

Jesus Our King

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[0 : 00] Well, if you have been with us over the past three Sundays, you'll know that we're doing a three-part series while David Short is away on the three offices of Jesus Christ, the person of Jesus.

And so we're talking about the third of those offices, the office of King today. And as I start, I wanted to apologize for my voice. I'm at the tail end of a cold. I feel a little bit like that fake plant that James had.

You don't know for sure if it's the real me who's speaking because my voice is different. But I'd like to assure you that I am. And it's a great privilege to be able to talk about the kingship of Jesus in this sermon.

And it's daunting as well because of the glory and the majesty of Jesus being presented to us. And how do we communicate that? How do we talk about that in a way that does it justice?

So we're going to look at Philippians to do that. If you haven't been with us, we've been talking about the fact that in ancient Israel, there were three offices or roles of people who were set aside to be mediators between God and God's people.

[1 : 13] And those people were prophets who spoke God's word. They represented God to the people. They were priests who represented the people to God, actually helped bring them into God's presence by representing them before the, in the Holy of Holies through the sacrifice.

And then they had a king. And we saw that in David. Somebody who represented the kingship, the rule of God to the people. Now the good news is that Jesus is the one mediator between God and humanity.

He fulfills all of this. And he is the one who gave himself for us. And so to see Jesus as prophet, priest, and king is a great help for us in understanding the great blessing we have that Jesus is mediator with God.

And so we talked about how Jesus is the prophet who is God himself. He is the one to listen to, to learn from, to know God, to know who we are, to know what this world is about and what we are meant to be.

And then last week we heard how Jesus is our priest who offers himself as the one perfect, sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world.

[2 : 29] And he brings us to God. So he is the one to trust for his work that brings us to peace with God. So he's someone to listen to, somebody to trust.

And today we think about Jesus as our king. Now that office of king is, it's a challenge for us and a great blessing for us as human beings, no matter what our background.

It's a challenge because we have a nature that doesn't like to be ruled, that doesn't like to have someone telling us what to do. We like to be independent. We like to be autonomous beings.

And so there's part of us that rebels against the idea of there being one who can tell us our life and what we are meant to be. But it's also a great blessing to humanity because we were created, all of humanity was created to worship.

We are created to think of ultimate things. And the ultimate thing is that we are meant to give glory to a king, to the king, and to give ourselves completely to one who deserves our worship.

[3 : 41] This is hardwired in us. But often our worship is misplaced. There are idols in our life. And those idols are often very good things.

They are careers. They are material goods. They are people we look up to. They are great causes. They are positions of power as well that we might worship.

Even our families can be an object, an idol, an object of worship. We were all made for worship and devotion and dedication. But the great choice before all of us is to what and to whom will we give our lives?

Who will have that place of worship, the one that we worship in our lives? And the answer, as we all know, is that it is God himself.

And the way that this is put wonderfully is in the Westminster Confession. It says, what is the chief end? In other words, what is the big purpose for humanity? And many of you may know, the answer is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

[4 : 52] There is the answer. There is what we were made for. What we were made to be all about. To give our lives to. To glorify God and enjoy him forever. It is the place of true and right fulfillment in us.

And it is good for us to look at what that means. To glorify and to enjoy him. And a very good place is Philippians 2. Please turn there to page 980.

And in this passage, we see Jesus in all his glory. And we see that it is Jesus himself who is meant to be the object of all true worship. And all true enjoyment as well.

So I am going to focus particularly on verses 6 through 11. Which are a wonderful hymn. We are going to talk about it in a minute. But Paul's urgent call for unity is the context of this little passage here.

And you can see that in verse 2. He says, complete my joy. Chapter 2, verse 2. Complete my joy by being of the same mind. Having the same love. Being in full accord.

[6 : 01] And of one mind. He wants them to be united. There was a temptation to division. To go separate ways. And he says, here's how I want you to do things.

Verse 3. Don't do things from rivalry or conceit. But humility, in humility, count each other more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests.

But also to the interests of others. Very practical words there. But how do they do that? What he does next is he directs their minds and hearts to Jesus and his rule.

Have your mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. Have that mind. And then he goes into this beautiful hymn of Jesus.

That's all focused on who Jesus is. And these are words that are amazing. They are powerful. They are full of his majesty. And I think that is why it has to be done in terms of a song or a hymn.

[7 : 00] Just words written in prose in how he was writing the letter would not do it justice. And so we have this hymn. And in it, the thing that's striking is that it is a picture of the depth of Jesus' humiliation and the height of his exaltation.

The height of his glory. You have both of those things in this hymn. It is wonderful because we see a beautiful and clear picture of Jesus' kingship.

Now, so let's look at verse 6. We see a movement. We see a movement from the glory of Jesus to the depth of the worst of humanity to the glory of God again.

So it starts out in verse 6. We see that Jesus was in the form of God before he was born of Mary. And this for Paul means that he is equal to God.

As we see as the verse goes on, he was God. He was of the same substance of God. But as we see at the end of verse 6, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, is the way he put it.

[8 : 12] And what that means, what Paul is saying is that he did not treat equality with God as a right to seize hold of and to grasp.

He certainly, that equality was his right. Jesus was God. In fact, if you look at the front cover, just take a quick look at this front cover. Very helpful from Hebrews.

It has all the three offices of God here. And we see right in the middle of that paragraph that Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature.

He upholds the universe by the word of his power. That's wonderful because it tells us of what it means that Jesus had equality with God.

He was God. But, wonderfully, instead of using this as an excuse to assert his glory, to make sure that it's made known, he used it as an opportunity for self-sacrifice.

[9 : 11] He used his glory, the fact that he was God, to give himself away for our sake. So listen to verse 7. It says there, and I think, it says, but he instead made himself nothing.

And the Greek says emptied. He emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men. That word emptied is very important for us because it helps us understand the unimaginable sacrifice that Jesus makes here.

We can't understand or conceive of the riches of what it meant to have the glory and the beauty and the power and the goodness of God.

The glory of being God himself. We can't imagine it. But Jesus here renounces all that belonged to him by right, and instead he chooses this obedient path of suffering.

Why would he do that? It can only be because of a deep love for you and me, for the world, and a deep love for God the Father, whose plan it was to use his sacrifice for us to be saved.

[10 : 28] Jesus' love shines brightly in this hymn. You cannot mistake it. And in that hymn, we see this moment of decision where Jesus gives up his rights for our sake.

It's the most loving decision that has ever been made. That decision to give up, to empty himself. Now, we have to be very clear that emptying does not mean that he stopped being God.

What that means is he remained God, but he divested himself of his glorious rights. He gave away the prerogatives of being God that he had.

And this was a sacrifice every day throughout his earthly life. Every day he was God, yet every day out of his love for us, he gave up his rights as God.

He was truly God, and he was truly man. And amazingly, in verse 8, we see that the sacrifice reaches the furthest depths of pain and evil in this world and in humanity.

[11 : 33] He humbled himself to become obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. The worst kind of death. Death on the cross is the rock bottom of humiliation.

It is, according to the Old Testament from Deuteronomy 21, it is a curse. Curse is the one who is left hanging on a tree. You died under God's curse that way.

But by God's incredible power, the curse is turned right upside down. And so the death of Jesus is the glory of God.

It is the glory and the power of God in that moment of dying on the cross. And that's why in John 12, you don't need to turn there, but John 12, Jesus has this powerful thing that he says.

He is faced with his death. It's going to happen very, very shortly. And he says this. He says, And what we see here is Jesus' passionate desire to glorify God.

[12 : 47] And that's why he chooses to die. And right after he says that, a voice comes down from heaven and says, God himself speaking, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.

You see, God has glorified his name by Jesus making that decision to empty himself. And he will glorify it again by dying on a cross for our sins in obedience to God.

In obedience to the plan laid out for us in the Bible. And that cross is the glory of God. In it, all of God's promises are kept and fulfilled.

And in it, we see the love of God. The perfect love of Jesus, the Son, for the Father. And the perfect love of God for a hurting world. And also, this is where we see the power destroying death.

Power of God destroying death. And destroying the power of sin. The power of God to save us. So, it's a critical point. It's telling us that this is where we see the power of Jesus, the King, being conferred on him.

[13 : 57] We're seeing him exercise that power in his death on the cross. It's an incredible reversal that's perfectly revealed in this hymn. Jesus descends to the lowest place in obedience to God.

God raises him up to the highest place of all. And I want to show you how that works in the hymn. Look at the end of verse 8. It says, Even death on a cross.

And then, therefore, God has highly exalted. He puts those two right next to each other. The lowest depth. The highest height. Next to each other in this hymn. God glorifies himself.

And, therefore, God highly exalted him. Bestowing on him the name that is above every name. So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.

It will certainly happen. Shall bow. In heaven and earth and under the earth. And every tongue confess. That Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory of God the Father.

[14 : 56] Father. Well, we can't mistake here Jesus' kingship. Because that hymn is showing us the beauty and the goodness and the power and love of God.

He is the servant king who goes to the depths of humanity to serve us. And now he is raised up to the ultimate heights of God himself. And that is why we hear him given that name.

It is the name Lord. The name Lord. Which is the name that was used for Yahweh throughout the Old Testament. And you can see that clearly in Isaiah 45.

Turn there with me. We're going to see how Jesus is God himself. He is in the place of God. Yahweh. To his glory. Look at Isaiah. It's on page 608.

Sorry, 607. Right at the end of chapter 45. Verse 22. 607. Verse 22.

[16 : 02] Chapter 45. God is speaking here. He's speaking to all of the nations who are assembled before him. And he says this. He says, Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth.

For I am God. There is no other. By myself I have sworn from my mouth has gone out in righteousness. A word that shall not return. And here it is.

To me every knee shall bow. Every tongue shall swear allegiance. Every knee shall bow. And every tongue shall swear allegiance.

Well, that's why that hymn tells us that this will happen with Jesus. Jesus has the glory of God himself. He is worthy of all our praise.

He fulfills that prophecy. The one who is humiliated and died for us as Lord is the king. He is God. And his kingship is so powerful. That there is going to be a day when all of humanity.

[17 : 00] And every spiritual being. Will have to acknowledge Jesus' power. And his right to be their king. And that will happen even for those who don't want him to rule.

It will be beyond any kind of objection. That Jesus has the right and power to be their king. He above everything deserves to be worshipped.

That is the power of our king. That is his worth. He is worthy of our worship and our honor and our praise now. Jesus is the king of our lives today.

And I want to just underline that. His authority and power of that day, the last day, is the same today as well. So that's why in verse 9, clearly it tells Jesus is the exalted king now.

God has highly exalted him. He has bestowed the name. In other words, he reigns over everything now. And we need to say a word about that.

[17 : 58] Because you will have a question about this if you're like me. And that is, how can this be? When there is so much chaos and evil and suffering in the world, how can this be if Jesus is the king?

Why has he not yet taken all of this stuff away from the world? And the answer is in Jesus' own words about the future, where he said, there will be tumult.

There will be suffering before I come again. And he's saying that all of these things will happen as he is directing history to the day that he comes again in his glory as the conquering king.

And the Bible says very clearly that God's timing is based on bringing as many people to know Jesus as their Lord as possible. He wants all people to repent.

And he alone knows those who will come to him, those who are not yet born and who will turn to him. That's one of the reasons Christians seek to protect all life, even those who are unborn.

[19 : 04] God has named those who will come to him. And he alone knows who they are. So in this time of waiting for his return in glory, Jesus' kingdom is a spiritual kingdom.

It's not something that's political. Jesus over and over again had to reject the attempts to make him a political king. He even had to reject Satan's attempt to do that.

His is not a visible kingdom yet. We see it with the eyes of faith. There's not a capital that we have, people who are under Jesus' lordship.

We don't have an army or a flag. There's nothing political about it. But wherever he rules in someone's heart and mind, that is where the kingdom of God is, Jesus said.

And their life begins to look the way that God wants it to look. And that happens in the church. As the church lives together, you see relationships that begin to reflect Jesus and his will.

[20 : 01] You see his kingdom at work. And there's a tangible blessing to the world through God's people as they minister in his name. And that can have a political effect. You see that very obviously in ministries like Ratnak in Cambodia, in which young children are taken out of literal slavery into a new life in Christ, into a physical and spiritual freedom.

It's a powerful expression of God's kingdom. But the blessings of the kingdom also happen in less prominent ways. It happens when there is a profound change in a husband's life after they come to know Jesus and after their wife has prayed for decades for them to know Christ.

It happens when many people are going to be blessed in years to come because a young person has committed her life to full-time ministry of the gospel.

The blessings of the kingdom come to many in the business community who are blessed by good and godly decisions of an executive in a company over many years. And perhaps people in that community come to faith because of his witness.

That goodness of the kingdom comes to people in a Bible study who have been ministers to each other for years through sharing God's word and their love with one another.

[21 : 24] And all through all the joys and sorrows of life, you see the blessings of the kingdom coming to them. It happens for the person in the hospital whose faith was renewed.

And they know God's healing presence through the visit and the prayers of faithful friends. A powerful work in God because of the lordship of Jesus.

So it's important for us to know that even though this isn't a political kingdom, it's spiritual, it is still a conquering kingdom. It's very important to see that. It is something that is advancing.

God's light through Jesus Christ penetrates the deepest darkness through his faithful servants. The gospel brings transformation to people's lives.

Incredible, powerful changes that happen. That is the work of the kingdom of God. Well, I want to close. Because this is happening, because we have a king now who is Jesus, we are faced with a question that we need to go home with.

[22 : 27] And that is, if Jesus is the king described in Philippians who has served you in more costly ways than we can imagine, and he is now exalted to the highest place of God himself, what is our response to be?

How is my life and how is your life different because Jesus reigns now? And that's an important question for us. It's probably very appropriate that today is the first anniversary of William and Kate's royal wedding, exactly a year ago today.

And because of them, there's been a resurgence in population of... Not yet. I'm not letting out any news that the tabloids don't know. A resurgence in popularity.

They've made the royal family cool again, according to the tabloids. But there's something about the queen and the royal family that is very different.

Their family does not have real authority over the citizens of the UK. There's a symbolic authority. There's a symbolic authority the queen has over us as well.

[23 : 43] And we like the idea of a royal family like that. It is popular. But we live in a place and in a situation where their rule is symbolic.

And I think often we have this concept of Jesus' authority as well. That it's something that's popular and nice to think about, but there is no real authority that he has over our lives.

He simply has a symbolic authority. But if Jesus is king who died for us with the authority to save us, if Jesus has been raised to the place of God himself, then Jesus' authority over us is total.

It is complete. It is an authority over the whole world. And Paul teaches us this in 1 Corinthians 6. He says, You are not your own. You have been bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

And so the right response to Jesus our king is to do now what everyone will be doing on the last day. Worship him. Confess with your tongue in all your life that Jesus is Lord.

[24 : 51] That is what we were made for. That is where our true fulfillment and true freedom lie. And so worship is not only a time of singing together.

And often that hour of singing in evangelical churches has been considered to be worship. It's been called worship. That is worship. But it is a small subsection of the worship of our entire life.

It informs it. It helps us in that worship. But the Bible says that worship is always loving and thankful obedience to God who alone deserves our worship.

It's very practical. It's daily. And in fact, in our passage today, Paul says, the way to worship for you Philippians is to be humble towards each other every day on the streets of Philippi because Jesus is your king.

And in our life, our worship will be very practical as well. It will be a change of mind that reflects the mind of Jesus. And what is the mind of Jesus?

[25 : 54] His ultimate goal in his life was to glorify God in all that he did. And so Jesus says, if you love me, you will follow me. You will follow my commandments through the power of the Holy Spirit.

You will do what I did. And so for us to worship and glorify means that we will wake up every day and we will say this, in my obedient life, I want God to be displayed in all of his beauty, in the most beautiful reality, and say that this is what the world needs most of all.

I want to display God in all of his beautiful reality. How can I do this today? How can I bless the world as I obey God? And this is what we are all about.

This is our great purpose. As we do this, we draw close to God. We know the joy and the freedom of worshiping Jesus Christ, our Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen us to glorify God as we obey Jesus, the servant king who has the name that is above every name, that at his name every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

[27 : 10] To the glory of God the Father. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us pray. There will be moments of silence between the spoken prayers when you may bring your own intercession to the Lord in the quietness of your heart.

Almighty Father, thank you for sending us your Son Jesus that we might know you and your heart of love for us.

We cannot grasp the enormity of the sacrifice of Jesus, his utter humility in coming to earth, dying on the cross for each one of us and then being exalted on high as God himself.

Thank you, Jesus, my Lord and King, for saving me, for protecting me, for blessing me, for giving me new life.

[28 : 35] Fill me with a desire to worship you, to be obedient to you alone. Come, my King, sit upon the throne of my heart and reign there.

But, Father, there are many idols in this world which compete for our interest and attention.

Let nothing or no one take your place. Give us the mind of Jesus. Keep us faithful in worshiping only you, in reading your word and in listening to your voice.

Father, we thank you for our clergy who lead us week by week, teaching us and guiding us. We pray for them and their families.

Give them your strength and protection. We thank you, Lord, for our church family here at St. John's that we are able to meet together and lift our hearts to you in hymn, prayer, and in sharing of the sacrament.

[29 : 54] And as we begin a discussion and discernment process to learn how best to serve you as a church, go before us and send us your Holy Spirit to direct and lead us.

Heavenly Father, we remember our larger Anglican family, the Anglican Network in Canada and its bishops. Today, we pray for Blackburn Hamlet Community Church in Ottawa and Eternal Hope Fellowship in Carleton Place, Ontario.

May each of these parishes know the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit as they worship you and seek your guidance. Thank you, Father, for the many new parishes which have been planted in the last couple of years across this country and in the U.S.

we pray for the Anglican 1000 Church Planting Initiative that it may flourish and that many new communities would continue to be established.

And Father, we lift up to you the Asian mission in Canada under the leadership of Stephen Leung. Bless the outreach of this ministry across the expanse of our large country.

[31 : 23] Father, the world in which we live cries out for your love and mercy.

Today, we remember the families whose loved ones have been injured or have died in the explosion and fire in Prince George this past week. Care and provide for these ones, Father, that they may know your presence during this challenging time.

And our minds turn across the globe to Syria where violence and bloodshed continue. Soften the heart of President Bashar al-Hassad to cooperate with the U.N.

peacekeeping mission that is trying to establish itself in this country. Father, we pray for a political will on both sides to bring an end to this conflict.

Almighty Father, we thank you for our country of Canada and the privilege of living in such a peaceful and prosperous land. We lift up to you our public leaders, remembering especially our Prime Minister Stephen Harper, our Provincial Premier Christy Clark, and the mayors of our respective cities.

[32 : 53] With the push and pull of many needs and interests at different levels of government, we pray that our elected leaders may know your wisdom, that they will make decisions for the public good, and that they will reflect your truth and righteousness in all they say and do.

Heavenly Father, we pray, too, for the public school teachers and students and their families in this province in the aftermath of job action and back-to-work legislation.

We ask, Father, that you would make peace where there is disappointment and anger, that you would enable a way forward which is honoring to you, and that you would protect the minds and hearts of the children and youth who are caught in the middle.

And now, Father, we bring to you those we know in our parish family who are ill and in particular need of our prayers this day. we lift to you Rowena, Derek, Chris, Brian, Marguerite, Janet, and Susan.

We thank you for your love and care for these ones and pray that by your Holy Spirit you would continue your work of healing in their lives. Lastly, Father, we offer to you a concern or a thanksgiving that may be on our hearts at this time.

[34 : 47] All these prayers we offer in the name of our Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen.