

November 26 2017

Scripture:

Psalms 95:1-7a

Ephesians 1:15-23

Romans 14:1-13

“Christ is King”

Today is the last Sunday in our church year before we enter into the season of Advent.

And every year as the church calendar draws to a close we celebrate Christ as King --- one and only head of the church.

It's as though we draw the year to a close with the great and powerful proclamation of the Kingship of Christ.

And so a poem entitled ‘Christ you are King’ -----

“Christ you are King
One and only head of the Church

Christ you are King
One and only head of my life

Christ you are King
Minister of the covenant of grace

Christ you are King
Prophet ---- priest ---- high and holy one

Christ you are King
Saviour ---- reconciler ---- redeemer

Christ you are King
Lord and Saviour to all who listen and to all who believe

Christ you are King
Clothed in humility --- tempered by grace --- ruled by love ---- rich in mercy

Christ you are King
Master of all --- debtor to none

Christ you are King
The one to whom every knee shall one day bow

Christ you are King
Because of you one day every tongue will confess to God

Christ you are King
Taking the weak and making them strong
Taking the poor and making them rich --- but not with things of this world

Christ you are King
Your day draws near

Christ you are King
And so I fall --- at your feet --- on my knees --- humbly ---- submissive ---
with delight --- and joyful anticipation of all this is to come

Christ you are King
And so I yearn for more of you

Christ you are King
My cup overflows because of you

Christ you are King
You who emptied yourself --- for me --- for him --- for her --- for all who
believe ---- and come humbly before the throne of grace

Christ you are King
And so I am still in your presence

Christ you are King
And so we are still in your presence

Christ you are King
And we are blessed

Christ you are King

And so everyday we continue to long --- and wait --- and long --- and wait --
 -- and long --- and wait for your return
 Acute is our dependency
 Intense is our devotion and obedience

Christ you are King
 You are mine and I am yours

Christ you are King
 And you sink beneath our wisdom like a stone

Christ you are King
 And so we bow down in worship --- in adoration --- with respect and awe

Christ you are King
 And you are amazing
 You come to us --- you take us --- you walk with us
 You lead
 We follow --- and we are changed --- in the twinkling of an eye even
 sometimes
 And somehow all is well

Christ you are King
 Christ you are King
 Christ you are King

The preamble to the ordination of a Minister of Word and Sacraments in the
 Presbyterian Church in Canada begins with ----

“All ministries of the Church proceed from and are sustained by the ministry
 of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is our prophet --- Priest --- and King ---- the minister of the covenant of
 grace.”

And then it goes on to say

“The Presbyterian church in Canada is bound only to Jesus Christ --- the
 Church’s King and head.”

“All ministries of the Church proceed from and are sustained by the ministry
 of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is our prophet --- Priest --- and King ---- the minister of the covenant of
 grace.”

----- and -----

“The Presbyterian church in Canada is bound only to Jesus Christ --- the Church’s King and head.”

What a powerful few sentences --- and what a powerful opening sentence ---
- “All ministries of the Church proceed from and are sustained by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Simply put ----- all ministries of the church ----- everything here ----- starts with Christ --- and then of course are also sustained by Christ.

It’s not me --- it’s not the elders ----- it’s not the ushers or the praise team --- it’s not anything or anyone save Jesus Christ.

He’s what matters most --- He’s why we’re here ----- He’s the one that allows us to participate in any and everything on His behalf.

“All ministries of the Church proceed from and are sustained by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Nothing matters more than Jesus Christ.

That’s what today is all about ----- the one who guides and leads us --- the lens through which we make every decision we ever make.

We as a Church --- as a people of God ----- must put God first.

Paul says in our passage from Ephesians today --- picking it up at verse 17 --

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ...”

What a poignant statement by a caring and compassionate Christian leader to a fledging flock of believers.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ...” ---- Paul says to the community of Christians at Ephesus.

And Paul says the exact same thing to us today as we gather ---- “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ...”

More than anything else --- what doctrine or beliefs we hold in common --- our understanding and our practice of ministry --- how we feel about certain issues in life --- in faith ---- in the Bible --- and so on.

More important than any of these is the fact that we stand before Christ and call Him King --- King and head of the church --- prophet and priest ---- Minister of the covenant of grace.

Lord --- Saviour --- reconciler ---- redeemer --- pioneer and perfecter of our faith ---- and so much more as well.

And of course calling Christ King and head of our church and our lives --- the one at the top ----- matters more than how we prefer communion --- or what age or stage of faith we should baptize ----- what songs we should sing ----- and other such things that can so often get a rise out of people.

As that great little saying goes ----- “In essentials unity --- in non-essentials liberty --- in everything love.”

“In essentials unity --- in non-essentials liberty --- in everything love.”

And we love by knowing Christ better --- walking with Him more closely --- and giving over all control to Him.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ...”

Paul encourages the Ephesians to stop trying to be in control themselves ----- - and give things over to Christ ----- by getting to know and trust Him more.

Paul prays for his fellow believers that their hearts might be opened.

And then He goes on to speak about being alive in Christ in the very next chapter.

When our eyes are opened to Christ we suddenly become alive in Him like never before.

And once we are alive in Christ we don't hold on to things of the past --- once we are alive in Christ we don't want to hang on to the way we used to do things or the way we are currently doing things --- we simply want to do as Christ so leads us into a beautiful and new future.

When we are alive in Christ ---- everything suddenly is about becoming.

Reluctance is replaced with dependency.

Dependency on the Lord and trust in the Lord.

Jesus came what --- to show people a new way ---- but man o man were they ever reluctant to see things differently.

Change is hard ---- really hard for some --- perhaps even most --- Paul knows this ----- and so he prays -----

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ...”

We are bound to Christ --- that's what defines who we are and how we choose to live --- our inseparable bond with Jesus Christ.

And so we seek to be drawn into His presence more and more.

That's what we all want right --- that's what heaven is after all --- dwelling in the presence of God forever.

We journey in faith seeking to be drawn into His presence --- and His love and His saving grace.

And these are things that can only happen when we surrender --- and let go of trying to control things.

God ceaselessly invites us to surrender.

The King controls --- His people surrender to Him --- and His way.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ...”

Paul desperately wants to see hearts transformed through an experience of the Risen Lord.

He wants those at Ephesus to be blessed by God --- he wants to encourage his brothers and sisters in Christ to let go of the reigns and trust in God.

Reveal yourself to us --- reveal yourself to me.

Show us more of your goodness --- beauty ---- and truth Lord --- open our eyes --- enlighten our hearts Lord.

This is the great cry of encouragement of Paul today.

God wants our heart first and foremost --- then and only then anything else we might have to offer.

And to be clear it isn't follow your gut ---- or follow your heart --- it's follow Him.

Your gut will lead you astray --- your heart will lead you astray --- He --- Jesus will never lead you astray.

It's obedience that matters when it comes to Christ --- not gut feelings or feelings of any kind of nature.

It's ----- "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ..."

Not I keep asking that they will follow their hearts or follow their gut.

Paul reminds us by encouraging us to step outside of ourselves and give way to God's lead --- follow Him Paul says --- not what you think and not what you feel.

And then to another church ---- one made up of people he had never even met --- those in Rome ----- Paul lays out systematically and comprehensively the gospel of Jesus Christ as he understands it for his brothers and sisters in Rome.

And in our passage today from Romans --- he addresses disagreements among believers ---- especially disagreements between weak Christians and far stronger ones.

And the central message ---- akin to Ephesians ---- is one of encouragement.

"Learn to get along" --- Paul says ---- "Don't judge ----- and don't put obstacles in the way of others."

Learn to get along --- don't judge --- and don't put things in the way of others as they grow in Christ.

We have this great and saving truth ---- the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ - -- and yet we get all sidetracked with what we want instead of what He --- God wants.

Christ is King --- means He is the most important thing in life.

But we get all caught up in what we want to the point that we so often lose sight of Him and what He wants.

We end our church year with an emphatic ----- He rules the roost.

That's how we end our Church year ----- He's the King ---- it's kind of like a giant period ----- bang --- end of statement.

Or --- in words my son would understand ----- it's Christ is King --- mic drop.

Does everybody know what a ---- "mic drop" ---- is?

A mic drop is where the one speaking --- the one holding the mic -- --- says what they have to say and then just after they finish --- they drop the mic --- and then walk away.

They drop the mic --- as in that's the last word ---- end of story --- walk away.

Well as Christians we end the church year --- with Christ is King ----- that's our mic drop moment.

Christ is King ---- drop the mic ----- and then turn and walk away.

And in a way this great mic drop --- this great confession that Christ is King.

Sets the tone not just for the year that has passed --- but for the new year as well.

It's ---- Christ is King --- mic drop --- period --- long pause ---- silence --- end of story ---- end of year.

And then it's also ---Christ is King ----- door opener ---- beginning of a great a saving love story ---- beginning of the story --- beginning of the year.

As I journey deeper into the heart of God Christ the King Sunday --- keeps playing a more significant role in my faith development.

Every year it seems to mean more to me.

Every year as we come around to Christ the King Sunday --- late November --- just before Advent ----- it becomes more and more obvious to me that I have such a deep and profound longing and yearning for the return of the King --- the return of Christ.

As one pastor put it --- “With everyday that I live --- the more acute in me is the longing for the return of the King.”

“With everyday that I live --- the more acute in me is the longing for the return of the King.”

That’s how I feel about my life ---- everyday signals a more acute ---- a deeper longing and deeper desire for more of Christ ----- for the return of Christ.

Just give me a little more Jesus I keep finding myself saying ---- and then it’s God just give me a lot more Jesus.

Jesus takes us deeper into the very heart of God ---- Jesus takes us where we can’t possibly ever go without Him.

As Leonard Cohen so powerfully put it ---- “Jesus sinks beneath our wisdom like a stone.”

“Jesus sinks beneath our wisdom like stone.”

In other words Jesus goes deeper --- Jesus takes us deeper than we can ever go by ourselves --- and it’s a beautiful thing.

Christ the King Sunday invites us deeper and deeper into the reality of the heart of God.

It reminds us that when Christ comes He will enter into our fallen and corrupt world like a King --- as our reading from Romans says ---- harkening back to Isaiah 45:23 -----

“As surely as I live says the Lord ----- every knee will bow before me ----- and every tongue will confess to God.”

Not everyone will like it --- not everyone will welcome it ----- but everyone will be subject to Him ---- suddenly falling down and making some kind of profound and humble confessional gesture --- in that moment eyes will be opened like never before.

I for one long for that day --- not because I'm perfect or good or right or righteous or better than anyone else but because it's what God promised and God's promises are good and true and just and faithful.

Things have slid in all directions ---- things continue to slide in all directions ---- the moral compass of our society is way off kilter ----- we need the King --- we need Christ --- to set it right once again.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father --- may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation --- so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened ...”

On that day --- when He returns in all of His glory ---- we will know Him in new ways --- ways beyond our imagining ----- and our hearts will be transformed --- enlightened like never before.

Until then ----- there is no greater truth to celebrate.

No greater wisdom to share.

Nothing more beautiful --- good ---- and true.

Than the saving truth that Christ is King --- He's at the top --- not you not me --- not anybody else.

The evil of this world is but a flash in the pan in light of eternity.

As we enter into Advent we live in the glory that Christ is on His way --- and not just at Christmas that's small picture thinking.

As we enter into Advent we enter into that reality that Christ is on His way - --- He is coming once again.

“With everyday that I live --- the more acute in me is the longing for the return of the King.”

God is so good to us.

He sends us all that we need.

And His name is Jesus Christ.

“He is our prophet --- Priest --- and King ---- the minister of the covenant of grace.”

Christ is King.

And the King is coming.

Amen.