

Jesus, the King 11-22-15

Jesus, King of the universe, rule in our hearts & minds now & forever. We long to please You. You are our only hope in a world gone mad. Keep us focused in Your love & mercy as we reach out to a hurting world. Lead us, we pray. Amen

When Jesus walked this earth, He did not fit the description of a King. He was born of poor parents – amidst animals, laid in a manger – a feeding trough for the animals. He didn't dress in kingly robes, nor ride in chariots. There was no talk of royal blood. He didn't come to be served. He didn't play into the pride & snobbery of the religious professionals – who were snobs (people with an exaggerated respect for high social position or wealth who seek to associate w/social superiors and dislikes people or activities regarded as lower-class). Instead, Jesus had an eye for the poor, the truly repentant, the authentic, and sinners! He hobnobbed w/fishermen, tax-collectors, women of ill-repute, healing the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf, those demon possessed. He died on a cross - a death of shame, separation from God. Yet, we call Him King! King of the Universe! King forever!

It had been prophesied from long, long ago that God would send a King – a King whose kingdom would not pass away, never be destroyed. To those who lived in Israel at the time Jesus was there, Jesus was a mystery. How could he perform such miracles? How could He claim to be the Son of God? Jesus of Nazareth – wasn't the King supposed to be born in Bethlehem? (Yes, He was. Since He grew up in Nazareth, He was called Jesus of Nazareth.) But wouldn't the King come & free them

from the Romans? Wouldn't He be a strong military leader? Pilate had trouble too. It didn't seem like he could get a straight answer out of Jesus. But Jesus says His kingdom is not of this world. It's no wonder Jesus & Pilate's conversation is so strange – the earthly & the heavenly meet. When people are talking on two different planes, it is impossible to make sense of it. One thing is clear: everyone who is of the truth listens to Jesus.

We have had very little experience w/royalty – our ancestors were only too happy to get rid of the rule of King George. But Kings & Queens, Duchesses & Dukes do spark some interest – most of us were somewhat interested in the life of Princess Di, the marriage & babies of William & Kate. Queen Elizabeth is a fine lady. I heard her giving a “state of the empire” address on a year when her kids had just given her fits. She said, “This year's been less than pleasant.” Now that's queenly, isn't it? She could have said, “This year has been the pits!” or something a commoner would have said. I heard a trumpeter play the most heart-felt melody at the changing of the guard outside the palace in Sweden. He played w/such passion, I thought it had to be a love song to the queen. Turns out it was “Memory” from “Cats” – a mournful song of an aged prostitute!

Our closest experience to a King would be, of course, our President. We were at a visitor center in Lincoln, NE, & they told us “You don't want to be in North Platte tomorrow – Pres. Regan will be there.” Oh yes we DO want to be in North Platte

tomorrow!” We saw him waving from the back window of a limo – the scene is emblazoned in my mind. But we really don’t expect much from Kings & Queens – they’re mostly figureheads. Oh there is lots of pomp & circumstance, coronations, certain protocol. Nor do we expect much from our Presidents – once they get to Washington. In the past, people looked to their kings for protection & care. A strong king meant better living.

But then there’s Jesus. Jesus is Lord of all. He says of Himself, “all authority in heaven & on earth has been given to Me.” Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father in heavenly places, far above all rule & authority & power & dominion. God has “put all things under His feet & made Him the head over all things for the church.” We desperately need His protection & care – He has the power & authority to do it. There is a war going on between good & evil. It’s a spiritual battle & we have no clue what that truly means. But we do know this much – when the enemy harasses us w/temptation or lies, we have weapons of combat.

Our best weapon is the Name of Jesus because at the Name of Jesus, demons have to flee – they have to flee; they have no choice. Jesus – King Jesus, has all authority. The devil knows that better than we do. The Word of God is a mighty sword. Quoting the Word of God builds faith in us - & scares the devil.

Earthly kings have been known to demand obedience, even worship, because

they're impressed w/themselves & their royal blood. Jesus, on the other hand, comes to us, ministers to us, has taken our sin upon Himself, died & rose again that we might live w/Him eternally. He alone is worthy of our adoration. We want to obey Him; we want to love Him. As we respond to His incredible love, we desire to worship Him. It's not something we have to do – or only do once a week on Sunday morning.

Last week we considered 3 words: praise, thanksgiving, & reverence. One can put those 3 words together & come up w/one word – that word is worship. To worship Christ the King, we get our eyeballs off of ourselves – our complaints, our selfish desires, our comfort, - and focus on Jesus. It's not that we don't make our requests known to God, we do – w/thanksgiving! (Some company sent a notice encouraging us to get ready for Thanksgetting! Is it really all about us? NO!) We make our requests known & leave them in God's hands. He is able! He is working! He knows the beginning from the end – He sees the big picture! We praise Him & thank Him for that! He is the great & mighty King.

Maybe you've heard this story. When Hitler's forces occupied Denmark, the order came that all Jews in Denmark were to identify themselves by wearing armbands w/yellow stars of David. The Danes had seen the extermination of Jews in other countries & guessed that this was the first step in that process in their countries. The King did not defy the orders. He had every Jew wear the star & he himself wore the

Star of David. He told his people that he expected every loyal Dane to do the same. The King said, "We're all Danes. One Danish person is the same as the next." He wore his yellow star when going into Copenhagen every day in order to encourage his people. The King of Denmark identified w/his people, even to the point of putting his own life on the line. Now that's a great story with a powerful point. The only problem is it isn't true. It's an urban legend. It's been around for a long time & told thousands of times. Too bad! What an image for a king, identifying with his people! And of course that's precisely what Jesus did. Jesus became flesh & lived among us. "Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality w/God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven & on earth and under the earth, & every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The day is coming when EVERY knee shall bow b/4 Christ the King! Even those who have resisted Him here on earth. Their end will not be good. Aren't you soooo thankful that you know that the Word is true and we can come b/4 Him now in praise & thanksgiving – worshipping our King who reigns over all! Amen.