

Christ the King Sunday

November 22, 2015

Prayer of the Day: Lord Jesus Christ, by your victory you have broken the power of the evil one. Fill our hearts with joy and peace as we look with hope to that day when every creature in heaven and earth will acclaim you King of kings and Lord of lords to your unending praise and glory; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia! I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Alleluia! (Revelation 22:13)

Sermon Text: John 18:33-37

Confusing. Baffling. It is difficult to comprehend. For our sermon reading John writes:

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

³⁴ "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

³⁵ "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

³⁶ Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷ "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

You understand what is happening here. You see it. Jesus stands there, humiliated, ashamed, abused. Still, you know that is not how he really is. He does not need to be standing there, absorbing those horrible accusations. You know that he reigns as the Almighty King of the universe!

Yet, is that what you always see? As you wake up each morning and prepare for your daily routine do you always remember that Jesus is your Almighty King who sits with a

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watchful eye on you? Or does it feel like Jesus is nothing more than the image we see here—poor, pitiful, weak, unable to do anything?

At first glance, Jesus does look pretty helpless. Shouts wake up Pilate up early Friday morning. An angry Jewish crowd mobs his door, pounding on it, demanding that he come out immediately. So, Pilate walks out on his balcony, leans over, and watches as they push a man out of their group. “He threatens the Roman nation!” they cry. “He challenges mighty Caesar’s authority! He must be executed!” ([Luke 23:1-2](#); [John 18:30-31](#))

This man must be killed? This Jesus? Can you just imagine the thoughts racing through Pilate’s mind? Just look at Jesus! Ropes bind his hands together. Spit hangs from a scraggly beard. Blood mixed with sweat trickles down his face. Puffy eyes are swollen shut. His face hangs in disappointment, eyes sag heavily with sorry, eyebrows droop in exhaustion. *This man must be killed—* and killed because he is a *king*?

Does he really look like a king? No loyal citizens stand faithfully at his side! His own countrymen have rejected him. Even the religious men of God detest him. He appears completely powerless to punish their insubordination. Instead, he stands all alone, listening to their accusations against him! Pilate knows that no secret rescue team is attempting to break in at this very moment and snatch Jesus to freedom. In fact, the Twelve men that did follow him were seen running away at his arrest— one so desperately wanted to leave that when someone grabbed him, he wiggled out of his clothes and ran away naked! ([Mark 14:50-52](#)). Pilate has never put this man under surveillance; he has never heard about a new kingdom rising within his region. No, this man looks completely weak and insignificant.

Does it ever seem like the picture you have of Jesus here in John 18 is the true reality? That this is how Jesus stands now—weak, pitiful, insignificant? I mean, you look around at world events— all the troubles that happen each day. Your in-laws get injured in daily chores; accidents harm your family. Your heart aches as you watch your loved one battle a horrible cancer and get ever sicker. You worry about your own safety, hoping that no one takes your life. You get frustrated that taxes and expenses go up while income stays flat.

Maybe you do not feel those times of stress. Maybe you really feel nothing at all— like God really does not influence your life whatsoever. You go to school, learn how earn an income, how to pay bills, how to stay healthy, and it seems like God has no part in helping you with any of that. You wake up, feel fine, you go through your day, you go to sleep—and life seems so automatic. You expect to succeed in life—not because God is actively guiding and shaping things for your good, but because you take the necessary steps to succeed.

I mean, how easily we can sit beside Pilate and see Jesus hold no authority, no power, no control. How easily we can believe that truly Jesus holds no power in our sinful world, truly Jesus cannot help heal us, truly Jesus has no power to change my income or my abilities. How easily we can truly believe that Jesus is not needed in life, that we can live just fine without him, that we can still have pleasant happiness apart from him!

If it is true that life can be just fine without Jesus, then why is he born? Why does he enter the world? Why does he bother standing in front of Pilate at all?

Might there be something lying beneath the sights and sounds in Pilate's courtroom? Might there be more than just what meets the eye?

Recall all the signs surrounding his birth, his baptism, his ministry, his suffering and death I mean, at his baptism, the heavens rip open, a dove rests on Jesus, a voice booms: *This is my Son who I love, with him I am well-pleased* ([Matthew 3:16-17](#)). This is the One who stands in a boat during a raging storm on a sea, gives his command for all to stop, and the weather obeys! ([Matthew 8:23-27](#)) This is the One who just hours earlier, stood in the Garden of Gethsemane with armed guards all around him. When Jesus says that they have come for him, they all fall down ([John 18:4-6](#)). Jesus has power over nature and men; God the Father declares Jesus to be his divine Son! Yet, Jesus does not come to set up an earthly kingdom. He comes not to silence the Jewish mob or to dethrone Pilate or to ignore you and me.

So, what does Jesus come to accomplish on earth? What is the reason for him to leave heaven and step foot on earth? He comes **To testify to the truth**. The truth is the only thing that truly matters. That *all have sinned and fall short of God's glory*; all people have failed to meet God's standard of perfection. That because you and I have disobeyed a perfect God, we therefore become citizens of a hellish kingdom.

So, your King comes for you. He sets his sights not on worldly things. Jesus is not born to fight a worldly army; he does not come to overthrow Rome's emperor; he does not come for world domination. He comes for something greater than worldly fame and glory. He comes for you. He fights a hellish force that no one could ever hope to conquer. Yet, Jesus stands against every deceptive temptation. He strikes down all the flaming lies of the evil one. He sets his heart on the truth of God's Word.

The battle takes his life. No, he does not die as a victim. No, not because the devil killed him. The King of the universe willingly dies in your place, to suffer the wrath of God for your sins. The King of all dies for you! The King of all gives his Father a life of perfection—and he gives that life for your benefit.

Just look at the Easter day tomb! See who does not rest in there! Jesus is not like us—someone who lives for a while and then eventually dies. No, death is reversed; he comes to life. He walks out of his tomb. His visible life shows you the life you can expect to have. Because your Savior meets God's every perfect demand you are declared "forgiven!" You have peace with God! You have eternal life guaranteed! Christ your King has conquered death. He has conquered the devil. He has triumphed over temptation! The truth is, Christ is King forever!

You know this is true. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he has created faith in your heart to accept this as true. Jesus has testified to the truthful reality that he has removed your sins. You stand on the side of this truth; you listen to your God.

After all, that is what Jesus means when he says: *"My kingdom is not of this world."* Do you see what he says there? Your Savior does not deny that he has a kingdom. Yet, he does say that his kingdom does not rest on earth. It has no earthly boundaries. It has no

walls or gates or armies or location on a map. However, Jesus is not locked inside some gates far off wherever heaven lies. He is not locked in a throne room, seated at his Father's right hand, stuck there until he gets off the throne to come again. No, your Savior makes it very clear that his kingdom itself is different. His kingdom is not of this world because his kingdom is in you ([Luke 17:20-21](#)).

You pray in the Lord's Prayer. *Thy kingdom come*. You are not praying that Jesus set up an earthly kingdom. Instead, you pray that Jesus rules your heart, your words, your thoughts, your actions— and that he does the same in the hearts of many others as well.

That is how Christ your King reigns. As you read the Bible, you listen to his royal commands. You hear what pleases him. He rules your life as you live by listening to his Word above your own word.

So, when those troubles plague your life and thoughts race through your mind, set your hearts on the King's Word. Be at rest knowing that the Great Physician holds your health in his hands. Be comforted knowing that the Good Shepherd keeps you in his fold, guiding and walking beside you to heaven.

When you sit in school and begin college or your career or some other new path in life, give thanks to God that he gives you health to work. That he has blessed you with a mind to learn. That he blesses you with a job and income. Continue lifting your eyes up to a King who works in your life for your good. **SEE THE TRUE REALITY** of Christ your King reigning in heaven over all things for you!

You know, this Bible account is somewhat ironic. The Jewish nation failed to look past appearances. They want Jesus to *be* a king. They see him feed 5,000-plus people with bread that he multiplies— and so they want him to continue doing this. They want his miraculous power to drive away Roman authorities— Pilate included. They want him to sit on a throne so they can live peaceful lives on earth under his reign! ([John 6:1-16](#)) This Jewish nation wants Jesus to be a king— but to be a king on their terms.

So, they bring him to Pilate accusing him of being what they wanted him to be all along! Even as Jesus stands before Pilate crushed and pressed down, he still stands as the King of all. He endures death in order to free you from hell's dark forces. He lives again to proclaim his victory over all things. He establishes his eternal kingdom. He as head over all things for your good!

SEE THE TRUE REALITY of who your Savior is now! Christ has conquered every evil foe. Christ reigns! He reigns for you.