

Good News: Jesus is King

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Preacher: Fr. Caleb Evans

[0:00] And behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him.

And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. I just want to start this morning by saying that Jesus Christ is our King and he will reign forever. Alleluia.

Amen. So here we are. One of my favorite feasts on the church calendar. Christ the King Sunday. But this feast is a bit of a strange one. For one, it's a relatively new feast on the calendar.

Started in the early 20th century. On top of that, it's a little bit of a vague theme. And then there's the fact that as Americans, we have a history of not liking kings very much.

[1:30] Do we have anyone here this morning who wishes that we had a king of the United States? Alright, I'm not seeing anyone.

But I think that when we look at how the feast of Christ the King started, it really shed some light on what it is that we celebrate today.

And it started, as I mentioned a minute ago, in the early 20th century. It was a response to the rise of movements like communism and fascism in Europe.

Because professing Christians, even, we're starting to sell out to these ideologies. And the feast of Christ the King came as a firm reminder that Christ is king over everything.

And that our supreme loyalty as Christians is to him and to his kingdom. Our supreme loyalty is not to any political ideology and not to any nation.

[2:33] Not that patriotism is bad. But our supreme loyalty is to Jesus Christ first. The feast of Christ the King was added to the church calendar at a time when things were looking dark in the world.

And it was added as a reminder that Jesus Christ is still on his throne. Fast forward to 2018. Let's be honest, things are looking a little dark again, aren't they?

In the West, it appears that things are getting more and more secular. Christianity is increasingly marginalized and ridiculed. And in the vacuum, people have taken to politics as a religion.

Not the first time that this has happened. And the trouble is that politics makes for a really nasty religion. It doesn't place much value on the golden rule.

So we're seeing people hate their neighbors over political differences. Extremism of all kinds seems to be on the rise. Case in point, we have seen Nazis and communists fighting each other on American streets.

[3:48] Now, if that's not enough, around the world it looks as though militant Islam continues to be a constant threat in some places. Look at the witness of some of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are being persecuted and are being killed, are being imprisoned, simply because they are Christians.

Now, I'm not saying all of this to be a prophet of gloom and doom or to inspire fear in everyone. Not what I'm going for this morning.

I am saying all of this because I want to assure you that no matter how dark things may seem, even if it is really, really dark, Jesus Christ is still on the throne and always will be.

Jesus as King is good news because the light of His glorious reign shines in the darkness and will not be overcome by anything.

I want us to think this morning about what Christ as King really means for us and for the world that we live in.

[5:04] Now, the first point I want to raise is that Christ is a different kind of King. Now, for us, especially as Americans, we are inclined to think of kings as tyrants.

But Jesus is not that kind of King. Look at our text from Revelation 1 says this morning. Grace and peace to you from Him who is and who was and who is to come and from the seven spirits who are before His throne and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings on earth.

To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom priest to His God and Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. What do we see here about the kind of King that Jesus Christ is? Well, we certainly see that He's a King who loves us.

That He is a King who sets people free. Who sets people free from sin. Who sets people free from death. Who sets people free from the devil.

[6:17] And He did it by going to war for us against the things that kept us in bondage. Going to the cross for us and coming out of it all victorious by rising to life again to set us free.

So that everyone who puts their trust in Him has the promise that our sins are forgiven because He is a King who has washed away our sins with His own blood.

We have the assurance that we have eternal life. We have the assurance that death has no claim on us because He rose again on our behalf.

And that means that we are free to serve our King. And that service is true freedom. A different kind of King indeed.

One who sets the captives free. And He calls us as Christians to be His ambassadors. To go to all the world with the saving, life-changing, transforming, and glorious message of the Gospel.

[7:23] So that others who are in bondage can be set free to serve the King. I like how C.S. Lewis put it.

Enemy-occupied territory. That is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful King has landed. You might say landed in disguise.

And is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage. When you go to church, you are really listening in to the secret wireless from our friends.

That is why the enemy is so anxious to prevent us from going. You know what this great campaign of sabotage is really about?

It is the victorious campaign that Jesus is leading to trample the devil under his feet and to set the prisoners free. And we, amazingly, get to be part of it.

[8:26] Isn't that awesome? Jesus is a King who loves us and who has set us free by His blood.

A different kind of King indeed. I want us to look now at Daniel chapter 7. Now we think for a second about the context in which Daniel was written really highlights the beauty of what it is that we read here.

A little bit of a history crash course. God's people who had had a series of mostly bad kings get carried away from their homeland to exile in Babylon where, guess what?

The problem of bad kings is, if anything, worse. They're told at one point to worship idols or they'll be incinerated. They're also threatened with death for praying to the true and living God.

They had been through so much, but the prophet Daniel has a reassuring vision about the Son of God in our text for this morning. There are two things here about the reign of Jesus that I want us to take away.

[9:34] The first is that the reign and the rule of Jesus will be absolute and over absolutely everything. We read in Daniel chapter 7, This is such an important reminder for us.

We can look at the world around us, get really discouraged, and forget that Jesus is the rightful king. If Jesus is on the throne, we might be tempted to ask, Why is there so much awful stuff still happening in the world?

How do we make sense of that? And that, to be blunt, is because the principalities and powers that oppose the reign of Jesus are still active in this world.

The devil is still active in this world. But let me be very clear this morning. It will not always be this way, and you can count on it. Already the devil has lost the war and is fighting as one who knows that it is a lost cause.

Our enemy is already defeated and is just waiting for the death blow that is going to come. Jesus is coming back to trample the forces of wickedness under his feet, and when he does, all opposition to

his righteous rule will be banished forever.

[11:17] When the dust has cleared from the spiritual battle that is going on in our world, even as I speak, when the dust clears from the battlefield, what we will see is that only Jesus and those who belong to him are left standing.

And he will reign forever. That's the final point I want us to consider this Christ the King Sunday. As Daniel 7 tells us, his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Do you know what that means for us? It means that we do not have to be afraid of what the future holds because we know that our King is going to have the final word.

We live in a time when people are so afraid. But the Christian has no reason to be afraid because we know that the kingdom of Jesus Christ will last forever, that it will never fade away, and it cannot be destroyed.

I've said this before, but I think it's a reminder that we need. We hear a lot of talk in our society about being on the right side of history. Part of the trouble with that is that nobody can seem to agree on what being on the right side of history really means.

[12:50] What I have found is that it usually means conforming to the personal opinions of the person who claims to be on the right side of history. But here's the honest truth.

The only way to be on the right side of history is to be on the side of Jesus Christ. Because he is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the beginning and the end.

He is the one who is and was and is to come. He is at the center of history and history belongs to him. And that's an important point for us to remember.

Because there is only one way into this kingdom and that is through the king. There's one way to eternal life, one way to have forgiveness of sins, and that is through Jesus Christ our king.

So the question for us to consider in closing this morning is this. Do I know the king? Do I know him as my king?

[13:55] It's my fervent prayer that everyone this morning can honestly answer that question with a yes. And if you can't say yes to that question, I urge you to confess your sins to Jesus, ask him to wash you with his blood and be your king.

What about those who do know Jesus as king? What's the takeaway for us this morning? I'm reminded of what one Dutch theologian once said.

There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine. that includes the biggest things to the smallest things.

And it includes every aspect of our lives. So here is the question for each of us to think about. are there any areas of my life that are not submitted to the lordship of our king Jesus?

Are there areas in my life maybe where I'm seeking my own will instead of his? And that could look like the things that we treat as idols that we treat as more important than God.

[15:17] It could be, it could look like patterns of sin that we don't want to give up. But here's the thing. Every aspect of our whole lives belongs to Jesus and submission to him is the only way to true joy and true freedom.

In closing this morning, I want us to remember and be comforted by the fact that Jesus Christ is on the throne, that he is a king who loved us and saved us by his blood, that his is a glorious kingdom that will be victorious and will never end.

And I want us to remember the call that each of us have to surrender our lives to the king. Jesus is king, my brothers and my sisters.

Jesus is on the throne. Praise him and glorify him. To him who loves us, and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priest to his God and Father.

To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.