. It's so funny. The disciples have just heard about the cross, and now they're thinking, but who's really the greatest in the kingdom? But he said to them, the kings of the Gentiles, lord it over them, and those who have authority over them have themselves called benefactors. It is not to be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you should become like the youngest, and whoever leads like the one serving. For who is greater, the one at the table or the one serving? And of course, they're going to say the one seated at the table with a high position, that's the greater one. And then Jesus says, Isn't it the one at the table? Meaning, I know this is what you're assuming. But then he says, But I am among you as the one who serves you. Are those who stood by me in my trials. Notice this, I bestow on you a kingdom, just as my father bestowed. One on me. Wow. Just as the Father bestowed a kingdom of Jesus, Jesus looks at his followers and say, This is your kingdom. Now I bestow on you this kingdom so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom. Then he says, and you will sit, by the way, on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. That's probably the only part they heard in that conversation. But Jesus is preparing his disciples to rule in the kingdom, and I think they are going to rule over the 12 Tribes of Israel one day. But Jesus totally flips the script of what ruling, reigning and leadership looks like. He says, you've seen Gentile leaders, Lord and abuse and be oppressive with their call to lead. Not so among you, because in the kingdom, if you want to sit at the table, you've got to serve the table. You got to serve the table if you want to sit at the table. Why? Because Jesus, who set the table, came to serve the table. He came to wash feet. He came to seek and save those who were lost, to serve us. And Jesus says, If you want any part in this kingdom, reigning in the kingdom looks like serving being great in this kingdom looks like being the most humble. It is an upside down kingdom. But this is how this kingdom works. There are many who will have used their influence lord it over people. They get the lowest seat of the kingdom of God. And yet those who were faithful in serving in the most ordinary and mundane ways, they are seated in places of honor. And isn't this what Jesus told us in Matthew on the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew five, verse three, Jesus

said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Verse five, Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth. Verse 10, blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Positions of leadership and reigning in his kingdom are given to the meek, the humble and the persecuted. It's given to those that the world overlooks and those the world overlooks. Jesus promotes our world will honor visibility. Jesus honors humility. The world promotes platforms. Jesus elevates faithfulness the world fights for power while Jesus gives power away to the least of the servants. That's how it works in his kingdom. So think if you're a mom who is just faithfully, sacrificially serving your children, your family, your community, in ways that most often go unnoticed. Jesus would say yours is the kingdom of God. If you're a caregiver who is weary in doing good, but you stay faithful to God's call in your life, yours is the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom belongs to the bus driver, the street sweeper. To those who feel unnoticed and unapplauded, Jesus says this, these are the greatest in the kingdom, and these are given roles of great leadership in his kingdom. So serving like Jesus is how we reign and rule in his kingdom, then our life now should be a preview of this eternal Kingdom, because, like I said, this kingdom has already begun. It's already at hand. It's here. It has come, and it will keep coming. So if this is our destiny, our life now is a preview and a preparation for what this kingdom is like. In Luke 19, Jesus told another parable, and in this parable, he's correcting a false notion, understanding that his disciples have, his disciples think the visible, glorious nature of the kingdom of God is going to come instantly. And Jesus is saying that that will come, but not yet. There's going to be a lot of waiting in between. But in the waiting, your waiting isn't wasted. In the waiting, you're called a steward and be held accountable to what God has given you. In the present, notice this parable of Jesus from Luke 19, verse 11 onwards. As they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and they thought the kingdom of God was going to appear right away. Therefore, he said, a nobleman traveled to a far country to receive for himself authority to be king and then to return. He called 10 of his servants. Gave them 10 minas, and he told them, engage in business until I come back. But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, We don't want this man to rule over us. At his return, having received the authority to be king, he summoned those servants he had given the money to so that he could find out how much they had made in business. The first came forward and said, Master, your mina has earned 10 more minas, well done, good servant. He told them, because you have been faithful in a very small matter, I have given you authority over 10 towns, I will give you authority over 10 towns. The second came and said, Master, your mina has made five minas. So he said to him, you will be given five towns. You'll be made responsible over five towns. What an interesting parable. A mina in first century was about the equivalence of three months salary, three months wages. So not a little amount, but it's a significant amount of resources, opportunities that God gave to them. And here God entrusted these resources into their hands, and he said, I'm coming back. And some took the resources God gave them and multiplied it, one multiplied one mina into 10, and the other multiplied one into five, and they were rewarded with cities and towns to govern. Now what's amazing about this parable is Jesus didn't require equal outcome, but what he did require was faithful engagement. They had different results. God never judged them for their difference in results. Why? Because all he said was, engage in business until I come back, he didn't measure what the outcomes were compared to the other person. All he looked was, did you engage faithfully with what I put in your hand? And just few verses later, you read about the other person who had one mina, just like everybody else, but he buried it. Didn't do anything with it, and Jesus passed on to him a severe judgment. So here's what I want you to do, ask you to open your hands. Open all of us, if you have hands, open up. What is it that he's given you? Our life now is not a pause until eternity. It's a preview and a preparation for eternity and until he returns you right now, carry in your hands representing your life. Resources influence. You have relationships you can steward. You have opportunities to seize. You have a calling. You have gifts, you have connections, you have lived experiences, and God has entrusted all of it, and his charge to you is engage in business till I come back. Because the things that are given in your hands, they are not random. They are Kingdom resources by which we engage our real world now, until he returns, be the first two guys in the story that when Jesus returns, we can say, God, here is my family, the kids you gave me, the marriage you gave me, the actual business you gave me the story you gave me the pain you allowed in my life, the wounds I carried, all of which I stewarded for your greatness and Your glory, and what does Jesus do in that moment? Says You've been faithful. Here's five towns. Here's 10 towns you can govern and lead. I think the main point of this passage is how we steward what God has entrusted to us now directly impacts what he will entrust us in eternity, how we steward what we do with the real things he's given us now is connected to what he will entrust us with for all eternity long, And the invitation is steward diligently and faithfully what God has placed in your hands, because it matters, not just for now, but forever. In first Corinthians six, Paul is dealing with a very practical issue in church. It seems like two people in the church were fighting, which is encouraging. If Paul dealt with that in the first century, we can be gracious towards people here now too, okay, but as they're fighting, they want to take their issue outside of the church to a Gentile court, and they're going to let an unjust, ungodly ruler decide their fate. So notice what Paul says to them in First Corinthians, six. Verse one to three, if any of you has a dispute against another, how dare you take it to a court before the

unrighteous and not before the saints? Or don't you know that the saints will judge the world, and if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the trivial cases. Don't you know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? Paul seems to think that part of our basic Christian theology is that you will judge angels and judge the world. I didn't grow up hearing that in Sunday school. I don't know about you, it must have been in one of the missing letters to the Corinthians, but he's like speaking to them, I said, That's common knowledge. You're going to judge the world. One day you're going to judge angels. And here's what he's saying. What he's doing is he's grounding everyday behavior in how they treat one another with their future vocation of ruling the earth with Christ. That's what he's doing. He's grounding their day to day stuff. It could be disputes, could be issues. He's saying, Man, if you can't manage your relationships on earth. How are you going to judge the angels one day? And I don't know what we're going to judge angels about. That's we'll figure that out then, but it's saying one day, you are going to rule with Christ, which means you are going to exercise authority. You are going to have to be discerning. You will have to be wise and mature. And if you can't deal with stuff here on Earth, how are you going to deal with even greater things then? So he grounds our day to day behavior in life, and he's saying, Be wise, discerning, humble spirit led in your judgment now be a minister of reconciliation now, because that's what you're going to be doing for all eternity, as you judge the world and as you judge angels, today, we are living in a contested kingdom. Ephesians six speaks about principalities and authorities and forces of darkness, even in heavenly realms, it's a reality, because there is a pseudo king called Satan who is already defeated, but he is trying to claim influence on the earth, called the prince of the earth, of the air, and along with his fallen angels, Satan still deceives and sin still wounds. But every single day, God is moving his story towards righteousness and restoration. Everything in the earth will be redeemed, and every human kingdom that rises up against God will be humbled and lowered, and we will see the kingdom of Jesus reigning forever, and friends you and I will reign with Him in that eternal kingdom. Randy Alcorn, in his book on heaven, he says it like this, Christ is not simply preparing a place for us. He is preparing us for that place. He's preparing you for that place in the way you navigate your resources. He's preparing you in the way you handle suffering. He's preparing you in the way you endure opposition and struggle. He is preparing you to reign and rule with Him. So Paul says in Second Timothy two, verse 12, if we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He will also deny us. So it is a call to live in preview and preparation of this coming rule of God on the earth where we will reign with Him. I want to close by reading a passage from Jesus that I think, tells us how amazing the grace of God truly is. Jesus said in Luke 12 verse 29 onwards, don't strive for what you should eat and what you should drink, and don't be anxious for. Then the Gentile world eagerly seeks all these things, and your Father knows that you need them, but seek His kingdom first, and these things will be provided for you. A lot of us, we stop right there, but notice what Jesus says next. Don't be afraid, little flock, because your father delights to give you the kingdom. Have you thought about that? Don't be afraid, even when you were living in a contested kingdom, because your heavenly Father, he's not reluctant, not hesitant. No, no. He delights. He cannot wait. Us to give you the kingdom. This blows my mind, because once we were enemies to God, we were in direct opposition against God. Then Jesus entered the story. He dies on a cross, He rises to the grave, and he could have just forgave us of our sins, and that would have been good enough, but that's not all he did. Yes, he forgave us of our sins, and then he made us sons and daughters. He could have just made us sons and daughters, and that would have been good enough, but that's not all he did. What did he do? He made us co heirs with Christ, and He bestows on you His Kingdom, and the father delights in giving you his kingdom so that we, who were once enemies to God, now rule and reign with Christ on the redeemed earth forever. This is the full story of God's redemptive plan and the grace of God. Isn't that just a beautiful thing for us to sit in and remember and cherish. This is a kingdom that lasts friends. So this week, see your story in light of it. Live in light of it. Be faithful in the small things, because that is how the Kingdom of God works. Endure in your suffering. Have courage and boldness when you were opposed. Love Well, serve well, because the least of the servants is great in the kingdom. And perhaps we will be less consumed with worry and anxiety, because we won't be chasing power and success on this earth. We will recognize the greatest significance for us is already secure with Jesus, because he looks at you and he looks at me and says, you are going to reign. So endure now, so you can reign with me later. Do you bow your heads with me? I imagine there are some today. You came to church on Mother's Day because your mom made you, and you did a good thing by showing up. But have you received this kingdom? Have you settled yes to this king who came to save you. He came on a rescue mission, but he also came on a restoration plan to forgive you, save you, but to invite you to a new life. And today, I want to invite you to consider Jesus. Every other kingdom, every other pursuit, will fade and it'll be gone. It's just a vapor. Befriend, enter into this kingdom, because it is at hand right before you. So Father, would you open our hearts today to experience the grace, not just a grace that forgives us of our sins and makes us new, but a grace that allows us to reign and rule with Christ, all of which we will see and be blown away by. We thank you that you chose us to do that with you. Didn't need us, but you chose us because it was always the plan help us this week to live in light of who we are in Christ, co heirs and rulers of this eternal kingdom. So Father, we need not worry. We need not be anxious, because the Kingdom of God is here to stay, and we are here to reign with you forever.

We love you. We thank you for this story and for this good news in Jesus' name. We pray. The church said, together, amen, amen, amen. Thank you so much for being with us. Have an amazing rest of Mother's Day. If you need prayer, join us in the front or in the prayer room. We look forward to seeing you soon.