

## CHRIST THE KING

Revelation 1:4b-8, John 18:31-37 [MW18-38]

Sermon preached by Rev Wayne Thornton at Mangawhai & Wellsford, Sunday 25 November 2018

I was looking for a story about “kings” and instead found this about Prince Phillip and Queen Elizabeth II:

Prince Philip was visiting an Australian University where he was introduced to a couple identified as "Mr & Dr. Robinson". The husband explained, "My wife is a doctor of philosophy. She is much more important than I." Prince Philip sympathetically replied, "Ah, yes. We have that trouble in our family, too."

What does it mean to say “Christ is King”?

- everyone has something or someone that is “king” in their lives something that rules, guides, directs, influences what they do
- sometimes it is themselves
- sometimes it could be another person
- sometimes it could be a group, a principle or a particular cause

“Christ the King” Sunday gives us the opportunity to ask the question:

- who or what is king of my life?  
  who or what is in charge of what I do or say or think?
- because saying “Christ is King” is not something you can just pay lip service to either Christ is King, or he is not
- and if Christ is King there are consequences in how we live

This is something quite different to saying that Queen Elizabeth II

- is the head of the Commonwealth  
  yes, it is important  
  but it makes no real difference to our day to day lives
- on the other hand “Christ the King” impacts on our daily life  
  if it doesn't, then Christ is not King  
  simple as that

To be brutally honest, in our world today it doesn't look at all

- like Christ is the King of anything much  
  yet today we boldly assert that “Christ is King”
- when Pope Pius X instituted this celebration of Christ the King back in 1925  
  it didn't look like Christ was the King of anything that made a difference  
  and that was the point
- this celebration was to encourage the people of the church  
  to remind the church that Christ is indeed King  
  and through the church show the whole world
- that Christ is King: Ruler of the Universe

Ultimately this truth will be revealed – that's what the reading from Revelation tells us

- this will be shown and known  
  Christ is the ruler of everyone and everything  
  it's just that some don't know it yet
- those verses from Revelation assure us that one day  
  everybody, the whole of creation, will have to acknowledge Christ's kingship

Revelation 1:5 tells us

*Jesus was the first to conquer death, and he is the ruler of all earthly kings*

Yes, Jesus is a king

- but he is not a "king" in the sense that most people know and understand and we get a picture of this in our reading from John's gospel

You know, you have to have some sympathy for poor old Pontius Pilate

- he's trying make sense of and keep control of a tense and tricky situation there are the demands of the crowd, the Jewish authorities, his own position
- and Jesus is most definitely not helping with his cryptic answers:  
"Yes, I am a king," Jesus says, "but my kingdom is not of this world"
- say what?  
no wonder Pilate was getting a migraine
- for Pilate the only ruler was the Emperor, and the Emperor was king of everything he himself was the Emperor's representative and it was his job to keep the chain of command clear
- Jesus?  
well Jesus just didn't fit the mold

Jesus Christ was and is King, but just how does that work?

- remember what he said?  
*"I came not to be served, but to serve  
and give my life as a ransom for many"*

And consider this - the only crown Jesus wore was made of thorns

- and when he was lifted up above others  
it was on a cross

Jesus is a King who did not take power, abuse power, or use it over others

- in fact he came to share his power

Revelation chapter 1, verses 5 and 6 says:

*Christ loves us and by his blood he has set us free from our sins.  
He lets us rule as kings and serve God his father as priests,  
to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

Jesus came to share power

- the power of love  
the power of healing and forgiveness  
the power of grace
- he came to share the riches of life and living  
and not to gather them for himself
- as Jesus himself says, as recorded in John 10:10  
*"I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest"*

What all this means is that we are to take our cue from Jesus

- to live as he lived  
though he was the Son of God he did not use that to his selfish advantage  
when he was arrested and his followers started to fight, Jesus said:  
*Don't you know that I could ask my Father,  
and right away he would send me more than twelve armies of angels?*

In the Letter to the Philippians we are told:

*... have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross*

Interestingly, this scripture is set down for reading annually on Palm Sunday

- Palm Sunday, the day when perhaps Jesus came closest to being crowned “King”

And consider this – being subjects of King Jesus means we are sons and daughters of God

- get that  
you are part of the royal family!

Did you follow the visit to our fair shores of Prince Harry and the Duchess of Sussex?

- I think it was great  
they seemed like genuine caring people  
they mixed naturally with people from all walks of life  
people of all ages and stages
- they did a lot of realistically good things  
and in the process made good PR for the monarchy
- and yet, no matter how well it all went  
however warm and caring and down to earth Harry and Meghan are  
we are never going to be part of the family
- some people might get invited for afternoon tea, or even a state banquet  
but they are still going to have to go home afterwards, even if it is in a limo

Jesus the King says we are part of his royal family

- to understand what that means and how it works  
you have to put our two Bible readings alongside each other  
and read them together
- and you might end up with something like this  
Deacon Glen reflecting on “Christ the King”

How does Jesus our king, our leader, and our model rule? Jesus never sought to power or used his authority for personal gain. Although he had all the power, he only used it to help others. He had no servants instead was a servant to others. He taught the truth for the betterment of the world. He led by example through giving and sharing. He showed that complete self-emptying love was the way to happiness. He taught that sacrifice was the way to grow. He proved that that through death we find life. His kingship was and is one of service, humility and truth.

Too often we think of Jesus as ruling from heaven sitting next to the Father, looking down, calling the shots, and passing judgment ... but that is far from the truth. Jesus is alive today. We see him in all creation. He is present in each and every one of us and works through us. However, we always need to remind ourselves to let him be in control. And with all the violence in the world, all the needless destruction, evil and death, we need someone to lead us, to show us the way, and to be model for us. In our world today, we increasingly ignore God in our lives. We let our human flaws take over. We try to control in a self-serving manner. We stand behind false gods and blindly follow them. But if we look to our leader, our teacher, our Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe; we will receive not only the truth but also guidance.

In our hearts we must all say that Jesus is king ... he is our alpha and the omega. Jesus will lead us on the right path.

We are not in charge, Jesus is

- our allegiance is not to ourselves  
not even to the most worthy of causes
- but first of all to Jesus, our King  
that gives us our perspective on life and living

And so back to the question I asked at the beginning

- the question at the heart of our celebration today:  
who or what is in charge of what I do and say and think?  
who or what is king of my life?

[I invite you to reflect on this as we do that traditional activity for a Patronal Festival and march around our building]

[I invite you to take that question away with you and reflect on it this coming week]