

We Give Thanks to Christ the King

Sermon November 25, 2018 (Barb Little)

1 Timothy 2: 1-7 (New Testament page 196 in your pew bible)

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone; 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 this is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human. 6 who gave himself a ransom for all this was attested at the right time, 7 for this I was appointed a herald and an apostle. (I am telling the truth. I am not lying) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Matthew 6: 25-27 (New Testament page 6)

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than clothing? 26. Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can anyone of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?

ONE: This is the word of the Lord.

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

Let us take a moment for Prayer: Almighty God, please guide this message with words that will open our ears, and hearts so we might understand more completely the truth and understanding of your Kingdom. Amen.

A little background about this Christ the King Sunday:

Today is the last day of the church year, in church terminology, the Liturgical year. The church does not follow the normal lunar calendar. Today we finish the church year with a celebration called Christ the King Sunday. Beginning next Sunday, which is the first Sunday of Advent, we begin a new church/ liturgical calendar year.

We end every church year with Christ the King Sunday. It's a last chance for one more sermon to try to figure out who Jesus is, and was, Next week we will begin looking for him to come again to us as a baby in a manger.

This is a little like the Thanksgiving Day parade, we sit through all the bands, the floats, the hot air balloons just to get to that final float with Santa and his Reindeer. We give thanks and then we anticipate the gifts, in Advent we look forward to the gift of Christ the King, the King of Kings.

I will share a few different scripture readings that can help us understand what it means to be a king and how we as Christians can call Christ Jesus our king.

This is the Sunday set aside to remind us what the Christian thing is all about "that Jesus really is the king, the Lord of our lives; that we belong utterly to Christ; and that we can say, with the apostle Paul, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me".

A little history about Christ the King Sunday: The Feast of Christ the King Sunday was an event established in the Catholic Church by Pope Pius the XI in 1925. This was a very turbulent time in the world's

history. Secularism and nationalism was on the rise, dangerous dictatorships were emerging in Europe and elsewhere. Governments were becoming more dangerous. Christ had long been referred to as King, but Pope Pius and the Christian faithful saw the respect and reverence for Christ's authority waning in the midst of the unrest during the first part of the 20th century. In response, the feast was set with the intent to reaffirm and refocus faith and respect in the kingship of Jesus. He did say "I am the Way, the Truth and the Light..

Our Prayer of confession today was based on:

John 18: 33-37: Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34: Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" 35: Pilate replied "I am not a Jew, am I?" Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" 36: Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here". 37: Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." 38: Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" at that point Pilate went back out to Jews outside and said, "I found no case against him.

I do find it difficult to wrap my head around the use of the term "King", because for me in this time, I am more familiar with Kings who became Heads of the church because of their lands and wealth. Kings of that time and throughout the history of the church have been Popes, at one time there were three Popes. Kings and sometimes Queens, were appointed heads of the church of their country. Then there was King

Henry the Eighth who changed the laws of his Church because he wanted a divorce and then he be headed one or two of his Queens, the law of the church in Rome at that time said no divorces.

We read of many kings in the Bible, and through history. There is an image of aloof kings and queens, mean, judgmental, bigoted, selfish, oppressing the poor, and members of their own households. They often had many slaves and many wives, and frequently mistreated. These Kings and Queens were quick to chastise beat or behead, burning some at the stake, just because they were the King of someplace, and felt they were the King of the people. These were the kings that, many times, died of diseases, or from gluttony or were murdered or beheaded by greedy heirs. They saved all the crops and food for themselves. These Kings and Queens were nothing like the Christ the King I have come to know.

My question about this day is, why is Christ called a King? Now we who have attended Sunday school, and been around the stories of the Bible, know that Christ was and is heralded as "The King of Kings", and I do believe this to be true. But Christ is so so much more. The Christ is "The anointed one", the "son" of God our creator. But The Christ is not a mere man, or woman, Christ is fully human and fully divine

The Christ the King I know is the kind of King that took fish and bread and fed thousands, this King welcomed children into his arms and onto his lap for hugs and smiles. My Christ the King was able to feel the sorrow of a woman in a crowd who simply touched the hem of his robe and knew she was there and healed her. This King spoke to the Samaritan Woman at the well and let her know he knew her sorrow; he spoke kindly to her and offered her hope in everlasting life. My king welcomes all into his Kingdom of Truth. He welcomes all colors, all religions, he welcomes those who have been addicted to drugs, those

who have been and are persecuted for their poverty. Christ the King welcomes the Gay, Lesbian, and Transgendered. This King, Christ the King does not build walls to keep anyone out. All are welcome, in fact if Christ the king were to use a cell phone to take a selfie the picture would look like you and me; it would be a group photo of every one of every color, size, nationality, religion, and all political parties.

In the Old Testament we hear the words of David giving us a heads up about Christ the King, setting a precedent for the need for the example of a King.

2 Samuel offers a window into the role and character God requires of earthly leaders. In the Old Testament 2 Samuel chapter 23 vs 1-7 quotes the last words of David ...The spirit of the Lord speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue. 3 The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, 4 is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land. 5, Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire? 6. But the godless are all like thorns that are thrown away; for they cannot be picked up with the hand; to touch them one uses an iron bar or the shaft of a spear. And they are entirely consumed in fire on the spot.

Our current times are not too unlike the 1920's we too have a time where we are wrestling with our politics, we are in a time of transformation, changes in the church. The church is changing; the need to conform to a style, an image of the perfect church goer has been changing. We are becoming more in alignment with the Gospel of Christ the King. Hope for continued growth of the Christian Church lies in this transformation.

The idea Reformation and transformation is not new in our church. The church has been growing with the times. We have traditions that are comforting and pleasing to long time church members and followers of Christ.

Through Christ the King of Kings we are comforted, protected, and loved. Grace covers us because of Christ. The baby Jesus will be welcomed and celebrated again and again. Our liturgical year will start again and we will live the life of Christ in our church, from birth to the cross.

We will have struggles, we have good days and bad days but our King of Kings is our church.

The end of our liturgical year coincides with the holiday of Thanksgiving. And as we end our church liturgical year we acknowledge Christ the King as head of the church. A perfect time to give thanks to our King, Christ the King. We give thanks for our King.

As we worship Jesus Christ, and place ourselves in his service and do our best to follow, we do so without becoming lords over others. When we choose to walk next to those in need or lift them up out of their pain and suffering we are acting as Christ the King did as He set an example for us all.

Our witness is counter to the example of worldly leaders, the leaders and kings who exploit the ones for whom they are charged to care. The Spirit of our King speaks through us, our words and actions reflect the God who calls us.

This Christ the King Sunday is here, it is a time to assess how we use our influence and power, our privilege and our gifts.

So as the we read in Matthew, Do Not Worry, 6: 34 Worry will not add a single hour to your span of life, Do not worry about tomorrow, for

tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

So as we end this liturgical calendar year, I will close with something I included in a message at the end of last year, December 31, 2017:

These are Hard times, but they are not the End times..... If we use the gifts of Christmas, the gifts that Christ the King gave to us: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, we are living and sharing the Truth, the truth that Christ the King. The hope is now and it is in the future.

Revelations 1: 4-8

4. John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5. And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be the Glory and dominion forever and ever Amen 7. Look, He is coming with the clouds, every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail, So it is to be, Amen.

8. "I am the Alpha and the Omega", says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

The Greatest gift one can give is Thanks. In giving gifts, we give what we can spare. But in giving thanks- we give ourselves. So, We give Thanks to You Jesus Christ the King. We give thanks.

Alleluia and Amen.

