

## Christ the King

Sermon 2017-11-26 - Year A - Pentecost 11-23 - Christ the King - The Rev. Christopher Klukas  
Ezekiel 34:11–20; Psalm 95; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; Matthew 25:31–46

- It used to be said that “The Sun never sets on the British Empire.”
- I always wonder, though, how a peasant in the remotest regions of India or Africa felt about having a king in England. Did they have any idea where England was?
- Were they even aware that they had a king?
- Today is Christ the King Sunday, a day when we celebrate the fact that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. This is an absolute reality, Jesus is Lord over all creation.
- But how many people are there who live without any knowledge that they are under his rule and authority?
- How many of us live that way?

## Not Just Savior but Lord

- For those who are being saved, Jesus is both our Savior and our Lord. Rom 10:9.
  - A savior is one who saves us.
  - A Lord is one who protects us, leads us, and rules over us.
  - 1 Samuel 8:10-18 - Samuel’s warning about earthly kings
- To follow Jesus, we cannot follow in name only. We can’t just talk the talk, we have to walk the walk as well.
- Christ the King Sunday was first introduced in the Roman Catholic Church in 1925 to counter the growing secularism in Europe at that time. This is a concept we need now even more than it was needed in the 1920s!
- "If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men, purchased by his precious blood, are by a new right subjected to his dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire. He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, as instruments of justice unto God."<sup>1</sup>
- *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* (Matthew 7:21, ESV)
- We cannot be saved by our good works, but good works are the natural fruit which comes from God’s sanctification in our lives.

## The Importance of Loving the Body

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Pius XI, *Quas primas*, §33, Libreria Editrice Vaticana

- This is important to remember as we consider our Gospel passage about the sorting of the sheep and the goats.
- In the Ancient middle east, and still in some parts of the middle east today, Shepherds would take intermingled groups of sheep and goats out to pasture, but they had to sort them at the end of the day because the goats weren't as hardy as the sheep and the shepherd needed to make sure that the goats stayed warm. The two look very similar.
- Here Jesus uses a simile, the Son of Man will sort people and judge them just like a shepherd separates sheep from goats.
- The sorting will not be based on one's natural birth, but on their behavior.
- Some might look at this passage and think that Jesus is telling us that our salvation is dependent upon caring for the poor and needy, but it is a little more nuanced than that.
- Jesus says in v. 40 "as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."
- Matthew 12:50 - Jesus' definition of his brother, and sister, and mother.
- There was a Jewish school of thought that said the nations would be judged on how they had treated Israel.<sup>2</sup> Jesus says that all we be judged on how we treat the renewed people of God, those who follow Jesus.
- This is not to say that we shouldn't generally care for the poor, there are plenty of other passages we can turn to which command us to do so, but this isn't one of them.
- Jesus is saying that we will be judged on how well we have loved him as demonstrated by our love for his people, his body, our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- When we show love to one another, we are literally loving Jesus.
- This undoubtedly means that we should be looking out for one another, but also that we should be looking out for poor and persecuted Christians throughout the world and doing our best to give them help.
- *"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:35, ESV)
- This is Jesus' command to us as our Lord and King.

### **Invitation to Come Under the Lordship of Christ**

- So where do you stand in relationship to this King of kings?
- If you have accepted him as your savior, have you bent the knee of your heart to acknowledge him as your Lord as well?
- Psalm 95:7-8 "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."
- V. 34 The kingdom has been prepared for those who follow Jesus. The place of eternal punishment was not prepared for the devil and his angels (v. 41).
- Phil. 2:9-11 every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

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<sup>2</sup> Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone, Part 2: Chapters 16-28* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 142–143.