**11/24/24**

**Christ The King**

**John 18:33-37 (NRSVUE)**

To those of you out there in the pews, and to those of you out there on the conference call, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

How awesome is it to have someone reach out to you? How awesome is it to be able to talk and share with someone? How awesome is it to be counted on sometimes? What I am getting at here is that I have been blessed over the last few weeks to be able to read a few of my colleagues’ sermons and even provide some feedback. This has not only helped them I hope and pray, but I know for certain that it has helped me grow and change. It has actually propelled me on in my continued kingdom work, and in my continued research and writing that I share with you from this very pulpit. This love and respect that I have been able to be blessed with from my colleagues is the very love and respect that I am able to give and show them in return. Without our very King going to the cross none of this would have ever been possible, nor would we all have had the very example to live by and follow. This is precisely living out that Proverbs 27:17 life for, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” (2) Christ sharpened and continued to sharpen us, and we continue to follow that very lead and sharpen one another. Through that very mindset and concept, along with many more I will share with you today, we come together and celebrate Christ The King!

Now, all of you out there on the conference call and in the pews might be wondering why in the world we call this Christ the King Sunday in the first place. I mean, you might have even been observant enough, or have known, that we had to change out the colors of the various altar and pulpit dressings from green to white yet again this week as well. Over the course of your time in the church, or through general faith studies, I am quite sure you have even come up with or have heard of various reasons why we celebrate Christ The King Sunday or change out the paraments. Then, just perhaps you do not have much of a clue, and I am practically speaking a foreign language to you because you are new to the faith or the church. There is also the chance that you really have no clue or understanding because the church year and everything related to our faith can slip your mind, or just be somewhat overwhelming at times. I am here to tell you that wherever you are in all of this is perfectly fine. What matters is that you are here, and rest assured, no matter how seasoned or lightly seasoned you are, we will definitely review some things here from my various knowledge and research.

What I can imagine if that you of course know that any good answer comes with several various responses to it. So, lets get down to some of those particular answers for Christ The King Sunday. First off, it is the close of the liturgical church calendar year. Secondly, the Pope actually ensured that this very festival was in our church calendar several years ago. Third off, we are stuck back in the Gospel of John yet again, because the Gospel of Mark just does not really give a good explanation or story for this day. Fourthly, lastly, and quite possibly the most damning and hard to swallow one of these very points is that “like the Jewish leaders, our allegiances to earthly powers lead us to deny God’s kingship.” (4) Those, are just a sample size of various answers for the day, but they are going to be what we explore a little more in depth as we move along here this morning.

With that being said, I do believe that I have hit us up with a lot of things, and we sure do have plenty of ground to cover together here for sure. However, what I also do not want to forget to do before diving in any further is to actually thank you all for your continued presence in this very community. It is a blessing to be able to continue to wrestle with and explore the Word of God that is put forth in front of us each and every time we get together for our Worship Service. I am continually thankful that we are blessed and able to do so in this very place, and on the conference call as well. This for sure helps us grow together through and with one another whether we are physically together or virtually together. It also equips us to be able to go out there in the world to be able to share this very good news with others as we do God’s work. Thanks be to God for that, and thank you yet again for joining us!

Alright, it is time to really attack this subject and special festival of Christ the King. Let’s utilize the four things which I outlined just a little bit earlier. Let us dig into them a little bit more and unpack them so that we all can leave here with a little more understanding for sure. Now, rest assured I will repeat the points that I made earlier. I will not actually ask you to raise your hands, or even call on you, as if you had been taking copious notes like you were sitting in on one of my classes and lectures that I attend at the Seminary. So, are you ready to break things down and roll together here folks?

First off, it is the close of the liturgical church calendar year. We close off things and next week we move on to a new year and the season of Advent that leads up to the celebration that we have when we get all our gifts at Christmas… I mean the biggest and most ultimate gift of them all that comes in the manger, and to top it all off, is provided at no cost to you and to I. Our credit cards have not been maxed out, and our savings has not been depleted. Our church year is over and our proverbial bank accounts are ready for restoration and rebuilding as we enter Advent and this new beginning. However, the only accounts we are focused on here are our mind and our heart. We leave year B in our lectionary, and all that we learned or did not learn, and we move on to year C in our lectionary, and we get ready to learn and digest more of God’s Word together.

Secondly, the Pope actually ensured that this very festival was in our church calendar several years ago. Now, you may be sitting there and saying that you are not Catholic. I will admit that you are correct there to a degree. However, I have news for you, just like I did for our youth group kids oh so many years ago back in Pittsburgh. Let me remind you what we discussed just a few short weeks ago at the end of October during Reformation Sunday. If you recall I informed or reminded you all that Luther had no desire to start a new church. He simply wanted to reform or fix things, and actually get things back on track within the church. So, even though we may now come to worship in a space defined as Lutheran, I want you to know that we actually still follow several of the Catholic ideals that our brothers and sisters in Christ set forth. We also follow along with the Pope’s very highlighting of the majesty of Christ and the end times while leading into the very season of Advent with Christ The King Sunday. That is even whether the actual date changed over the course of time with the continued restructuring of the church. That is also whether we really do come to accept as true the very words we speak in our creed of believing in the holy catholic church. Yes, of course it means universal here. However, whether we actually have similar or differing theology or practices, we ultimately follow and honor the one and only true God represented and ever-present in the Holy Trinity. So, we come to the very realization that this day is vital to celebrate, and to universally teach others about as well.

Third off, we are stuck back in the Gospel of John yet again, because the Gospel of Mark just does not really give a good explanation or story for this day. With this point in mind, we also come to learn that the Gospel of John provides a completely different version of a king, and Jesus is not actually the type of king who we all too commonly are aware of through our various history educations. I mean when we think of a king, we are all too commonly used to drawing up an image in our minds of a king that would be overthrowing and ruling with an iron fist. A king that accepts no prisoners, and one that looks to conquer land and people. Instead, we get a King in Jesus that is ruling and testifying to the very love and truth of God. That is precisely why we get this piece of the Passion Narrative that seems out of place here as well. For we learn through this snippet of the Passion Narrative that people would like to think they were in charge because they brought Jesus to Pilate. Then, of course Pilate would like to think he is in charge because he is the one that is perceived to be asking the questions. However, what we get here is the clear-cut narrative of who is and will always be in charge, and that is Christ The King. He does not have to answer to Pilate, and He even turns his questions into questions, and more profoundly He turns them into self-examinations as well. Jesus turns everything upside down when he accepts whatever fate the people have and want to put on Him, for he knows he has to live out the very scriptures written, and go to the very cross and reign from there to be the highest and only true King. This is also precisely how we move on to our fourth and final topic here. For it is not just Pilate that is in this story, but it is you and I, and that is whether we think we are playing the part of the crowd or if we think we are playing the part of Pilate. Our true and eternal King is flipping the script and reminding us this is no history book we read from and share with one another, but the Bible is actually a living testament to his kingdom that is and the very kingdom that is yet to come as well.

So, fourthly, lastly, and quite possibly the most damning and hard to swallow one of these very points is that “like the Jewish leaders, our allegiances to earthly powers lead us to deny God’s kingship.” (4) That is precisely why Jesus had to provide the ultimate sacrifice on the cross for you and for I to release us from all this weight, this very lost nature of existence that we live at times, and this very present sin that overshadows even our best mindset and accomplishments. Our ultimate and only King provides us with grace upon grace that we would never have been able to achieve on our own no matter how good a follower we have become over the course of our lives. You and I in the Living Word right here are continually the very focus of an oh so awesome, forgiving, knowing, powerful, present, and loving God! We just need to really protect our hearts and our minds. We need to watch our various interests in what is out there versus the very what is in here of our very hearts, where Jesus resides. Christ The King is our very outward expression of us knowing who we are and whose we are! That is precisely why I try and remind you each and every week to go out and show just a little bit of Christ to others, for that is our very call, and it shows our love and respect and admiration for our Triune God and everlasting King.

Now, that I hopefully have you hooked with all that I served up here this week then you better make sure you come back next week when we really get the party started. That is when we start lighting candles on the Advent Wreath in anticipation of what we know for certain is to come. That is the very birth of a babe in a manger in swaddling clothes that came to this very earth to be the ultimate example and show us his very love and compassion. Our God is that big, our God is that awesome, our God does not want to rule from only above by himself, but he wants us to join him someday in the glorious kingdom he has created with oh so many rooms. Our God is the only God that I could imagine anyone would want to follow if we managed to share all of that from deep within our hearts and minds, and do so with the utmost respect, love, compassion, and excitement that He has put in each and every one of us! He was no idol or some virtue, but He was and is and will forever be the end all and be all. He is Christ The King!

Amen!

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year B 2024

 November 24th, 2024

 Christ The King

 27th Sunday After Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

 © 2018

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(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Christ the King (Year B)

 John crafts his narrative so that Jesus’ kingship becomes most visible in his

 crucifixion

 November 24, 2024

 Commentary on John 18:33-37

 Susan Hylen

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Christ the King

 Jesus unmasks the demonic forces of society that engage in abuse of power

 November 21, 2021

 Commentary on John 18:33-37

 Samuel Cruz

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 Christ the King Sermon

 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Wildwood, NJ

 November 20, 2024

 Kenneth Bassett

**John 18:33-37 (NRSVUE)**

 In John’s gospel, the story of Jesus and Pilate presents two different ways of

 exercising power: through force or with love.

 33 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 does not belong to this world. If my kingdom

 belonged to 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.”

**(Not Used)**

**Theme Statement: What is God doing in or behind this text?**

**(Active verb, saving or empowering action, complete thought, and a simple short sentence)**

**(Not Used)**

**Four Page Method**

**Page One (Trouble in the Text) (Characters Only)**

**Page Two (Trouble in the World) (Us Only)**

**Page Three (Grace in the Text) (God & Characters)**

**Page Four (Grace in the World) (God & Us)**

**(Not Used)**

**Sermon Unity Elements: The Tiny Dog Now Is Mine**

**Text (41-42):**

**Theme (42-48):**

**Doctrine (48-50):**

**Need (50-52):**

**Image (52-56):**

**Mission (56-57):**