

KNU International English Church
Sermon by Matthew Banner
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What does it mean to be king?

Today is Christ the King Sunday, so we are going to talk about what it means to truly see God as our king. The problem is that we don't really like kings. We only see how people with power mishandling it and mistreating their subjects. When we think of rulers, we remember the old adage "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." We think of the Egyptian kings in the Bible who made the people of Israel into slaves. And we think of Hitler, who used his power to try and take over the world and commit genocide.

So, because of this, I have a natural distrust of anyone with too much power. Our governments make rules to make sure that no one has too much power. Instead, we give people the power, that way no crazy person can destroy us all. And, what I hear all the time is that democracy is the only way to go.

And this is true. No person should be given the power of a king. It is bad news. Even in our church, our own pastors do not have absolute power. This is not because we think our pastors are dishonest or untrustworthy, but because giving anyone too much power is dangerous. I fear anyone without boundaries. Everyone should have accountability.

Therefore, I don't like kings or anyone who wants to rule over me. So, now I am going to tell you why we get to celebrate Christ the king Sunday.

The simple answer is this: Christ is like no other king. He does not have the same failings and temptations of everyone else in the history of earth. Jesus is the ultimate king, messiah and lord. God is true ruler; one who cares completely about the people he rules. It is something that is impossible for our human minds to comprehend. We often think of what great riches and power a king has, but Christ the King came not to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:42-45).

Living in the Kingdom of God is not a democracy. The will of the people can be wrong. The majority is not always right. God is the head and is in charge of the kingdom. But, Christ is also not a petty dictator, who abuses power. Instead, we know that Christ is a loving king.

The Bible talks a lot about Christ as king:

Christ is the eternal king (1 Timothy 1:15-17) "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners— of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and

glory forever and ever. Amen.” We give all honor to Christ, who shows us mercy even we don’t deserve it. And this is a king that will continue forever.

Christ is the king of Israel (John 1:49) 49 Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” The people of Israel followed the one true God through tough times, and were part of the covenant of God, and lived under God’s rule.

Christ is the king of the Jews (Matthew 27:11) When Jesus was on trial for his life, 11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “You have said so,” Jesus replied.” Even though he never claims it, Jesus is the messiah for all of the Jewish people. He is the king that the people can worship.

Christ is the king of kings (1 Timothy 6:15) God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.” All rulers in this world should bow down before God, who is a king over all kings.

Christ is the king of the ages (Revelations 15:3) “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. Christ has control over all the nations of the earth, all of the governments and all of the decisions.

Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelations 1:4-5) Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.”

Basically, We can take time to celebrate Christ’s power and impact. The first aspect of worshipping the king is knowing the power of the king, and God is the most powerful king.

But, even more important is knowing whether the king we serve is a worthy king. Is Christ’s life worth us dedicating to him our lives? It is.

I love the story of the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. It’s the fantasy story of a family of children who enter a frozen land and get help freeing the people thanks to a powerful lion named Aslan. Here’s a hint to the story; Aslan represents God. One of my favorite quotes is when one of the characters says that Aslan is not a tame lion. Lucy, one of the main characters, responds, “no.... but he is good.” God is not safe. God is not easy. God is not like your little friend that you can call out whenever you want, on your schedule. God is big. God is powerful. God is big. Sometimes, God is scary. We cannot control God. But, above all else, God is good. God is loving. God is always there for us.

Power works only because Christ is never petty or vindictive. Christ never thinks of his own desires or selfish needs. Christ never makes mistakes. We can trust God to be smarter and better than we are.

How do we know this? We know this because God had all of this power, and with it, he came to earth as a helpless baby, suffered all the things that the common person suffers, and then died on the cross. That is the actions of a king who cares completely about his people above all else. We can trust this king.

And how do we respond? Let's look at Psalm 95:1-7.

- 1 Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.
- 3 For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
- 7 for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

When we enter into God's presence, there is only one response: to offer God all of our praise and thanksgiving. We must bow down before our mighty king.

If we accept that we don't know best, that we need Christ to be our king and our ruler, it changes who we are. It changes the essence of our being.

Having Christ as our king changes our allegiance. We give all of our honor, loyalty and obedience to God.

It also changes our expectations. We have a continual hope that the kingdom of God is coming and will be here.

It changes our values. We no longer value achievement, success or independence. Instead we invest in the things that God counts as important, what is on the inside of us; our love, honesty, and compassion for others.

It also impacts our priorities. To determine someone's values, we simply need to look at how they spend their time and money. We follow God as king by living and spending for God, not for ourselves.

Finally, it impacts our life-long mission. We are not all called to be pastors or missionaries, but we are all called to live as a free subject in God's kingdom, and to live our lives with Jesus as our savior.