

Christ the King Sunday

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 November 2017

[0:00] Amen. Pray with me. Father, we bow in your presence.

! May your word be our rule,! Glory to Jesus Christ.

Glory to him in his church and in his saints. I greet you in the name that is above every name. The name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

With joy, I bring my wife with me, Megan. She is the finest thing I've ever looked at this side of heaven. And I saw her walking and I decided to marry her.

And she said yes, so I'm grateful. I said all that to say, Megan and I are overjoyed to be with you this morning.

[1:11] To be with so many of the Lord's faithful. We bring you greetings from your sister church. I bet you didn't know you had a sister church. But I also am a priest at Holy Trinity in Hudson.

And with Caleb and I being in such a relationship, you automatically inherited me. So I look forward to... I look forward to further ministering with you all and the shared communion.

Now, before I go any further, I want to pause a moment and honor my friend and your rector, Father Caleb Evans. Someone once said, nobody gets to heaven on their own.

We all run our own race. That's true. But if we were honest this morning, we are all here today because somebody, somewhere, prayed for us.

Encouraged us. Helped us along the way. And made us believe that through Christ, all things are indeed possible. I know it's Sunday morning and it's easy to pretend like we've had it all together, like we've always known the Lord.

[2:18] But I wonder if people were honest today, if someone could confess that they haven't always had it together. And I know you had your coffee and you put your makeup on and you look real nice on this Lord's Day.

But if truth be told, we haven't always had it together. And if it had not been for the Lord who was on our side, we'd be lost. If it had not been for someone to disciple us, to care for us, to come alongside us and encourage us, to pray for us, there's no telling where we'd be.

I said all that to say, thank God for Jesus. Thank God for his saints. And thank God for discipleship. Father Caleb Evans is that person for me.

If I make it to heaven, it'll be in large part because of his prayers. Because of his faithfulness.

Because of his commitment to see the kingdom of God break out in my life.

And I'm honored to call him my best friend and a brother in Christ. Which brings us to today. This day did not catch Megan and I by surprise.

[3:29] When Caleb and Elaine shared the news that they were going to have another baby, we expected to be here. We knew that we'd be present for the baptism. But we had no idea that we'd be asked to be godparents.

And from that moment, Megan and I have been praying for Lucy and for Mia because let's face it, she's ours too. And it's our hope that when these girls make it to heaven's gates, it will be in part because of our prayers, because of our faithfulness, and because of our commitment to see the kingdom of God break forth in their lives.

As we prayed, Megan and I, we find ourselves echoing the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Church of Ephesus. And our prayer for you is exactly what Paul prayed for those who he was spiritually responsible for.

He says this, his prayer is that God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of Him and that having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, you may know the hope to which you have been called and the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and the immeasurable greatness of His power towards all who believe.

Our prayer as God parents, I'm sure the prayer of Caleb and Elaine, our prayer for these girls and for everyone here in this congregation is that no matter where you are, no matter what you've done in life, that you would come to know Jesus Christ as King and Lord of all.

[5:15] For the scriptures say, for the scripture says, all rule, all authority, all power, all dominion in heaven and on earth has been given to Him by the Father.

As King, Christ has preeminence. being known from the foundation of the world and because of His great love for us, He revealed Himself to us by wrapping His divinity in the frailty of human flesh. On the hard wood of the cross, He purchased us with His own precious blood, stretching forth His arms in love so that we all could come within the reach of His saving embrace, that through His suffering and death, we might become children of God, heirs of eternal life and having to share in the inheritance promised to the saints and all of those who long for His appearing.

What am I saying? Thank God for Jesus. Lawrence, Lawrence, what are you saying here? What are you saying here? I'm saying that Jesus Christ's kingship, His absolute lordship is not up for debate.

Jesus Christ is king over all the world whether we believe it or not. I'll say that again. Jesus Christ is king over all the world whether we believe it or not.

[6:42] And our thoughts on the matter doesn't alter the reality that He is king and He will come again. Now it's important to point out, now this is an important point for us to point out that Christ is king because we live in an age where we are politically split.

Many of us have grown and had a long-growing distrust for political leadership. After all, we are Americans. And we rejected our last king and we exchanged it for a more manageable term of a president who we could vote for and elect.

And if someone ascends to the highest office in this land and we don't like Him, we simply wait Him out, voice our distaste, and wait for the end of the term.

And at the end of the term, we try again. But my friends, Jesus Christ is not that kind of ruler. Jesus Christ is not that kind of king.

His rule is not limited to four terms. The scriptures declare that He shall reign forever forever and that His kingdom will have no end. This is why this day is so important.

[7:59] The last Sunday of the liturgical year is known as Christ the King Sunday. and it is the church's reminder that after it's all said and done, Christ will reign as King over all the world.

Next Sunday, we will enter a season known as Advent where we will celebrate Christ's first coming. This season is often associated with a cute nativity scene in which Christ is depicted as a baby in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes.

But my friends, that is far from the reality. However appropriate it is to acknowledge that Jesus Christ was at one point a baby and while the depictions of cute and cuddly Jesus lying in the manger might comfort us during the Christmas season, the reality is a king awaits us.

Jesus Christ is coming again not as a baby but as a king. One who will unite the world divided and enslaved by sin under the banner of his cross and setting the people of this world free so they might worship him in spirit and in truth and bring glory to his father through the power of the Holy Spirit. In our gospel, we hear more of Christ's kingdom. There, in our gospel, we were reminded that the kingdom of God is not only a prepared place but the inheritance of all those who love the king, those who have committed their lives to his service and the service of others.

[9:48] The gospel makes it clear that the kingdom of God isn't simply a mystical far off place where we have to wait until we die in order to inherit it.

No, the kingdom of God is alive. The kingdom of God is active. The kingdom of God isn't coming. The kingdom of God is here. And it isn't so much a place as much as it is presence, being in the presence of the king.

And as king, Jesus Christ isn't just king over all, as the scripture says, he is before all things, in all things, and in him all things hold together.

You see, without Christ, nothing is possible. And if this is true, that Christ is in all things, then we are created.

In fact, we are created in his image. And if this is true, then how we treat each other matters. For how can we say we love God who we can't see, who we recreated in his image, and hate our neighbor who was also created in the image of God?

[11:06] That doesn't work in the kingdom of God. To love God is to love that which he created. To love our neighbors as ourselves is to love God.

It matters. How we treat each other has eternal consequences. it's impossible to separate the two. I'll say again, how we treat each other has eternal consequences and it is impossible to separate the two.

So we have talked about Christ as king overall, and we've talked about the behavior that's appropriate for the kingdom of God. What does this have to do with the baptism that's taking place today?

I'm so glad you asked. Jesus in the scriptures is very clear that the way into the kingdom of God is through the waters of baptism.

Jesus says in John, after talking to Nicodemus about being born again, that unless one is born of water and the spirit, they cannot enter the kingdom of God.

[12:17] It is the desire of Caleb and Elaine that Lucy grows up in the kingdom of God, in love with the king of kings and the lord of lords, Jesus Christ, who will today become her lord.

That's why we have gathered today to witness Lucy's entrance into the kingdom of God, to give our assent to her citizenship in that great kingdom.

We've gathered to commit our lives and ourselves to her nurture and her development as she grows into a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, her lord.

You see, it's not just the job of clergy or parents or god parents to see that Lucy grows up and becomes a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

It's the job of the body of Christ, of all the citizens of heaven, of all the citizens of this great kingdom, to ensure that Lucy grows to maturity in Christ.

[13:24] It is the job of everyone in this room to do what Caleb did for me, and disciple Lucy, so that she might bear fruit on that great day.

Our prayer for Lucy is still that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give her the spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him and having her eyes, the eyes of her heart enlightened, her heart and the hope that she is called to and the riches of the glorious inheritance that has been laid up for her and all the saints, the immeasurable greatness of his power towards all of those who believe.

Friends, the kingdom of God isn't coming. The kingdom of God is here and it is already broken out among us. it is our job to participate in that kingdom, to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to love God with everything in us.

For he is the king over all and the king is soon to come. In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The order for a holy baptism is another sheet. You may pick up the new promise and pick it up.

[15:04] I would ask that the person to be baptized is the