

“King Jesus” By E A Terry Delivered 11 25 18

Isaiah 2: 1 – 5; 1st Timothy 6: 11 – 16; Revelation 19: 11 – 16; **Luke 23: 33 – 43 (Sermon)**

Today is Christ the King Sunday.

The picture we see of Jesus in our lesson from Luke does not square with our understanding of a king.

We do not see a king sitting on a throne in a large castle with a cadre of servants attending to his every need.

Rather the picture we see is of a man nailed to a cross, beaten to a pulp, bleeding to death, and dying of asphyxiation.

But Jesus often referred to The Kingdom of God and The Kingdom of Heaven as being His kingdom and other people referred to Jesus as a king.

Also remember Jesus did not deny that He was a king.

When Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, ***“Are you the king of the Jews?”*** Jesus replied ***“You have said so”*** (Luke 23:13)

Four times in our lesson from Luke Jesus is confronted with our human image of a king.

In verse 35 the Jewish leaders sneered at Jesus saying, ***“He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the chosen one.”***

In verse 36 the soldiers mocked Jesus by saying, ***“If you are king of the Jews, save yourself.”***

Next in verse 38 we see Pilate had a notice posted on the cross, which read, ***“This is the king of the Jews.”***

Lastly, in verse 39 one of the criminals who was being crucified, hurled insults at Jesus, saying, ***“Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us.”***

To put it mildly, the kingdom presented and represented by Jesus was confusing to the people in that day.

People do **not** have a problem seeing Jesus as a prophet, who is a person who speaks on God’s behalf and brings God’s Word to us.

People do not have a problem seeing Jesus as a priest who is a person who speaks on our behalf to God and conveys our requests to God.

But seeing Jesus as a king presents a problem for us when we see him beaten, bruised, bleeding, suffering, and dying on a cross.

The concept of Jesus as king was confusing and divisive to the people in that day and it is confusing and divisive to the people in our day.

You see the trouble is we try to make Jesus into our image.

We forget that Jesus created us in His image.

The ironic thing is that Jesus is all of the things that the people in His day expected and Jesus is all that we expect in a king today.

The trouble is what we really want is a Santa Clause or a genie in a bottle.

We want that person to grant all of our wishes whenever we want and in the way we want it.

The image of a king with sovereign and absolute power is foreign to us who live in a democratic society where we elect our leaders and the people make the laws.

In fact the only kings we know about are rich puppet figures.

And other than the publicity and glamour we see on TV we will not be affected by their rule.

However, in Jesus' time, kings had unlimited power.

A king decided who lived and who died.

A king decided how much your taxes were and the king took anything they wanted.

Kings were not accountable to any other person nor were they accountable to any governing body.

If anyone challenged the king's authority that person was punished severely or killed.

We love our independence but when life is chaotic, when we are surrounded by uncertainty, and when the wheels come off of our wagon, we definitely want someone who is all-powerful to come to our aid and get us out of the mess we are in.

We want that because that gives us a sense of security and hope.

The great paradox of Jesus' death on the cross is that from a human point of view: the cross epitomizes failure, dishonor, tragedy, madness and weakness.

Yet, with the eyes of faith, the cross epitomizes victory, honor, good news, strength, power, and hope.

There are several key words in our text that underscore the Kingship of Jesus.

They are love, forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation.

At the foot of the cross we see the religious leaders who were delighted at Jesus' death.

We see Jesus' followers who were confused, heart-broken, and looked on in disbelief.

We see the Roman soldiers who did not question, but simply carried out the execution orders.

And we also see two criminals: one criminal insulted and rejected Jesus, and the other criminal accepted Jesus as his savior.

It is easy to see that the criminal who insulted Jesus could not imagine that Jesus could do anything for him.

So what did the other criminal hear or see for him to realize that Jesus really was The King of Creation?

This criminal knew and he admitted that he was a sinner.

This criminal knew and he acknowledged that Jesus was innocent and that Jesus was The Messiah.

This criminal knew he needed forgiveness before he could enter God's Kingdom.

This criminal knew he could not save himself and he knew he was near death and he knew he was out of options.

After this criminal heard Jesus forgive the people who were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion, this criminal sought Jesus' forgiveness.

"Jesus," he said, "remember me when you come into your kingdom."

This criminal recognized that Jesus' kingdom was not of this earth.

You see, this criminal understood the true kingship of Jesus.

Then when this criminal asked Jesus to remember him Jesus granted him eternal life in heaven with Him.

Jesus said; ***"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."*** (Luke23:43)

The same is true for us today.

It is only when we know **and** we admit that we are sinners condemned to spiritual and eternal death.

It is only when we admit that we cannot save ourselves.

It is only when we seek Jesus' forgiveness and it is only when we acknowledge Jesus as our king that we will be granted eternal life in heaven with King Jesus.

Which of the two criminals do you identify with today?

You see we all are like one of those two criminals.

We are all sinners condemned to die and we must make a choice.

We can mock Jesus because we can not see what Jesus can do for us right now or we can recognize Jesus as our King and ask Jesus to forgive our sins.

The crucified and risen Jesus speaks to us today and offers us a choice.

Jesus said, ***"I come that you might have life and life more abundantly."*** (John 10:10)

The account about the repentant criminal shows us that Jesus' Kingship is revealed in Jesus' commitment to redeem human beings regardless of the circumstances.

Even on the cross Jesus is providing hope, bearing another's burdens, and giving life to those who respond to His love and His forgiveness.

Jesus affirmed His Kingship over everything in His triumph over death.

I cannot imagine a better king than the one who was reaching out to others even as He was bleeding and suffocating on the cross.

If Jesus was loving and restoring people's lives while He was on the cross imagine how much more Jesus is capable of doing for us now that He sitting on His throne in Heaven today.

You see Jesus is different than all other kings.

Unlike any earthly king, Jesus voluntarily went to the cross in order to reconcile all enemies to God.

Jesus' death on the cross was not the result of mob violence.

Jesus voluntarily came to earth to pay the price and penalty of your sins and your sinful nature.

Jesus gladly took your place so that He could redeem you, to restore your broken relationship with God so you can enjoy life with Him both now and throughout eternity.

A true king is a person of power; a person who protects and who provides for all the needs of the people.

A true king is a person who settles disputes and dispenses justice; a person who leads people in the correct direction; a person who is always tells the truth; a person who serves His people.

A true king is a person who loves his people and would willingly give his life for His people.

The truth is Jesus is all of these things and Jesus wants to do more than we can ever ask or imagine.

Jesus is the only person who can put a broken messed up life back together.

Jesus is the only person who can give meaning and purpose to our lives.

Jesus is the only one who has the ability to grant you eternal life in heaven throughout eternity.

Jesus can do all these things because Jesus is God!

Jesus has authority over all the people, all the rulers, all the nations, and the entire universe.

Remember Jesus spoke and created everything.

That is real power.

Nothing happens without Jesus' approval and nothing happens apart from Jesus' eternal plans and purposes!

Jesus reigns today as King of all Kings and Lord over all Lords!

Jesus loved and Jesus forgave the people that wanted to put Him to death.

It is when people embrace the forgiveness offered by Jesus that God changes peoples' hearts, minds attitudes, and lives.

You see we can love and forgive other people because Jesus has already forgiven us.

It is in this act of loving and forgiving our enemies that we are changed and, in time, we are also able to love and forgive all the people that wrong us.

When we make Jesus our king we are set free from the grip of hatred, selfishness, greed, lying, bitterness, and prejudice, and death.

We are set free by Jesus to love, forgive, and enjoy the abundant life God planned for us.

When we make Jesus our king we will want to work for the good of all peoples.

Today many people question the fact that Jesus is King.

You will hear people ask, *“If God is the Supreme Ruler, why does He allow bad things to happen?”*

Jesus Himself answered this question when He was on trial before Pilate.

At first Jesus was silent and this silence irritated Pilate.

Then Pilate said, *“Don’t you now know that I have power to release you and the power to crucify you?”*

At this point Jesus answered him, *“You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.”* (John 19:11)

Pilate also asked Jesus if He was a king or if Jesus claimed to be the King of the Jews.

Jesus answered this by saying, *“My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom was from this world my servants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.”* (John 18:36).

Regardless what people say or think, the fact is that Jesus is The King of the Universe.

One day Jesus will come back to earth and claim what is rightfully His.

When Jesus returns Revelation 1:7 tells us *“every eye will see Him”* and in the last part of verse 7 we learn that *“all”* includes those people who have died previously.

All people will have to stand before King Jesus and give an account of their life!

In Philippians 2: 9 – 11 we read *“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on*

earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.

Today we celebrate Christ the King Sunday.

But in one sense every Sunday is Christ The King Sunday when we pray in the Lord's Prayer: *"thy kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven."*

The Kingdom of God is defined as God's sovereign rule over all creation.

You see when we pray The Lord's Prayer, we are asking for and expecting Jesus' kingship to take shape in our personal lives and in the lives of others as we and they live under the influence of Jesus in all of our every day activities.

When we pray *"your kingdom come"* we are also asking God to transform us so that we might transform the people around you!

When we pray *"your kingdom come"* we look forward to the time spoken of in The Bible when Jesus will return to wipe away every tear, tear down every earthly stronghold, deliver His people, and to establish His physical literal reign on this earth that will usher in eternity.

When we pray for His kingdom to come, we are asking for our kingdoms to be overturned.

When you pray *"Your kingdom come, your will be done"* you are stating that you are committed to doing God's will in your life while you are present on this earth just like God's will is done in heaven.

When you pray *"your kingdom come"* you are asking God to come into your heart in all of its fullness, power, and perfection and you are asking God to crush all of your selfish little kingdom.

Next Sunday we will celebrate the first Sunday in Advent.

The sermons on December 2nd and 9th will be on Jesus coming again to establish His eternal kingdom on earth.

God's word to us this morning is crystal clear; Jesus truly is *The King Of Kings*.

The only question is; *have you asked Jesus to be the king of your life and does Jesus rule over every aspect of your life.*

AMEN!