

**CASKET EMPTY:**  
**God's Plan of Redemption Through History**

Kenwood Baptist Church Sermon Series

Pastor David Palmer

September 3-November 26, 2017

**OVERVIEW:** This fall we begin a new sermon series entitled CASKET EMPTY: God's Plan of Redemption through History. We will survey the great narrative of Scripture in order to bring the many pieces of our life together. Although God inspired sixty-six different books, in three distinct languages, over thousands of years, the Bible is one redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation. The unity of the Bible is found in the revelation of the identity and character of God and his saving plan for humanity in Christ. CASKET EMPTY will help us to see this.

We need the unity of Scripture because we live in an increasingly broken and incoherent world. Many cultural voices insist that life is chaotic, random, and without meaning. In his essay "How the World Lost Its Story," Robert Jenson explains that "it is the church's task to tell the biblical narrative to the world in proclamation and to God in worship. It is the church's mission to tell all who will listen that the God of Israel has raised his servant Jesus from the dead, and to unpack the soteriological and doxological import of that fact." CASKET EMPTY will help us to do this.

The acronym CASKET will guide us this fall through the Old Testament that begins at CREATION and continues with the call of ABRAHAM and the covenant God makes with his descendants at SINAI. God's redemptive purpose advances in the period of KINGS when the monarchy is established and David is promised everlasting kingship. Despite the judgment of EXILE, God's plan remains certain during the period of TEMPLE as the Old Testament concludes with a partial restoration and a vivid picture of future hope. The acronym EMPTY will guide our journey in the spring through the New Testament as Israel's EXPECTATIONS are realized in the life, death, and resurrection of the promised MESSIAH. The Holy Spirit is poured out at PENTECOST so that the TEACHING of Christ may spread throughout the world. The church offers new life in Christ to all who believe as we wait for Him who is YET-TO-COME. God's plan of redemption reveals His identity and our own. His purpose provides meaning and coherence to our lives. His eternal actions will guide our daily decisions and compel us to join His mission in the world today. CASKET EMPTY will help us to live this.

**CHURCH INTEGRATION:** We will seek to integrate and apply the series with small group meetings during the week using the Old Testament Timeline and *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide* written by my friend and colleague Dr. Carol Kaminski. We will encourage individuals and families to read the selected Old Testament Bible Readings for personal devotions. We will encourage the entire congregation to enter the conversation of God with His people through Scripture and prayer. We will also display original artwork in the sanctuary inspired by each letter of the CASKET EMPTY acronym.

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** Our memory verses for this series will be:

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received:  
that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,  
that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures”

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4**

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil,  
to give you a future and a hope.” **Jeremiah 29:11**

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** The cover images of the CASKET EMPTY Bible series draw our attention to the death and resurrection of Christ as the center of God’s saving purpose for all of humanity. The cross of Christ is the place where God and humanity are reconciled. His substitutionary death provides atonement for sin and everlasting righteousness for all who believe. The empty tomb of Christ radiates with the dawn of God’s new creation. All who believe are filled with the Holy Spirit to walk in newness of life and become part of God’s mission in the world.

**WORSHIP EMPHASIS AND KEY HYMNS/PRAISE SONGS:**

<b>And Can It Be</b>	<b>This I Believe</b>
<b>No longer Slaves</b>	<b>Behold Our God</b>
<b>The King of Love My Shepherd Is</b>	<b>Sovereign</b>
<b>A Mighty Fortress is Our God</b>	<b>What a Beautiful Name</b>

WEEK 1:      September 3      Pastor David Palmer  
Title:                      What Matters Most  
Text:                        1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
Theme:                     The gospel is about Christ’s death and resurrection according to Scripture  
                                    The grace of God is powerful and leads us to mission

Pastoral Contact: This Sunday we will introduce a new sermon series entitled CASKET EMPTY: God’s Plan of Redemption through History. I have been involved with this project for nearly ten years and am excited to preach through God’s Word in this way at Kenwood. Although God inspired sixty-six different books, in three distinct languages, over thousands of years, the Bible is one redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation. The unity of the Bible is found in the revelation of the identity and character of God and his saving plan for humanity in Christ. We need the unity of Scripture because we live in an increasingly broken and incoherent world. You can find out more about CASKET EMPTY by visiting [www.casketempty.com](http://www.casketempty.com). We encourage you to read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and prepare your heart for worship.

Following the Lord with you, Pastor David

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, introduction.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Genesis 1-11; Psalms 8, 29, 93, 96-98

WEEK 2: September 10 Pastor David Palmer  
Title: “CASKET EMPTY: C is for Creation”  
Text: Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8  
Theme: We are created in God’s image to display His glory

Pastoral contact: The opening of the Bible celebrates God’s work of creation. The Lord has no rivals but acts by his sovereign, powerful word. Humanity, male and female, are the climax of God’s creation. Together they are uniquely made in his image and likeness. They receive a royal commission to reflect his righteousness and to fill the earth with the knowledge and worship of the Lord. The Lord places them in the world to care for it. Adam and Eve live in unbroken fellowship with God and to discover that goodness is found in obedience to God’s Word. We encourage you to read Genesis 1-2 and Psalm 8 to prepare your hearts for worship.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 1: Creation, pp. 1-14.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Genesis 1-11; Psalms 8, 29, 93, 96-98

WEEK 3:      September 17 Associate Pastor Scott Burns  
Title:            “CASKET EMPTY: C is for Creation (part 2)”  
Text:            Genesis 3:1-24  
Theme:           Sin and death enter the world through disobedience

Pastoral contact: We are created for worship. Our highest joy is to know and respond to God in praise. Our life in the Garden of Eden teaches us that moral goodness is found in obedience to God’s expressed will. Sadly, our first ancestors are deceived by the false promises of evil to disobey God. The fall of humanity brings shame, wrath, and judgement. Even Creation itself suffers. All of human life is now experienced outside the Garden of Eden. Only Christianity offers a compelling explanation for the paradox of human existence. We are created with glory in the image of God and yet we are disfigured by the inheritance of sin. God is gracious to provide a covering for our sin and to express the first hope for redemption. We encourage you to read Genesis 3 to prepare your heart for worship on Sunday. Please plan to stay for lunch after the second service for our annual meeting where we will share our ministry vision for the year.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 1: Creation, pp. 14-25.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Genesis 1-11; Psalms 8, 29, 93, 96-98

WEEK 4:      Sept 24            Pastor David Palmer  
Title:            “CASKET EMPTY: A is for Abraham”  
Text:            Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-20  
Theme:           The life of the believer is one of committed service to Christ

Pastoral contact: God’s plan of redemption advances with the call of Abraham out of Ur. Although he is an idolatrous, elderly man with a barren wife, God reveals himself to Abraham and promises him descendants like the stars. God makes the stunning promise that all nations will one day be blessed through Abraham’s seed. Abraham believes God and his faith is reckoned to him as righteousness. God promises his covenant presence and commits himself to

Abraham and his family through whom salvation will one day come to all the world. We encourage you to read the Genesis 12-15 for Sunday to prepare your heart for worship.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 2: Abraham, pp. 27-54.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Genesis 12-50

WEEK 5:	October 1	Pastor David Palmer (Communion)
	Title:	“CASKET EMPTY: S is for Sinai”
	Text:	Exodus 12:1-27
	Theme:	God redeems his people from slavery to worship him

Pastoral contact: God fulfills the promises He had spoken to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Exodus. God acts to redeem His people with a mighty, outstretched arm. He pays for their lives with the blood of the lamb. He triumphs over their enemies with the dramatic parting of the sea. He leads them to worship at Mount Sinai and there reveals His will in covenant with the Ten Commandments. God dwells in the midst of his people, forgives their sin, and commissions them to represent him to the nations. Exodus forms the template of redemption and all future hope, including the person and work of Christ who is our Passover Lamb. The events leading to Sinai redefine Israel’s worship and motivate faithfulness to God. We encourage you to read Exodus 1-20 to prepare your heart for worship on Sunday. Also, remember to pray about who you might invite to join you for *Martin Luther On Trial* next weekend at the Aronoff Center.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 3: Sinai, pp. 55-74.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Exodus 1-29, 32-34, 40; Psalms 19, 105-106

WEEK 6:      October 8      Pastor David Palmer  
                 Title:              “CASKET EMPTY: S is for Sinai (part 2)”  
                 Text:                Deuteronomy 6:1-12; Joshua 1:1-9  
                 Theme:              God brings His people from the mountain to the promised land

Pastoral contact: God leads His people from the mountain of his presence to the promised land. Like Adam and Eve in the Garden, God’s people need to learn to live by his Word. The journey through the wilderness brings us to the borders of the land. We are instructed to hear the voice of the Lord and to love Him with all of our heart. God appoints Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan to claim our inheritance. He too is instructed to mediate on God’s Word day and night. We encourage you to read Deuteronomy 6:1-12 and Joshua 1:1-9 to prepare your heart for worship on Sunday. Later that afternoon, we will watch *Martin Luther On Trial* at the Aronoff Center. Make plans to invite a friend and plan to go out for dinner to discuss the play.

Following the Lord with you, Pastor David

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 3: Sinai, pp. 75-91.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Deuteronomy 1-13, 17-18, 20-21, 25, 27-32, 34; Joshua 1-8; Psalms 119, 134-136, 145-146

WEEK 7:      October 15      Pastor David Palmer  
                 Title:              “CASKET EMPTY: K is for Kings”  
                 Text:                1 Samuel 16:1-13

Theme: God appoints David as a man after His own heart

Pastoral contact: We pay attention what we can see. We evaluate people on how they look or what they wear. Not so the Lord. 1 Samuel 16:7 says that “the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” God’s plan of redemption advances during the period of KINGS. God’s people enter the land promised to Abraham and his descendants where they are to live in obedience to the covenant. God anoints David as King and will one day promise to him an everlasting kingdom where one of his descendants will rule forever (2 Sam 7:1-16). We encourage you to read the compelling narrative of 1 Samuel 16-17 to prepare your heart for worship on Sunday.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 4: Kings (United Monarchy), pp. 93-119.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** 1-2 Samuel; Psalms 2, 16, 21-24, 32-34, 40, 45-48

WEEK 8:      October 22      Associate Pastor Scott Burns  
Title:            “CASKET EMPTY: K is for Kings (Northern Kingdom)”  
Text:            1 Kings 18:17-40  
Theme:          God requires single minded devotion for our own good

Pastoral contact: Most of us fear commitment. We like to keep our options open for what lies ahead. Even God’s people at times struggle to embrace the exclusive claim that the Lord places upon us. Israel often stumbles by compromising with the surrounding culture and being enticed by the false promises of idolatry. The history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel is characterized by such compromise, especially with the worship of Baal. In 1 Kings 18, the prophet Elijah dramatically confronts his generation with the question: “How long will you go limping between different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him” (1 Kings 18:21). This Sunday we will hear the Word of God through Pastor Scott. We encourage you to read 1 Kings 17-18 to prepare your heart for worship.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 5: Kings (The Northern Kingdom), pp. 121-152.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** 1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 1-17; Hosea 1-14

WEEK 9:      October 29      REFORMATION SUNDAY Pastor David Palmer  
Title:                      “Martin Luther rediscovers the gospel”  
Text:                        Romans 1:16-17  
Theme:                      God will renew the church

Pastoral contact: This year marks the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation. On October 31, 1517, a young Augustinian monk named Martin Luther posted 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. This act began a historic movement of church renewal and reformation that can still be felt today. At the heart of the Reformation, Luther rediscovered the gospel, the sufficiency of Scripture, and the priesthood of all believers. He reshaped Christian worship around congregational singing and the preaching of the Word. This Sunday we will hear a biographical sermon on the life and work of Martin Luther. You can use the following link to hear an inspiring message on Luther’s life and labor from John Piper: <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/martin-luther-lessons-from-his-life-and-labor>. We also recommend Eric Metaxas’ new biography of Luther entitled: *Martin Luther: The Man who Rediscovered God and Changed the World*. We encourage you to read Romans 1:16-17 to prepare your heart for worship.

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**SMALL GROUP:** Take this week to catch up on your reading from *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, pp. 1-152.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** 1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 1-17; Psalm 46

WEEK 10: Nov 5 Special guest: Rev. Kit Ripley, Missionary in Thailand (Communion)  
Title: “CASKET EMPTY: K is for Kings (Southern Kingdom)”  
Text: Isaiah 1:1-20  
Theme: God calls for righteousness in all the earth

Pastoral contact: This Sunday we continue with the great narrative of Scripture. God’s plan of redemption through history advances in the period of KINGS through the life of the Southern Kingdom. God sends prophets like Isaiah and Micah to call us back to faithfulness. The God who is revealed in Scripture loves what is good and hates what is evil. This truth can bring comfort in a world that seems to be filled with oppression. We will hear the Word of God this Sunday through Rev. Kit Ripley who serves Christ as a missionary in Thailand. Kenwood is Kit’s church home and she brings a unique perspective on Christ’s work in the world today through her work at the New Life Center in Chiang Mai. You can learn more about Kit’s ministry by visiting <https://internationalministries.org/teams/92-ripley>. We encourage you to read Isaiah 1 to prepare your heart for worship on Sunday.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 6: Kings: The Southern Kingdom (part 1), pp. 153-183.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** 2 Chronicles 10-36; Isaiah 1-11; Micah 1-7

WEEK 11: November 12 Pastor David Palmer  
Title: "CASKET EMPTY: K is for Kings (Southern Kingdom, part 2)"  
Text: 2 Kings 22:1-20  
Theme: God will vindicate his Word in judgment and mercy

Pastoral contact: One of the bright spots in the narrative of KINGS comes during the reign of King Josiah. He takes the throne at the young age of eight. During his eighteenth regnal year, he makes an extraordinary discovery. He finds a copy of the Word of God which had been long neglected. He gathers the people to listen attentively to the revealed will of God in an effort to renew their life of faith in obedience to the covenant. Despite his efforts, the heart of the nation remains hardened and faces God's righteous judgment of exile. Around the same time, the Lord calls Jeremiah the prophet to confirm the sin of the nation and to promise a stirring vision of future hope. We encourage you to read 2 Kings 22 and Jeremiah 1 to prepare your heart for worship on Sunday. Please plan to join us for our community celebration of Thanksgiving following the second service.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 7: Kings: The Southern Kingdom (part 2), pp. 185-212.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** 2 Kings 22-25; 2 Chronicles 10-36; Jeremiah 1-39

WEEK 12: November 19 Associate Pastor Scott Burns  
Title: "CASKET EMPTY: E is for Exile"  
Text: Daniel 1:1-21  
Theme: God protects His people in exile and promises a glorious future

Pastoral contact: Despite repeated warnings from the prophets, God's people are taken into exile in Babylon. The presence of the Lord leaves the Temple. Jerusalem is destroyed in 586 BC. God's righteous judgment is on display for all to see. However, God's plan of redemption

continues through the period of exile. Daniel and his companions discover faithfulness to the LORD in a foreign land. God reveals his future plans in vivid dreams to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and to the prophet Daniel. In our most difficult seasons, we need to be reminded that God's sovereign purposes are for our good. The darkness of exile allows the hope of redemption to shine brightly. This Sunday we will hear the Word of God through Pastor Scott. We encourage you to read Daniel 1-7 to prepare your heart for worship on Sunday.

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**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Daniel 1-12; Ezekiel 1-24, 33-37

WEEK 13: November 26 Pastor David Palmer  
Title: “CASKET EMPTY: T is for Temple”  
Text: Ezra 1:1-11  
Theme: Israel returns from exile and God closes the OT canon in hope

Pastoral contact: The Old Testament canon closes with hope. In 539 BC, the LORD stirs the heart of the Persian King Cyrus the Great to issue a decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The period of TEMPLE marks the rebuilding of the city and the temple. No other people in the ancient world returned from exile. God's people are moved to complete the Temple in Jerusalem by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The covenant is renewed and the walls of the city are rebuilt under the godly leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Old Testament closes with the earnest expectation that the LORD himself will soon return. We encourage you to read Ezra 1:1-11 to prepare your heart for worship.

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**SMALL GROUP:** *CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide*, Chap. 9: Temple, pp. 247-274.

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:** Ezra 1-10; Nehemiah 1-13; Malachi 1-4

**SERIES HYMN:**

**“A Mighty Fortress is Our God” by Martin Luther (written in 1527)**

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and pow’r are great, and, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,  
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God’s own choosing:  
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;  
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;  
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly pow’rs, no thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth;  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.