

“King of Kings and Lord of Lords”

Date: November 25, 2018

Place: Lakewood UMC

Texts: Rev. 1:4-8; John 18:33-37

Occasion: Christ the King Sunday

Theme: Lordship of Jesus Christ

Today is Christ the King Sunday. It is not one of the major holidays on the Christian calendar, and in fact, some of you may never even have heard of it. It is a kind of transition Sunday, marking the end of one season and the beginning of another. Today is the last Sunday of the Christian calendar year.

Next Sunday will be the first Sunday of Advent and the first Sunday of the Christian new year. If we're talking about Advent, then you know that Christmas is just around the corner. That hardly seems possible, but the retailers have been thinking about Christmas for a long time, and many of us are beginning to think about it too.

The observance of Christ the King Sunday can help us to make the connection. You see, the birth of the baby Jesus is connected to the risen and glorified Christ. The babe, whose birth we await during Advent, is also the King of Glory. At Christmas, we have more than just the baby in the manger; we have a sovereign king. “Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her king.”

There is a beautiful poem that I know many of you have heard before. It tells us in a few brief words that Jesus did more to change history than any other person who has lived. The title of the poem is called “One Solitary Life.” It goes like this:

“He was born in an obscure village.

He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty.

He then became an itinerant preacher.

He never held an office; he never had a family, or owned a house.

He didn't go to college. He had no credentials but himself.

“Twenty-one centuries have come and gone and today
He is the central figure of the human race.
All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed,
All the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings who ever reigned
Have not affected the life of humanity on this earth
As much as that one, solitary life.”

So, if someone asked you who was the most influential person who ever lived on earth, who would you nominate? Would you name one of our presidents, and if so, which one? Would you nominate Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr.? How about Napoleon or Alexander the Great, or Caesar? Or maybe one of the saints? Who would you nominate as the most influential person who ever lived?

The truth be told, none of the political powers who ever ruled on earth was ever as great or as influential as our Lord Jesus. Men and women have influenced history and changed the course of human events. Their names are required reading in our history books. But none ever was, nor will ever be, as great as Jesus Christ. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

In the scripture passage this morning, there is a dialogue that takes place between Pilate and Jesus. Jesus has been arrested on false charges, accused of being a king, a political threat to Rome. Certain Jewish high priests wanted Jesus to be tried by the Romans so they would put him to death and his blood would not be on their hands.

So here we have this back and forth dialogue between Pilate and Jesus. Pilate asks him: “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answers him, “Why are you asking me this? Is it you who wants to know or did somebody tell you to ask me?” Pilate comes back at Jesus, “Listen, do I

look like a Jew? It's your people who want you to die. What have you done?"

Jesus tells him, "My kingdom is not of this world." Pilate thinks he hears what he needs for a conviction. "Ah, so you are a king?" Jesus replies, "It is you who say that I am a king. But this is why I was born, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth will hear my voice."

Jesus kept answering the questions, but in a way that Pilate didn't understand. Do you? Jesus was saying, "I am the truth. Know me and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." But what is the truth about Jesus? What is it that makes him the greatest man who ever lived? Why do we say that he is King of kings? What makes *him* so special?

People have written entire books answering these questions. Let me make three brief points this morning. **Point number one:** Jesus was who he said he was. Jesus was and is the Son of God. Not merely a human being, but God in the flesh. When Jesus was born, God became one of us. Jesus was God incarnate. *That* makes Jesus special.

Point number two: Jesus really did rise from the dead. The resurrection changed history. No one has ever come back from the dead, risen in the power of the resurrection. Sure, people have been resuscitated by doctors, but I'm talking about genuinely coming back from the dead. Easter was a one time, only time experience. "Christ is risen; He is risen indeed!" *That* makes him special.

Point number three: Sin is forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus is king of kings; He is the Son of God; He is risen from the dead. AND he is Savior. There is no other name under Heaven by which God forgives the sins of humankind.

Plato, Buddha, Mohammed, Moses – all great leaders, thinkers and philosophers. We can learn from them; we can respect them; we can study their teachings. But only in the name of Jesus are sins forgiven. *That makes him special.*

Jesus changed history. We even mark history differently because of his life. BC and AD refer to the time before Jesus and after his birth. There is none to compare; he is in a class all by himself. He is the holy One of God. He is King of kings and Lord of lords, the greatest human being who ever lived. He alone shared the divinity of God in his body.

Now, you might be sitting in your pew this morning, thinking to yourself, “Yes, I’ve heard this before. This is nothing new. This is basic Christian doctrine. What’s so profound about this? Well let me tell you. You’re right, none of it matters, if it is only intellectual knowledge.

My dear friends, you can know the truth, but unless the truth holds you in its grip, it remains merely words. We can nod our heads in agreement and say, “Yeah, I believe that Jesus is King of kings.” But you know what; it doesn’t matter unless you also call him “Lord.”

And this is what I mean by that title. Jesus wants to be the controlling influence in each of our lives. Jesus doesn’t want us to simply know things about him. Jesus wants to influence every aspect of our lives. Jesus wants to have a personal relationship with each one of us. He wants to come into our hearts and live. You see, Jesus is not just an idea. He is a Being who has the power to live inside each of us.

Jesus is King of kings, but is He Lord of your life? Does he have control of your eyes and the things you look at? Does he have control of your ears and the things you listen to? Does He go to bed with you at night

and wake up with you in the morning? Does He ride in the car with you, and influence the way you drive?

Jesus is indeed King of kings, but is He Lord of your life? Jesus does not want us simply to believe certain facts about him. We are not saved by having the right information about Jesus. Jesus wants to live with us, work with us, play with us, and be with us always. Will you let him be Lord of your life? Let us pray:

“Lord Jesus Christ, we proclaim your greatness among all the people of the earth. There is none like you, nor will there ever be. You are King among kings. But your power is not military might but the power of love. And so we pray, may your kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven. Come into each of our lives, Jesus, and be Lord. We surrender to your love and care. Forgive us our sins, and then transform us: guide us, mold us, and sanctify us by your love. We pray in your name. Amen.”