

# “This is the King!”

Luke 23:33-43

25 November 2007

the Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor  
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When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

I. Prayer.

II. Today is Christ the King Sunday. (from The Christian Year, J.C.J. Metford)

- Formally declared by the 1<sup>st</sup> General Council of Constantinople, 381 AD
  - “... one like the Son of man was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”
- Pope Paul, 1967: Established as the “close of the year of faith” to reiterate and re-assert as essential to our faith the “belief in the eternal kingship of Christ.”
  - “At the conclusion to the calendar year before it begins anew at Advent when the faithful look forward to Christ’s return when the Lord shall reign for ever.”
- Begs the question: What makes Christ our King?

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III. Today's Gospel, the Good News: Luke 23:33-43. What makes Christ our King?

- 1) "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
  - Jesus was crucified at the place called The Skull with two criminals, and Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
  - They cast lots to divide his clothing, and Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
  - The leaders of the people scoffed at him, and Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
  - The soldiers mocked him with sour wine, and Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
  - One of the criminals mocked him, and Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
  - ***Jesus is my King because He forgives my sins, just as he forgave those who did him such an injustice. And Jesus forgives your sins, too.***
  
- 2) Jesus yielded not to temptation.
  - This wasn't the first time Jesus faced temptation. At the beginning of His ministry, He was in the wilderness 40 days with the devil, was tempted 3 times, but Jesus yielded not to temptation.
  - Today, Jesus was tempted to save himself, just as the leaders of the people suggested, but Jesus yielded not to temptation.
  - Jesus was tempted to save himself, just as the soldiers suggested, , but Jesus yielded not to temptation.
  - Jesus was tempted to save himself and the criminals, just as the one criminal insulted, but Jesus yielded not to temptation
  - ***Jesus is my King because He gives me the strength to resist temptation. He has walked in my shoes. He gives me the strength. And he gives you the strength to resist temptation, too.***
  
- 3) Jesus saves those who confess their sins and place their faith in Him: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."
  - The wasn't the first time Jesus brought salvation to one who confessed his sins and placed their faith in him. Just two weeks ago, we heard of Zacchaeus. "Today salvation has come to this house." "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

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- A few weeks before Zacchaeus, we heard of the 10<sup>th</sup> healed leper who returned to give thanks, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.” “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
- And before that, the return of the prodigal son. “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
- Today, it was a capital criminal, who confesses his crime to Jesus, as they hung side by side at their crucifixion. With a whisper of faith, no bigger than a mustard seed, the condemned criminal asks, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
- ***Jesus is my King because He hears my confessions. He hears my petition for eternal life. And He saves me into Paradise. And he can save you, too.***

#### IV. Conclusion.

- Kings are empowered by their people. To what do you ascribe to Christ our King?
- I am called to witness to Christ, my King: He is
  - The one who forgives my sins.
  - The one who gives me the strength to resist temptations.
  - The one who hears my confessions, my petitions, and saves me into Paradise.
- And I am called to give Jesus thanks; thanks for these unlimited gifts of forgiveness, strength, and salvation. Thank you Jesus.
- As a disciple of Christ, as one who is searching for a closer walk with God, are you not also called to witness to Christ, your King? Are you not also called to give praise and thanks to Christ, your King?

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen.

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