

Sermon November 22nd Christ the King Sunday

“May the words from my lips and the meditations of our hearts always be pleasing to you O God”

Welcome to the last Sunday of the Church year! Today the Church marks “Christ the King”. The theme of the day is praise and allegiance to the Lord and King who is above all things but also intimate enough to be in relationship with us. We celebrate a very different King than the world would recognize. We take some time today to ask what kind of a King is Jesus? Who are we following? What type of disciple follows this type of King?

The Gospel reading is Jesus’ great story of judgement. And this parable has no parallel in the other Gospels. In the end the faithful are those who serve Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick or estranged. This is the type of disciple we want to be the ones who make the reign of God known in our loving words and deeds.

What type of King are we following? A king that identifies so closely with his followers that care for them becomes care for him. A king that is not coercive or domineering but servant- like.

Jesus's ministry revealed that God's reign is one that cares for the most vulnerable and most in need of compassion.

This is the King we celebrate on Christ the King Sunday.

Today I would like to spend a little time looking at our psalm for the day. This psalm has a long history - it was used in temple worship and in synagogue. It has been part of the liturgy from earliest times of our Church. It has been called the Venite (coming from the Latin words that begin the Psalm O Come) It is used in Matins or morning prayer.

Psalm 95 invites us into the joyful, grateful and musical worship of the Lord. It is a call to worship followed by a reason for the call to worship.

A couple of weeks ago in bible study we looked at Law and Gospel and their importance to Lutherans. This psalm can most definitely be heard as Gospel!

We are called to make a joyful noise to God as we consider who God is and what God has done.

We are also called to live our lives in obedience to this God - heeding God's voice in all of life. This God invites

us to worship - but does not force. We can accept the call or decline. We can choose to pay attention to God or we can choose not to. Our response to God is to be freely given. We may, like the Old Testament stories of the Israelites, choose to harden our hearts - or we may not. God gives us the freedom to respond.

Psalm 95 is all about praise and the way to worship. And it might not be very comfortable for us. Singing out loud? In public? Kneeling? Bowing? No the usual postures for our regular lives. These acts of praise are not the norm. This is not the normal way we spend our time. There is no direct benefit to us, no goal to be reached and no success to be gained. But our psalm encourages us to make these the norm. Make these things the way that we respond to God's love in our lives.

Christ the King Sunday - a day of joyous praise that prepares us for the joyous period of waiting that Advent is. So sing out loud! Make a joyful noise to God. Come before God with praise and thanksgiving.

Our worship on Christ the King Sunday needs a shot of joy.

The psalm says - Come let us.....and this implies a choice - a choice to pay attention to God. When do we choose to pay attention to God? If you are worshiping on Christ the

King Sunday you have made a choice to pay attention to God. A deliberate choice to sing, kneel and give thanks before God.

What did you give up to take this time - to carve out time to take the time to make a commitment to the time to pay attention to God?

PAUSE

In our lives there are many situations - many times when we are faced with the choice to pay attention to God and to try to discern God's will in our lives.

There are times and situations in our lives where we have the choice to say God is sovereign in my life.

Today, together we have made the choice to pay attention to God....to come with shouts of thanksgiving and songs of great joy. Today we worship together and celebrate Christ the King and a God who made all things - and made all things good. A God who calls us sometimes gently, sometimes insistently - but always calls with the choice to respond or not.

But what happens when you leave this time of worship? Will you choose to pay attention to God? What choices will you make tomorrow or the next day? Will you choose

to continue to praise God. To tell of the good things that God has done? Will you choose to tell of the King that you follow?

Next Sunday we will begin our Advent journey. A time of joy and anticipation and waiting. When you choose to connect again in this community you will have chosen again to pay attention to God. To see how God is working in your life. To be open to the call to be reformed and reshaped. Come...let us raise our voices in song as we praise our God.....

AMEN