

## **Find your Fit**

Good morning everybody. Good to be with you on this first Sunday after Easter. What a weekend it was! We had jam packed services. Our attendance over all three services was around 500 people! We had people giving their lives to Jesus! 18 Baptisms at the Sunrise Service! We praise God for a very special weekend celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.

We have had a lot of new visitors join our church recently, and we are so excited about that. We sometimes forget that not everyone knows the Staff team here at King of Kings, so for the benefit of new people and guests, let me quickly introduce our

### **Pastoral Team (Slide)**

That's me on the left, with Ian in the middle, and Tristan on the right. I don't know why I looked so pink when Damian took that photo. Perhaps that's just how I normally look and I have not realised yet! But these are the Pastors here at King of Kings, and it is a joy to lead, serve, and care for this congregation. We count it a great privilege. But then alongside the Pastors are our Ministry Directors;

### **Ministry Directors (Slide)**

Danielle is our Children's Director, Sino is our Worship Director, and Damian is our Youth Director. Great people. Great team. Great friends. Then last but not least, our;

### **Admin Team (Slide)**

Tracey on the left is my Personal Assistant. It would not be an exaggeration to say that I would be lost without her. She is a gem, and I am very grateful for her administrative support. And then Rosh, Rosh is our Church Receptionist. It is her lovely voice you will hear on the phone if you call the church office during the week. And she is so much more than just a receptionist. She ministers to so many people and is a great support to our team as well.

So there you have our Staff, and it is this group, together with the Church elected Overseers and Deacons, that make up the leadership of the Church here at King of Kings. I am sure we can introduce the other elected leaders on another Sunday soon.

But let's get into our message today!

Today we are launching our new teaching series called;

### **Find your Fit**

Find your fit. Who of you like puzzles? Who are our avid puzzle people here today? Good on you, I like puzzles too, I am just not always very good at them! I can handle the kiddies ones, but when you get to those 1000 piece puzzles, and they have been on the dining room table for about a month, and you're still searching for those elusive pieces, I begin to lose interest! It all gets a bit much. I've got enough drama

in my life, I don't need to be adding to that by searching for tiny missing pieces of cardboard!

But I know some of you are pretty avid puzzle people and finding that one lost piece is like finding Gold! Right?!

Well, if you think you're a specialist, maybe the Disney Ravensburger Puzzle is for you.

### **Picture of Disney Ravensburger Puzzle**

With over 40,000 pieces... That's right, 40,320 puzzle pieces in total, "Memorable Disney Moments..." is confirmed by Guinness World Records, as the largest commercially made puzzle in the world, both in the number of pieces, and overall size. It is 22 feet long, and over 6 feet wide.

Anyone have a 22 feet long dining room table? Anyone keen to give it a go? ...

Estimated Completion Time: About 600 Hours!

I don't know about you. But I don't have no time for that – 600 hours! That is like 25 days, Full time. No thanks.

Where am I going with this today – well, just like puzzle pieces each have their own unique fit into the big picture, we need to remember that God is the great designer who has made each of us, and in his grand design, he knows where each of us fit best.

In this series, which we will base on the book of Ephesians, we plan to ask that question about how to find your fit. We will move through three main themes;

### **Belong | Believe | and Become.**

Today we are going to begin, with Belonging.

### **Belong | Believe | Become.**

Belong. The reason we are starting there, is because we are going to see that it is through belonging, through understanding our identity, that we find we have a role, and place, and a purpose.

So let me ask you this question today.

### **Do you feel like you belong?**

I think many people battle with this. There is a strong desire in all of us, to really belong.

Now especially, after the global impact of the COVID pandemic, it is only recently that we are having larger numbers at our services, and I think that many people are looking around, and wondering to themselves, who are all these people?

I don't recognise a lot of them! Do they know me? Do I know them? Do I really fit in here? You know what – you're not alone. I am a Pastor and I sometimes feel like that around here. We are human. And we all struggle with feelings of belonging

sometimes. And it has been a time of tremendous change. But I want you to know that you do belong.

This is where our scripture for today comes in. Paul wrote a very, very important letter called Ephesians. It was written to the Ephesian believers. They were a complicated bunch. In Ephesus there were all kinds of strange people.

Ephesus was the Capital City of the Roman Province of Asia, and it was a busy commercial port. Ports in those days had all sorts of people. Sailors. Traders. Different cultures and races all converging into this one cosmopolitan city.

It is crazy how you can be living in a busy city, with people all around you, and still feel lonely.

The Apostle Paul had visited the City of Ephesus in the past, and he had in fact been the cause of a riot there, but that's another story! It was a wild city. Perhaps Cape Town is not too dissimilar.

And so in the Church of Ephesus, there were Christians that came from all kinds of backgrounds, all kinds of cultures, all kinds of vocations. There would have been soldiers, sailors, traders, bakers, blacksmiths, silversmiths, my people! But here is what I find so great, even though they are all so different, Paul affirms their identity in Christ, and their belonging to God.

**Ephesians 1:1;**

**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Father, thank you, that in Christ, we are your Holy People. Thank you that we can stand, in your Grace, and in your Peace, which comes from you. Amen.

Here is our first main point today;

**In Christ, you belong to God**

Everyone say – In Christ... I belong... to God. Amen.

Follow along as I read from verse 3;

**<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.**

**In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.**

Identity is such a crucial issue in our lives – who do you belong to?

How would you describe yourself? How do you view your identity? The picture we can sometimes paint of ourselves, can vary, according to our self-esteem, and can feel like it changes week to week depending on what is going on in our lives!

While we all have our own families, and friends, our unique tribes, we need to understand our true identity runs deeper than that. As human beings, we are made in the image of God.

And while we may belong to our own 'people' for those of us who are in Christ, we have been blessed in the heavenly realms, and we have been chosen, and we have been adopted, through his grace, into a new identity as God's child. We are now a new people – a new tribe. Christians.

God describes the believers in this passage, as Holy people. I'm sure, like us, they did not feel Holy, but God's description of them, is based on how God sees them, rather than on how they see themselves.

Some older bible translations use the word Saint. It is an odd word, but it means holy, set apart for God – it does not mean perfect – it means set apart for God.

The passage goes on to say, that in Christ, you have been chosen by God before the beginning of creation. That is mind blowing. God was thinking of you, before you were even born.

### **Psalm 139;**

**<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:15)**

Many people go through life, thinking that they are mistake... I don't fit in. I don't belong. I'm not important. I don't have a purpose. I am not special.

Those are lies. From Gods perspective, that is just not true. God created you. He designed you. He placed you. He values you.

The Word of God also says here, that God chose you. Perhaps you were that person who was always chosen last to be on the team. You feel like that is the story of your life. Well you know what? It's not. God chose you.

What does that mean? Some people get stuck into thinking, that because God chose you, that He did not choose someone else, therefore God is unfair. But that is not right, God has made His salvation known to all people.

But God also knows, from before you were created, if you will decide for yourself to follow Him or not.

The emphasis on this passage is from God's perspective though– He is the one who steps towards us and takes the initiative. We saw that during Easter. He is the one who makes the first move, to give up his one and only son, to die for us, to pay the price for us, even though we know that we have sinned. He is the one who offers us

forgives and grace. Why? Because He has chosen us – He has chosen you for adoption. He loves you, because he loves you!

I love the picture of adoption – if you have seen some amazing adoptive families like we have in this church, it is a wonderful picture of God's love for us. An adoption is a choice to be family – a family that is as legally binding as a biological family.

And it is in Christ, in this 'belonging,' that we have been blessed with so much;

Follow with me from verse 7;

**<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.**

**<sup>11</sup> In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup> in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.**

**<sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.**

Because you have been adopted by God there is access to certain benefits – things that you cannot access if you do not belong to God.

In Christ, we have redemption through his blood! In Christ, we have the forgiveness of sins, in Christ, he has made known to us the mystery of his will.

In Christ, we can know that God has a big picture plan – we know that Jesus is coming again as judge – and the whole world will be under His rule and authority.

We are living in this in-between time where God's Kingdom has come through Jesus, but it is not yet full established and evident – there are competing Kingdoms. But God will be victorious, and eventually evil will be defeated. Amen!

And what is God's purpose in all of this? Why does He want people to belong to Him? Why does He offer forgiveness and restoration with Him? Simply put... It is all for His glory, it is all so that we will praise and worship Him.

In Christ, we belong to God, and we have been marked with a seal, we not only have the identity of being God's child, but also we have the privilege, of having been sealed as his, by the Holy Spirit live within us. Thank you God.

So in this first section of Ephesians – we see that in Christ, we belong to God.

Everyone say again – In Christ... I belong... to God!

In the next part though, we see that in Christ, you not only belong to God, but...

### **In Christ, you also belong to God's Church**

Everyone say – In Christ... I belong... to God's Church! Nice.

Pastor Tristan will pick up more on this next week, but just briefly, in Ephesians 2:19 it says;

**<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens, with God's people, and also members of his household.**

In Christ, I'm a member of his household.

The NLT says it like this; **You are citizens, along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.**

In Christ, you are members of his family.

The Message translation says;

**<sup>19-22</sup> That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building.**

You... belong... here. I... belong here. In Christ, this is our home. And God is building his home. King of Kings is just one church, and wherever people gather, who believe in Christ, who preach the true gospel, who value the Word of God, and are filled with the Holy Spirit, God is building a home there as well! Amen.

As a Pastor, I have tried to make it my ambition, to study the things that make a church feel like home.

I read by Will Mancini, called Future Church. It speaks about the church being like a building with two floors. Two rooms. On ground floor, he speaks about the four P's that make a church feel like home – things that make you feel like you belong.

I made a little diagram to help you grasp it. Here it is, and here are the four P's on the ground floor...

### **Place, Programs, Personalities & People**

#### **Let me explain what is meant by these...**

Firstly, **Place**. Simply put, people get attached to a church, as a place. They love the old pews, the pew spot they have sat in for so many years, the wood is worn and familiar, and safe. They love the old steeple, or the old Sunday School rooms where they remember Auntie Barbara teaching them about Jesus all those years ago. And if anyone tries to mess with the old church, maybe some new young Pastor suggests they move location, or get rid of the pews, and suddenly you have a riot on your hands! Why, because that place is special to people. That 'place' feels like home.

Secondly, **Programs**. People get attached to certain ministry programs in the church. Perhaps it is something that they helped serve in for many years, and their parents before them. There is a special connection to the church because of the programs and the ministries it runs. People get passionate about these programs, and because a church has them, the church just feels right.

Next, **Personalities**. A church can feel like home because of certain big personalities. I know this church has our fair share of them! People like your small group leader. Perhaps a certain worship leader. People like Pastor John, my predecessor. People like Pastor Andre, from a few years ago. People like Pastor Alan. Who was such a Shepherd to so many in this congregation. People in a church family, connect with, and associate a church with certain big personalities, and a church just feels right, because those personalities are there. Finally;

**People**. A church can feel like home because of certain people. People will come to a church because their friends attend a church. People will come to the church because their parents come. Or their kids come. Or their friends kids come. Maybe there is a family that they enjoy connecting with, that are in a similar life stage to them. Maybe they really like Bob and Sue, and because Bob and Sue attend this church, they attend this church!

**Place. Programs. Personalities. People.** All these P's are important parts of why a church feels like home. But you will notice, that they are all on the ground floor. Downstairs. But there is a upper room above this. A higher level. Now I am not saying any of these things on the groundfloor are bad reasons for people to come to a church. They are all crucial to church growth, it's why we enjoy doing things like the Potjie Showdown. That's actually the 5<sup>th</sup> P that Will Mancini never knew about, Potjie. Very important. We believe it is important do do life together, to eat together, to connect at this level, but do you want to know a deeper truth. All these P's. They only produce shallow disciples of Jesus. If these P's are all you have, what you have is a shallow church.

If we want to be a church of growing disciples of Jesus, it is okay to have these things on the ground floor of a church, but growing disciples of Jesus need to move to a upper room of maturity in Christ, where the focus becomes more about the mission and the vision of the local church.

We have to move off milk, and onto the steak!

What is in the upper room?

### **Mission, Vision, and Partnership in the Gospel.**

Mature disciples of Jesus, and mature churches, realize that although the downstairs stuff is important, the really important stuff happens in the upper room.

### **Mission, Vision, and Partnership in the Gospel.**

Prayer. Purpose. Mission. Vision. Partnership. In the Church in Ephesus, the great teacher and Apostle Paul left for a while, and the church started to wobble. Maybe they attached too much to him as a 'big personality.'

Paul then realized he needed to return, to help sort them out again, and when he comes back, he tell them very clearly, that in Christ, they belong to God, but not only this, also... they belong to God's church.

God is building a home. And they are a part of it, whether they like it or not! And they are on a mission! For the sake of the Gospel!

You see friends, we are living in a time, when lots of people like the idea of being in Christ, but not so much being in Church.

But being a Christian, a child of God, comes hand in hand with being a part of his Church. It's a package deal. And it is not about whether or not you like the building, or the coffee, or the personalities, or the people, it should really be about family, and the mission of God!

Church, can I be real with you...

Over the past few years, we have experienced a lot of change here at King of Kings. I know that has been difficult for some. But the mission has not changed. We had a big legacy left to us 7 years ago, and we decided to upgrade our auditorium – to reach a new generation - for the sake of the gospel! This place needed a upgrade, but you know what, we messed with the place!

Over the past two years, during Covid. Certain programs had to be reenvisioned. We could not just do what we normally did. We had to pivot to take our services online when we could not meet together. We now have camera's, and live-streams. We have hosts, and yes, we know that the services and programs feel a bit different now, at first it was out of necessity, but then we realised the incredible mission field we have online, and we're going to keep doing this – Why? For the sake of the gospel!

We have also gone through the loss of many big personalities in this church. The Lord has taken some home. Others have moved away. That is always tough. But we need to be reminded that we don't base our faith on big personalities. Or who else comes to Church or does not. Our faith should rest on people. Our faith rests on God. Right?

We also changed our service times. We added a 8am service, and our primary service moved to 10am. We did that to make sure we had more opportunity to gather the church. More opportunities to reach people in the valley who might attend at another time – all for the sake of the gospel. But do you know what happens when you change service times, you re-schuffle the relational deck of the church, and people get upset!

Over the past while, we have seen many new people coming into the church, and we truly rejoice in that, but we have also seen some leave us. We are aware of that. Whenever we hear of that, we always try to meet, and love, and support, and bless, and be gracious. But sometimes in a church, people come and go. And that is okay.

Many church experts have called this time, the great re-schuffle. It makes me sad, but I also understand. This has been a time of transition for many people. And that's okay.

But a lot of people are struggling as well, some people are lonely, and are starved of community – and we want to do something about that.

We are so glad that we are now in a position to start doing life together more. Our Potjie Showdown yesterday was amazing! I am sure there were around 150 people there! Wasn't it awesome! I also loved spending time with about 25 of our seniors at Sav Café on Friday for the Seniors Breakfast. They really are a great bunch.

Friends, I know how easily people can become critical of a church. I know how everyone has their own views and opinions on things, but that's part of being a family. I also want to remind you that the last two years we have been in crisis mode, and you don't pull each other down during a crisis. You support each other.

Now is a time to focus on our mission, vision, and partnership in the Gospel! It's time to get going. It is time to start rebuilding. It's time to start partnering together! For many, many years we have had members. And we love our members, but we now have some members, who are on our list, and we've not seen them around for a long time! Please come on back! We miss you. Members are important, but do you know what, the bible actually talks less about members, and more about being partners. Partners in the gospel.

Do you know when you feel like you belong in a church community?

You feel like you belong when you are present and participating.

Partnership with a local church is a privilege and responsibility of followers of Jesus Christ. Paul says, in Christ, you are a part of God's Church. That means you have a part to play. That means you have responsibilities. As members of this household, somebody has to do the dishes. Somebody has to do the cleaning up. Somebody has to pay for the lights. Somebody has to do the banking and arrange the payments to missionaries. Somebody has to answer the phone when someone needs counselling. Somebody has to run the ministries.

Over the past few months, we've had lots of visitors, and we rejoice in that, but what we really want, is for everyone to move from being visitors, and attendees, to being partners. Real partners.

You won't often hear me talking about money. But I want you to know that part of being a partner in the gospel means learning to be a generous giver into the storehouse.

Recently I challenged the us as a church to respond to the Ukraine Crisis. We heard of another church in Germany taking supplies into the Ukraine. In just a few days, about R24,000 was paid into the church account! Isn't that incredible! Praise God. And thank you for your generosity. But do you know what happened, that month, our tithes went down by about the same amount!

This year, although our services have been filling up, our bank account has been emptying. We are about R116,000 behind the tithes that we budgeted for so far. We've been keeping expenses down, and we are not fearing, we are full of faith that God always provides, but we want everyone come to the party as a church community, to each do our part – to be partners in the gospel.

For a long time, our Church has been a shining light with the other churches around us to minister to our valley. Helping the needy. Aiming to bring transformation. But King of Kings, we can't do that when the storehouse of God is empty.

I want you to know that our ministries and programs, our missionaries, our staff, we need your support as a church.

I was looking at all the various ministries, organizations and departments that rely on our giving. I tried to splash it all on one page – not easy!

Missions, all the missionaries and organizations we support. Living Hope, Living Well, our counselling ministry, which although it has gone through some changes to staffing, there is still so much good counselling happening!

Movement, our youth ministry. There were a whole bunch of teenagers gathered in here on Friday night. Our Children's Ministry. Our serving teams. Hope4Babies. Bright Hope, a new ministry that we have just started, which you are going to hear about soon on Mother's Day.

Paradigm Shift, the entrepreneur training we are starting soon. Radio Africa Network, spreading the gospel by radio into hard to reach areas. CCFm which we support. Immerse, a Network of Pastors that we support. All of our other ministry departments of the church.

Church, we can't do what we do, if we don't have your support.

### **What is our Mission?**

**To love God, love People, and make disciples.**

### **What is our Vision?**

**To influence our community**

**Build families**

**And reach the next generation.**

In Christ, you belong to God's Church. In Christ, I belong to God's Church. This is our home. Let's get on mission together. Let's move into the upper room. Let's pray. Let's trust God to move. Let's each of us do our part. In serving. In giving.

In Christ, you are a part of King of Kings. You belong, and we need you to partner with us, to reach this valley for Jesus!

Amen!

Let us pray.

**To God's holy people in King of Kings, the faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Father, thank you, that in you, we find our fit. Like lost piece with no home, you found us, saved us, adopted us, and fitted us into your family.

In you, we have redemption through your blood, in you, we have forgiveness of sin, and we belong to you.

In you, we also belong here – because we know from your word that you are building a home. A family. A place where each of us have a part to play.

Lord, help us each to partner in the gospel, to find our fit.

In Jesus name, Amen.