

Sunday, November 20, 2022 Pentecost 24 ***“Shepherd KING SAVIOUR”***

Jeremiah 23:1-6 Luke 23:33-43

ON September 8, Queen Elizabeth II died and her son King Charles III ascended the throne. But it seemed the world stopped for a few days when we heard the news of her death. This woman influenced many people with her gracious presence, her kind words of hope and continuous service with Christ guiding her life. We all knew that at some point she would die but for many people she was the only reigning monarch one had known. Her images will be amongst us for years to come yet when we sang “God Save the King” for the first time we knew that her reign ended.

Yet Queen Elizabeth II believed in the King of kings for she spoke of her faith in Jesus for he guided her life. And this King Jesus reigns forever his kingdom knows no end. He is the One whom Queen Elizabeth II worship and praised; lived by his teachings and this is Jesus the One whom we worship today.

Jesus reigns yet the only crown he wore was a crown of thorns. Jesus reigns, yet the robes he wore were not elegant or stylish. They were of a peasant and eventually even these were gambled and divided by the soldiers at the foot of the cross.

Jesus reigns and the meals he shared were not with government leaders or key people of the world, but ordinary people at a wedding, his closest 12 friends frying fish or when he performed miracles providing lunch for thousands. He was never lauded as the guest of honour nor ‘roasted’ for his life’s accomplishments. Yet the table at which he presided is replicated in every Christian church as a sacred place in which we remember what he asked us to do. Through the sacrament of Holy Communion he shared with those who were with him and they acknowledged who he was and were saddened by his leaving. He was betrayed, arrested, and tried within 24 hours. Soon after he was crucified. But Jesus had also offered hope.

Jesus reigns for when he met Mary in the garden near the tomb she knew him as the Messiah/ Saviour/ Rabbi. She ran to tell the others so that they might realize that he not

only rose from death, but conquered it. Jesus is alive and his reign continues in the hearts of all who believe, trust and recognize him as their Saviour.

Jesus' story is what we share all year long- from the waiting time to his birth; his call of disciples to Holy Week and Easter. We learn from his actions, his words and in what he taught during his time on Earth. And these teachings have been passed on for over 2000 years.

The question that arises for us right now is Do you know Jesus as your King? Does he rule in your heart and guide your life? Do you know him as Saviour?

The prophet Jeremiah writes about the need for God's people to be restored to hope as they have been scattered by shepherds who did not care for the flock. Jesus called himself the Good Shepherd for the main reason that we need him to lead and guide us always. He called us the sheep of his pasture in need of one to follow in this world. Jesus lived in the world as a part of human history and experienced the ups and downs of every day living. And he taught us that we should follow him to live a life more abundantly. Christ calls us to gather together and be as one in His church; no longer are we to be scattered but we are to come together to know and grow in faith and with hope. Are we willing to do this? This is the challenge for us to follow Jesus as Shepherd leading all of us as his flock.

Christ the King Sunday is a transitional day between what we have learned this year about Jesus to preparing ourselves to welcome Christ the infant born in a manger and destined to be our Shepherd. He will tend to our needs as sheep but we must believe. We must also remember what was inscribed above Jesus on the cross upon which he died. "The King of the Jews" This was there to mock him, but in reality, Jesus is king of all. For by faith we believe he is the Son of God, who was given to the world by God the Creator to save us. The question is and has been for 2000 years do we believe that Jesus saves people from sin? Do we believe Jesus show us the way to God? And do we believe that he reigns in our hearts forevermore?

Just for a moment- reflect on your relationship with Jesus- do you see him as only a man? Or a spirit or creator—or all of these and more? How you relate to God is your way of knowing God's Son and Spirit but how you grow in knowledge is what we share here in church services and studying together.

This is reign of Christ Sunday—so how do you honour the Saviour/ Christ Jesus? How do you rejoice in his love for you? One key thing to do is to open your heart for him; open your mind to hear his teachings for you and to open your ears to fully hear what you need to hear.

Today we lift up Jesus as King; the one who is crowned in glory and the One whom we call saviour and lord. Let us be glad and know that He is with us always and reigning in our lives through our faith in him. Thanks be to God.

PRAYER

Might and tender God, voice of the voiceless, power of the powerless: we praise you for your vision of a community of wholeness, a realm of peace, in which all who hunger and thirst are nourished, in which the stranger is welcomed, the hurting are healed, and the captive set free.

Guide us by your truth and love, until we and all your people make manifest your reign of justice and compassion.

We pray in the name of your anointed one, our servant- king, to whom with you and the Spirit, one Holy God, be honour, glory and blessing this day and forever. Amen.