

SUNDAY, November 24 2024 Jesus Shepherd King and Saviour

Revelation 1:4-8 John 18:33-37 John 21:15-19 and Matthew 3:13-17

What are we doing here today? Why? What brings us together this morning? For some it is the lure of a church lunch together with good food and friends. For some it is reason to get out of bed and out of the house even for a short time. For some it is to have a time of relaxation and to reflect on the world and its problems and to pray. And for many of us, we believe that the presence of God's Spirit is in this place and moving amongst us all. For all including those present both in person and on line, in this moment of time we are experiencing God's Spirit alive and are remembering Jesus life story and He has changed you. Jesus has made a difference in your life and you just want to praise God and give thanks.

This is Reign of Christ Sunday. In these last weeks of the Season after Pentecost we have been reviewing and hearing the key teachings of Jesus and why he is the One whom we worship and praise as Christians. Jesus is our Lord and Saviour and the One true head of the church and it is He whom we offer our gratitude, and our lives because of what He has done for us. Jesus is in the hearts of those who believe and by this we mean that He dwells within by His Spirit. And because of this we believe that lives are changed through Jesus the Christ.

Our readings today reflect key moments in Jesus' ministry. In Matthew we read of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River. John the Baptist is hesitant to do this because he believes Jesus to be the Messiah. But when this occurs, he is not the only one to know for sure. The heavens open up, the voice from above is heard loud and clear- this is my beloved Son, whom I love. Listen to him. The Spirit in the form of a dove descends upon Jesus as he rises out of the water. In this moment God- Father speaks, Jesus the Son rises from the water and the Spirit descends upon him- God is heard, seen and experienced. We may not see Jesus when we baptize individuals like today- but we do know that the Spirit is in this place, God is comforting and embracing us and we in turn act upon what Jesus has done-- by receiving the waters of baptism and being renewed in our faith as we acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God who rose from death to life for us.

In the reading from John 18 we experience Jesus' passion story as Pilate questions Jesus. Jesus is asked, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus does not answer this directly but states, my kingdom is not from this world which confuses Pilate. But you are a king? No not really not in the way he thinks- ruling with armies and authority. But what is shared is the question of what is truth? Pilate is just not sure what to do with Jesus. He only gives into what

the crowd wants as they have been coerced by the established scribes and Pharisees to be rid of this man who cannot be the promised messiah. Jesus is king- but in our understanding he is the King of all; and has reigned forever. Pilate is confused but has Jesus beaten and eventually Jesus is crucified. But we also know and believe Jesus rose from death!

John 21 tells us what occurs a few days after Jesus rose from death. We remember that Simon Peter denied who Jesus was three times before Jesus died. And in this story, Jesus and Peter are having breakfast and Jesus asks him do you love me? Peter responds to the same question 3 times with Yes I love you. And it is then the Peter and we receive our purpose as Christ's followers. Yes Jesus loves us- but we must 'feed His sheep'; we are to tell Jesus' story of life, death and resurrection.

In Revelation we learn of Jesus and what the future brings- Jesus is the Alpha and Omega and in him there is no beginning or ending. Jesus was and is and is to come. Jesus lives and is with God the Father and the Spirit. He is God's Son and we believe that through God's grace and love, we may live forever with him. This is the promises of being Christ's followers.

This is why we come together- to honour praise and humble ourselves before Jesus our King, our Saviour and the Son of God knowing that God's Spirit is with us forever. We come today because Jesus' has made a difference in our lives. Today we celebrate with the Sadeghi family how they have received Christ Jesus and professed their faith in Him. Through the waters of baptism they have risen to stand to live a new life. Not only here in this place and time in Canada and amongst our church family, but with new eyes to see and to hope in their hearts that Jesus loves them as we share our love. We are grateful that they have come to know Jesus and have become a part of this church family in faith.

We give thanks and praise God for Jesus is the One whom we lift up. Jesus as the Main thing. that is the focus in this church- we want people to hear Jesus message of hope, peace, joy and love. And to live this out each and every day.

On this Reign of Christ Sunday we recognize that Jesus life, his role and importance as King of all, causes us to realize that He is on a whole different realm than most of our world. And this is good because we need fulfil our purpose and feed the sheep who are seeking the Shepherd Jesus. We need to renew our hope in Christ for we believe in the gift and promise of eternal life.

As we anticipate Advent we start a new church year where we look to the scriptures of what people have been searching for, for years. A Saviour who changes lives. And as Christians we begin to tell the story of Jesus' birth and what was born that night in the stable is God's expression of love for us all.

Jesus' story is filled with hope- yes there are times of loss- when he too grieved the death of his friend; but there are moments of utter joy! When angels sang and told of his birth; And when He ascended into heaven and is with God for ever. But we are not left alone- The Spirit is with us; the Counselor guides us and we are called to follow and live and love as Jesus taught. We are to feed his sheep because we like Peter said, Yes I love you. Jesus loves us so we in turn must tell his story again and again.

We have experienced the waters of baptism, renewed our faith in the Risen Christ and soon we will begin the waiting time as we anticipate and prepare for Jesus' birth. May God be with us and guide us. May knowing Christ Jesus, the shepherd, King, and Saviour live in you always. Praise and thanks be to God-- Jesus Reigns forevermore.