**Sermon Notes 11-26-2023 Christ the King (and Confirmation Sunday)**

Today, on this Christ the King Sunday as well as Confirmation Sunday, I would like to begin this message with a video that will remind us of the wonderful King that we have in Jesus Christ.

**That's My King Dr. S.M. Lockridge video -** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE>

That’s My King! That’s our King! Can I get an Amen?

I just love that video. It is appropriate any time of the year, but perhaps no more appropriate than today. Today is Christ the King Sunday. The Christian calendar or Christian year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, which is next Sunday. And the cycle of remembering the first coming of Jesus Christ and looking ahead to the second coming of Jesus Christ begins again with Advent.

But today, we particularly remember that Jesus is, right now, enthroned in heaven as King. And He is at this moment exalted to the highest place in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. Today thousands of churches around the world are taking time to celebrate Jesus as the King over all.

And not only this, but just a few moments ago there were three young ladies that made a public confession of their faith. In doing so they were declaring Jesus as their King and their desire to follow faithfully after Him.

But when we speak about kings, especially in America, sometimes people can get a little uncomfortable. People may not be excited about the idea of kings. We think of tyrants and mistreatment of the weak.

We may think of taxation without representation. You may remember that from school. America as a nation was founded on a rebellion against a king, for crying out loud.

But despite this history, we as people are fascinated by royalty. When a wedding or a coronation is taking place in England, many Americans get up early in order to watch the events on television. Have you ever done this? There is no shame in admitting to this. It is certainly interesting with all the fancy regalia involved.

This fascination may also explain why so many children are so interested in Princesses and Princes and Kings and Queens. One of my nieces came to our Thanksgiving gathering wearing a Burger King crown. I called her a princess and she got very excited about it.

In some ways it almost seems as if people are designed by God to be fascinated with royalty. Many parents, myself included, have called their daughters or sons a princess or a prince at some time. Many you have probably done something like this yourself.

But often, by the time that children make it to middle school, they come to believe that this is simply nonsense. They say or think things like, “I’m not a prince, I’m not a princess. I’m not royalty. Maybe there are real princesses in England and other places, but certainly not here, and certainly not me.”

The truth, however, is discovered in God’s Word. And this truth is that there is a King that is above all and who rules over all. And His Name, of course, is Jesus. Sometimes in rightly focusing on Jesus as our Savior it is easy to forget that He is also our King, our Master, our Lord. Truly, He is sovereign over all.

But this royalty subject does not end just with recognizing Jesus as King. And here is where it gets especially very interesting. Everyone who chooses to follow Jesus becomes adopted into God’s family, right? This is the clear message of Scripture. And what does it make someone who gets adopted into God’s family? It means that they had been made royalty as well.

That’s pretty amazing. That means that you and I and all followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are royalty. And this royalty is far more powerful and lasting than royalty in England or any nation.

Now when we think of royalty, what are some words that may come to our minds?

I often think of words like nobility, power, leader, ruler, high status, set apart. While these words are all fitting ones, as Christians we must view our royalty based on the nature of our King.

 In other words, King Jesus defines what royalty looks like in His Kingdom. Now did Jesus use His power and status to lord it over others? Not at all. He did not come to be served but to serve and lift up and bless others. We see this time and time again in the gospels. In fact, we see this throughout all of Scripture – God lifts people up to Himself as they find their identity in Him.

Now as Jesus’ servants, His friends, His followers, it makes perfect sense that He expects those of His family to follow in His footsteps in how we live out our royal identity.

So on this Christ the King Sunday I invite you to turn with me to Matthew 25:31-46.

**31“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.**

**34“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’**

**37“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’**

**40“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’**

**41“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’**

**44“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’**

**45“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’**

**46“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”**

Friends, in this teaching of Jesus, the Lord describes Himself as a King that is returning. And when He returns, He will be expecting those that say that they love and serve Him to be actively reaching out to be a blessing in this world in Jesus’ Name, particularly to the weakest and most vulnerable among Jesus’ followers.

And one of those things is actively serving and seeking to bless those that are struggling in these ways, or in ways similar to these, is so important to the King that He equates doing these things for others with doing these things for Him. That is profound.

He describes giving food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty and clothes to those that need them and looking after the sick and visiting those in prison. And Jesus says that when you do these things for the brothers and sisters experiencing theses challenges, you are actually doing them for Him.

Isn’t that amazing. We have a King that is so humble and loving that as we care for one another we are truly also blessing Him at the same time. Jesus identifies with the weakest and most vulnerable among God’s people.

Now in this story or parable of Jesus, Jesus uses the metaphors of sheep and goats to describe two camps of people. One is doing His will and intentionally caring for the weakest among them and the other is not. The sheep are those that do His will are given eternal life. And the goats are those that do not do His will and they are sent to eternal punishment.

As we process this powerful story of Jesus, it is important to remember that Jesus is not creating a to-do list here for people trying to earn God’s favor and make it to heaven. Jesus is not doing that all that.

He is not saying, make sure that you do these things in order to get on my good side. No. This teaching of our King is about earning salvation through good works.

**Instead, Jesus is using this story to teach that people’s actions serve as indications that they are truly committed to living for Him as their King.**

Please note that both the sheep and the goats in the story are surprised. One was surprised that they were serving in such a profound way and the other is surprised that they had not served in these critical ways. The fact that both the sheep and the goats were surprised makes it clear that Jesus is not prescribing a to-do list on how to make it to heaven and to avoid hell.

Instead, in a very creative way, Jesus is describing a heart condition for true sheep. True sheep are genuine believers that have been so touched by the goodness and grace of God offered to them in Jesus Christ that they are eager to bless others in Jesus’ Name.

Jesus is basically saying that if someone truly loves Him and truly submits to Him as their King, it will impact how they live towards others. These genuine believers will desire to help support the vulnerable, rather than neglect them.

The part of the parable that is rather sobering is regarding the goats. Jesus is saying that there are many people that believe they are true Christians, but in reality, they are not. AND ONE OF THE BIGGEST INDICATORS THAT THEY ARE A TRUE SHEEP, A TRUE CHRISTIAN, IS THAT THEY EARNESTLY DESIRE TO SUPPORT THE WEAKEST AMONG THEM IN SOME WAY.

So what is the main point of Jesus’ story? What is Jesus saying? **He is telling His listeners that true allegiance to Him as King will always result in an eagerness to help support the needs of brothers and sisters in Christ.**

And if this is lacking, it is a pretty good indicator that they are not a genuine follower of Jesus. They may say they love and follow Jesus, but if they take no concern for Christians that are struggling, then they need to take a heart-check and consider if they are truly in the faith.

So as we consider this passage and its relevance for our lives today, what is the main thing to remember? And I believe that it is this – **We are to re-affirm our personal commitment to following Jesus as our King and ask Jesus to fill us with His love to such a degree that we are serving Him by serving others all the time without realizing it.**

Certainly, service and support can take all different forms, depending on the needs that there are and depending on the resources and gifts that we have. Sometimes the need is time and we show our love and allegiance through offering our time to serve in some way.

At other times, the need is money and we are called to share some of our money to help support the other person.

One of the biggest ways that we actively support one another is by our prayers. Today, three young ladies made professions of their personal faith in Jesus Christ. Today we committed to praying for them and seeking to actively support their growing relationship with the Lord.

Praying for them and for others is a HUGE way that we are actively caring for one another.

And additionally, as we learn of needs far and near amongst God’s people, we are to be eager to help. Here at Chestnut Grove, we have our 2nd mile giving to specifically support others in these ways.

Finally, we are called to ask the Lord how He desires for us to help care for the many needs around us.

The biggest thing is to remember that our King is looking for vessels who are eager to serve and bless others in His Name. To be a Christian is to live to be a blessing in Jesus’ Name. We are to serve and give of ourselves because the love of Christ has been shed abroad in our hearts and minds.

One big way to grow in this way is to remember that Jesus has come for us and has rescued us from our many sins. And Jesus has met our needs one way or another and through different vessels along the way. It should be natural for us to eagerly desire to be His vessels as well in helping to meet the needs of others.

Sam Chambers shared with me a neat quote just the other day. It is posed at Camp Hebron, where his family has often gathered for Thanksgiving. And this quote is “Live in such a way that those who know you – but don’t know God – will come to know God – because they know you.”

Friends, our great King, Jesus Christ, is a servant King. As His royal family, may we be eager to serve Him by serving others until we see our great King face to face.

Let’s pray…

Sources: [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

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