

The LORD is King!

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[0:00] Jesus.

Psalm 93. The Lord on high is mighty.

Your decrees are very trustworthy. Holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore. Amen. The word of the Lord.

Well, people of God, we have come to the last Sunday in the church calendar year. This Sunday in our Anglican tradition is called the Sunday next before Advent.

Although most people know it as Christ the King Sunday. In fact, this observation is a 20th century innovation in reality.

[1:49] It wasn't practiced in the churches for the previous 19 centuries before. It wasn't until 1925 that the current Pope decreed that the last Sunday, that the current Pope at the time in 1925, decreed that the last Sunday in the church be observed in this manner as Christ the King Sunday.

And he did it to counter what he perceived as the secularizing influences of the age. The tendency of the early 20th century as removed increasingly, really started in the 19th century, but increasingly away from, more and more away from God into secular ideologies and rejection of all that is holy and centered on God.

Now, I'll leave it to your observation of history to decide if he was successful in maybe turning the culture back to God. In fact, it wasn't until 1997, the end of the 20th century, that the Anglicans deviated from our own calendar to start observing Christ the King.

Perhaps maybe that was earlier in the U.S. in America and later in 1997 in England.

I'm not quite sure about that dating. Now, I'm giving this seemingly boring history lesson to show that a lot of what we perceive as Anglican practices were in fact late 20th century innovations.

[3:23] Now, innovations in and of themselves are not bad. If what is being arrived at is an improvement on the former, if it's drawing us even further and deeper into the knowledge of God.

But I will submit that this was certainly not the case because what we did in the innovations of the lectionary, for example, and in these things, I'm not speaking particularly of Christ the King Sunday, but some of the innovations in the 20th century as Anglicans, what it ended up being is that we lost a wonderful lectionary that allows the church to read through the large swaths of the Bible on the Lord's Day, which is our one-year historical Anglican lectionary, and the cohesiveness of that lectionary that gives internal structure in teaching about the historical redemptive work of God in Jesus Christ.

That was our heritage as Anglicans. We kind of jettisoned that for what we currently have. Now, I think we lose our distinctly Anglican and Protestant identity with the adoptions of many of these later innovations.

And I think it's our loss to do so. And it is one of these vital parts of our Anglican heritage that we seek to reclaim.

And that's what I hope the impetus, the reason why we're doing that and getting back starting next year, which is starting next Sunday, beginning of the new liturgical year, to go back to that particular one-year lectionary.

[5:15] And it will seem strange to probably all of us, because I said that these are later 20th century innovations, but for us, that's all we've known. It might seem strange, but maybe be assured that, in fact, what we're doing in going back to this one-year lectionary starting next Sunday, an Advent one, is that we're going back to really the historical root of our Protestant heritage, Anglican heritage in particular.

And, in fact, one of the interesting things about that lectionary is that it goes beyond even the 16th century and the Anglican, the changes that were being made at the Reformation in England in the

16th century.

This lectionary is as old as the 5th century. And so that's the beauty of what we've jettisoned. And so I hope that as we go back to this, as we return, as it were, to this ancient path, may we find in it that the way is good and that it is a path in which we can rest in.

So that is just sort of a preview or just an information to what we're going into next year as we enter into Advent one, and just to inform you in some ways of the changes.

But now let's look at the readings for this Sunday from the Revised Common Lectionary, which is, again, as I said, Christ the King Sunday. And we'll primarily be in Psalm 93, as we've discussed.

[6:49] The theme of that psalm is right there. The Lord is King. That's what the psalmist is saying. The Lord reigns. Now, as I mentioned Pope Pius XI, who was the Pope in 1925, the reason he wanted a Sunday in which the Roman Catholic Church will extol and celebrate the truth that Christ is King is because he saw the condition of the modern world post-World War I.

In one sense, human pride made us, I mean mankind, made us think that we were the center of the universe. The onset of the exponential advancement in science and technology was upon us. We were moving into the age of automated vehicles and automation in general. In the previous century, in the 19th century, humanist philosophy and thought had already done a lot of work in rejecting religion and in rejecting God and had already placed human reason and scientific inquiry as the measure of truth.

And the thinking was this, that humanity will shake up the crutch that is primitive religion. We will shake it up and in exchange we will progress in this scientific understanding which is going to be the end, the telos, the goal of all human action.

It's to continue in this trajectory, this progress as we shake up God and religion and all these superstitious things. But instead of progress, there was World War I in which about 20 million people died.

[8:49] Another 20 million people were wounded. This was engrossed. In fact, the aftermath of the war led to even greater destruction and tragedy.

There was famine. And there was a world pandemic in which an addition of 50 million people died. So all the language of growth and human progress, that was the result of it in the beginning of the 20th century.

But lessons were not learned. Instead of saying, as the psalmist says here, the Lord reigns. That Christ is king. And we must look to him.

The world turned instead to fascism and to communism. And another world war arose in which another 50 million plus people died.

And we have yet to learn these lessons that the sermons declare in this song. I know so far I'm being sort of a Debbie Downer.

[9:57] Sorry, Debbie. No offense. And sorry to anybody else named Derby. Debbie here. But it seems like I'm being a Debbie Downer here. But it isn't so. I'm just helping us to see, really, where we are as mankind.

The way we've jettisoned God. And we've made ourselves the center. This psalm rightly sees the center of all reality. It's not us.

It's not you and I. In fact, we've moved even further away from even a view of mankind as a center. Right? We now, in the post-modern world, have a view of I.

Not even we. I am the center. And so, I can think of all reality as conforming to myself rather than the created other that the world has made.

And all of reality must conform to what I think and how I view the world or how I view myself. It is in this confusion that we have such things as, I am a man in a woman's body.

[11:08] That sentence itself does not make any sense. It would not have made sense to your grandfathers and even your parents. It wouldn't have made, it wouldn't have been registered.

But that's the world we live in. Because we have jettisoned God. It is progression. Instead of progress, it is, in some many ways, devolution. And we fail to learn the lesson.

We fail to acknowledge Christ as King. We fail to recognize that this is the reality that God reigns. That that reality must shape every microsecond of our life.

The fact that the Lord reigns is not something that is ever in doubt. It wasn't for the psalmist. It's not a question.

No matter what the world thinks out there, it's not a matter of questioning if the Lord reigns. The psalmist just declares, the Lord reigns. This is the reality. Of course, the more we acknowledge His rule and submit to it, the better the world will go for us.

[12 : 18] The better things will be. But the world's rebellion does not overthrow the reality of His rule and reign. His kingdom is not like those of earthly kings.

That is dependent on the acceptance of its subjects. The Lord reigns. The psalmist has it right. It's not that the psalmist's world is less sane than ours.

Perhaps it is in some ways. But we're not told when this psalm was written, in fact, or who it was written by. We just know that it was one of the psalms sung by the people of God throughout their history.

Perhaps Israel was singing this psalm in the wilderness on the way to the promised land. The Lord reigns. Perhaps in the promised land itself, under faithful and faithless kings, they were saying, the Lord reigns.

And perhaps even in exile, very much in exile, after God had taken them out of the land in judgment, they were still saying this truth, this bedrock reality of the universe.

[13 : 30] Christ is king. The Lord reigns. Through it all, the Lord reigns. This divine rule was, in fact, is, the reality on which the world turns.

The first section of the psalm gives us this truth in verse 1 and 2. It tells us that the world turns on its axis. The universe does not implode on itself. And the only reason why it does not is because of the divine king's eternal and transcendent power.

The psalm begins with the praise of this king. He tells us he is robed in majesty. He has put on strength as his belt. You know, earthly potentists, earthly kings and queens and rulers, presidents and prime ministers, they arraigned themselves in raiments to convey their greatness.

Right? If you've seen the coronation of Charles III, if you watch that, he was dressed in regal robes. If you saw pictures of Elizabeth II, I was told that six women had to hold a beautiful, flowing, you know, sort of coronation gown.

The earthly rulers dress and arraign themselves in majestic attire to show the significance of their office.

[14 : 56] But this divine king does not need to borrow anything outside of himself to show his majesty, to burnish his majesty or his strength. This divine king, all his superlative attributes, are who he is in and of himself.

They're not things he puts on. Remember that story by, I think it's Anne's Christian Anderson, about the emperors with no clothes? There's this emperor who wanted to, in his hubris, wanted to be a reigning the best of all royal robes.

And he says to, he gets these tailors to come, and he tells them, I want you to make me a robe that only people who have noble birth and superior visage will be able to see that robe.

Well, they then made a robe, made the robe for the emperor, and they arranged the emperor in these robes, and they paraded the emperor around, and the emperor goes around, and all his subjects were like, well, we must pretend that we see it, because we want to be seen as people, noble people.

And so they all said, oh man, the emperor's robes are so beautiful. We've never seen anything this amazing, this glorious, this magnificent, this majestic. The emperor kept going, and he goes in front of one of the kids in the city square, and the kid, not knowing any better, says, why does the emperor have no clothes on?

[16 : 40] Well, that's something, that's sort of how the human rulers sort of attire themselves, in all their glory, and all their majesty. It's as if they, before the Lord, they are naked, but not so with God.

He himself, is glorious in and himself. He doesn't need to put anything on, to show off his majesty. He doesn't need to put anything on, to show off his strength. Then verse 2 concludes with this, in praise of this divine king's eternal being.

Verse 2 says, he is from everlasting, we're told. He has no beginning, and he has no end. No one bestowed kingship on him. In fact, the reverse is true.

No one, uh, coronated him as king, because all rule, all power, in any capacity, that there is, derives from him.

All lords and kings, must answer to him, because their rule is by his, by his leave. And it's through his strength, and his eternity, that all things hold together.

[17 : 50] So that the first three words of this psalm, the Lord reigns, is not just an aspirational statement. It is an existential statement.

If the Lord were not on the throne, if he were not to rule, and reign, over the universe, then nothing in all the universe can exist.

It is by his rule, that the world is established, as he says there in the psalm. It is by his rule, that the world is established, and it should never be moved.

The world turns on its axis, because the Lord reigns. I wonder if this truth, is a comfort, is a source of comfort to you.

I wonder if this truth, is a source of peace, and strength for you. The Lord reigns over the heavens, and the earth, over the skies, and the seas, over every molecule, and atom.

[18 : 59] And the world, in rebelling against God, needs to know this truth, so that they may come to bow the knee, and acknowledge him as Lord. But as a citizen of his kingdom, as a child of his, do you know this truth?

Does this truth, inform your life, and your reality? Must you be reminded? If you must, be reminded, brothers and sisters. It is important, that we must be reminded of this, in the world that we live in.

We must be reminded of it, so that we will not lose heart, even as we go through life's changes.

Now, the truth that the Lord reigns, for the unbeliever, it cannot be a source of much comfort.

Because it is before this ruling king, that every rebellious soul, must come before, and stand before, and give an account, of Israel's rebellion.

But for the Christian, it is a comfort to know, that the Lord reigns. And to know that he is a just king, and a merciful one, and a gracious Lord.

[20 : 25] So what are you going through, now? What have you been going through, this year?

What are you looking forward to? What are the fears and anxieties, that are before you?

Hear the words of the psalmist. The Lord reigns. He rules, and reigns, over every single aspect, of not just your life, but the universe, as it were.

Well, not as it were, as it is. So take heart. The second section, of the psalm, actually then goes, and talks about, some of the realities, of our life.

So verse 3 to 4, reminds us, that in this present world, in which we live in, we have floods. And he says it, verse 3, the floods have lifted up, oh Lord, the floods have lifted up, their voice.

The floods lift up, their roaring. The flood, which is stated three times, in this verse, is not merely, a devastating onslaught, of water. That's not, it's an imagery, more so that, the flood signifies, the forces of chaos, the forces of rebellion, that lift their voice, against God's majesty, and God's rule.

[21 : 44] That's what, that's what the flood, are meant to signify. The flood, is the world out there, in rebelling against God. The flood, is the sinful heart, that rejects God, and his rule, and his word.

The flood, the flood, is the result, of our sin, that we see in the world. Wars, and rumors of wars, famine, and death, and disease, and great atrocity, that man, inflicts on man.

All of that, we see in our world. The floods have lifted up, they've lifted up their voices, the floods lift up, they're roaring. They seem like a tsunami, unstoppable, and threatening, to swallow you up, and pull you under, into the abyss of death.

The floods have lifted up, their voice, the floods lift up, they're roaring. And the king, who is from everlasting, who created this world, he created it, at the creation, the sound of creation, was ammonious.

The sound of creation, was ordered, was beautiful. And yet the flood, that we speak of here, that the psalmist speaks of here, the voices of rebellion, the voices, that come, with the discordant, and conflicting tunes, into the harmony, of God's creation, invades.

[23 : 18] And you hear it, you hear the cacophony, of the voice, and the roaring, of death, and rebellion, all around you. Death is a song of chaos, of hatred, of enmity, with God, and enmity between man.

And in their wake, is brokenness, and destruction. And the roar, and the din, of the flood, might seem overwhelming, at times.

Wars, and famine, perversions, of truth, and beauty, these are all the fruit, of the roaring. But what might seem, insurmountable to you, and to me, the psalmist lets us know here, that it is not so, with the Lord.

What might seem like a tsunami, to you and to me, is not so, with the Lord. Verse 4 tells us, mightier than the thunders, of many waters, mightier than the waves, of the sea, the Lord on high, is

mighty.

All these floods, that have risen up, in opposition, are no match, for the transcendent might, of the Lord. Psalm 2 asks, why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot, in vain?

[24 : 46] Why do the kings, of the earth, set themselves, and the rulers, take counsel, against the Lord, and against his anointed? And you might think, that the forces, arrayed against God, are too many.

You might think, the forces, often times, the forces, arrayed against God, and God's people, are insurmountable. We see the forces, amassed against the Lord.

Against you, as his people, because you know him, and you call him, you know him by name, and you worship him. You live in the fear, of the Lord. And so you're hated, by the world.

But what does Psalm 2, further tells us? Psalm 2 tells us, what God thinks, about this opposition, about these forces, that are arrayed. Psalm 2 verse 4 says, He who sits in heaven, laughs.

Is God scared? Is God moved, by any of this opposition? No. The psalmist tells us, that he who sits in heaven, laughs. The Lord holds them, in derision.

[25 : 46] And then, the Lord will speak, to them in his wrath, and terrify them, in his righteous fury. That's the verdict. That's what we saw, in revelations as well, that we read this morning.

The Lord, is enthroned on I, and he rules, and reigns, and he will judge. All rebellion.

He will stamp it, under his feet. And the scripture, invites us, to see that. To fix our eyes, on the Lord who reigns, to whom salvation belongs.

And not to fix our eyes, on the problem, which we're often, prone to do. Or fix our eyes, or move our eyes, off the one, whom salvation belongs to.

And fix our eyes, on counterfeit, messiahs, and counterfeit idols. The flood, brothers and sisters, may rage, and roar, but the Lord is mightier.

[26 : 52] We see pictures, of God's might, through our scripture. As I read that passage, I can't help, but think, of two, pivotal, pictures in the Bible, of the chaos, and insurmountable power, of the flood.

And, and, what seems like, metaphorical, language, is also real, in some ways. You think about, the Red Sea, as the people of God, comes to the sea.

They're surrounded, by the flood, of the Red Sea, in front of them. And, advancing, at their back, is the flood, of the rebellious, Egyptian army, led by Pharaoh, bent on death, and destruction, of God's people.

There isn't, there was no hope, seemingly. Death in front, death at the back. And yet, God parted the Red Sea, and causes people, to walk, on dry ground, to safety.

And at the same time, even as he, saves his people, that very, means of saving his people, he used as a way, to destroy, and to vanquish, his enemies.

[28 : 13] Destroying, the formidable, Egyptian army, in one fell swoop. The Lord is mightier. I can't help, but think also, of, of Jesus' word, in the midst, of the tempestuous sea.

As his disciples, sit in a boat, experienced semen, most of them were, at their wit's end, unable to do anything, and finally, cried out to God.

And Jesus awoke, from his sleep. When you read Psalm 2, and it says, the Lord and I, laughs, and sits in derision. I see that, when I saw, when you imagine, how would Jesus sleep, in the middle, in the middle of a storm, of a raging sea?

It's because he's the Lord, he's mightier. He laughs in derision. It's nothing to him. But at the insistence, of his disciples, he awoke, he looks at the sea, at the storm raging, at the waters, that seems to be, about to swallow, them up.

And with a word, he quieted the waves. So that even his friends, those who know him, have lived with him, now looked at him, would wonder, anew, and say to themselves, what manner of man, is this?

[29 : 44] Well, it's because he is the king. He's no mere man. He's the Lord, of whom Psalm 93, speaks of. He is mightier, than the floods.

And so now, the psalmist, comes to the third, and last section, of the psalm, in verse 5, and now speaks, of the lasting, stability, of the Lord's decrees, and of his hours. It says in verse 5, your decrees, are very trustworthy.

Holiness, bespits your house, O Lord, forevermore. This is our, that's the ESV version. I love the CSV version.

It says this, your testimonies, instead of your decrees, your testimonies, are completely, reliable, trustworthy, completely reliable.

Holiness, is the beauty, of your house, for all the days, to come. Your testimonies, or as NASB, put it, your testimonies, are trustworthy, completely reliable, are fully confirmed.

[30 : 54] Holiness, is pleasing to your house. And you see, what the psalmist, is saying here, about the Lord's testimonies. God's word, It is unmovable. It is unmovable.

God's word, God's word, is as powerful, as he himself is. His words, are fully confirmed.

You can go to the bank, with it. You're fully insured. By virtue, and as one theologian puts it, to say, to speak of the Lord's testimonies, here in verse 5, is to speak of his covenant, stipulations, his promises, to you and I, as his people.

That's the comfort of verse 5. What are God's testimonies? It's his word to you, as his people, those who belong to him. It's his word of promise, and of hope. And by virtue of this, his covenant with his people, we're told again, that the Lord's house, conveys another central privilege, to God's people. The privilege of holiness. The abiding beauty, of the Lord's house, reflects this eternal majesty, and beauty, of this divine king.

[32 : 15] Holiness befits your house. We've seen the Lord, that he reigns in glorious majesty. We've seen that he is mighty, in his strength.

But also, we're now seeing that the Lord reigns also, reigns, is also righteous in holiness. And as you think about this, holiness aspect of God's reign, we must be honest with ourselves.

We're inhabitants of this house, that is his. This body that we belong to, that he is fashioned, that he's brought us into.

We're inhabitants of this house. The house of a holy and righteous, and just, and mighty king. And so, we must reflect, the holiness, of the king, in our actions, in our behavior, in our outlook, in our thinking.

But yet, we're also honest with ourselves, aren't we? We must be, at least. We live in this world, and the flood, that's darkened the world, and cries out, and rebelling against him.

[33 : 29] Although we are now, come to him, our heart has been changed. We still live in a flesh, that wars against, the spirit of God in us. And draws us to the world, and draws us away from God.

And we know, even in ourselves, that we are constantly at war. But here the psalmist says, holiness befits your house. And so what is our hope, as sinful human beings?

What is our hope, in the midst of this, this, in the face of this king, who is mighty, who reigns, but who is also holy? Our hope is in Christ Jesus, our king.

What does the Bible say? What does Paul say, in 2 Corinthians, about this king? For our sake, he made him, that is God made him, to be sin, who knew no sin.

So that in him, we might become, the righteousness of God. What is your hope? It is in Christ, who became sin for you, so that you may become, the righteousness of God.

[34 : 40] So, this king who reigns in majesty, this king who rules, over all the world, who oppose the world, by his right hand, is also the king, who has come, into the world.

written himself, into his story, to come and save you, and deliver you, and rescue you.

And so, if you're reading this, Psalm 93, and you're saying, this is a picture, of a transcendent God, that I cannot relate to. Well, here's the comfort.

Yes, you cannot relate to him, in his transcendent power, but he has come, near to you, brothers and sisters. He has come, so that you may know him. He has condescended himself, to our level. And this is what we'll be, looking forward to, as we enter into Advent, and we look, on our way to Christmas. We delight in this king, who has come, and made himself known to us.

[35 : 51] Not, as a conquering king, though that is, we is, but he's come, as a merciful savior.

Yahweh is king. The Lord reigns. And his rule and reign, is both our comfort, and our hope. And it's also our strength, in this world.

It is a hope for you, in the midst of the, the, the change, changing world, as the flood, rages around you. It is a comfort for you, in the midst of it as well. But it's also your strength, brothers and sisters. Will you live, in this strength, that the Lord reigns. And so, you can't stand, firm, upon, the rock of ages. Because your, king, laughs, in derision, at the flood, around you.

And because you're, in him, the flood, cannot take you. It cannot sink you. It cannot overwhelm you. It will not.

[37:06] 24-7, 365 days of the year. Every second of every minute. Not only on Christ the King Sunday. But every second, of every day. Christ is king.

The Lord reigns. Amen. Amen.