

November 22, 2015

Christ the King

Daniel 7:13-14

Theme: To Christ the King Belongs:

1. The Kingdom
2. The Power
3. The Glory

The Last Sunday of the Church year is Christ the King Sunday. Our attention on the last days brings us to victor. Daniel records for us a vision that he saw pertaining to the last days. To really understand where he's coming from in these two short verses we have to understand what he saw previously. He saw four beasts that came out of the sea. The first was like a lion. The second was like a bear. The third was like a leopard. The fourth beast had iron teeth and ten horns. It was very disturbing and frightening. We're told **The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise up from the earth.** (*Daniel 7:17*) These kingdoms spoken of in Daniel can be identified as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Cyrus the Great of Medo-Persia, Alexander the Great of Greece and the Emperors of Rome are all names associated with powerful kingdoms that brought them glory. But history shows their kingdoms were short-lived, the power was always surpassed by someone else and their glory quickly faded away. As the vision proceeds he sees what is recorded in our text.

His vision continues with what I suppose we could call the fifth beast. But note the transformation in tone. **I looked and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.** Daniel sees a vision of Christ the King returning. From the Father, the Ancient of Days he has received sovereign power or we might say kingly power. He received a kingdom. In the gospel for today, Pilate asked about that kingdom. And Jesus said, **my kingdom is not of this world.** (*John 18:36*) That might lead us to wonder just what kind of a kingdom it is. As you might remember from your confirmation instruction Jesus kingdom is his rule in our hearts through faith. He is the king because he has won the victory.

Mankind was engaged in a fierce battle against the devil, the world and our flesh. Their desire was to keep us from all of the good blessings that God holds out to us. We were losing. We were dying, not just in this life, but facing the prospect of eternal death. The devil, the world and our flesh don't want us to know the love of Jesus. They don't want us to know the peace that exists in his kingdom. Peace that is not dependent on children behaving or terrorists putting down their arms. The peace of his kingdom is beyond any peace we know today because his peace is true peace. His peace is freedom from the guilt of sin and the stress of life. When Jesus establishes his kingdom, his rule in our hearts through faith, he brings peace beyond what we could imagine.

The kingdom belongs to him and so do we. We have nothing to fear. A while back there was an episode of Extreme Makeover: Home Edition where the father's quote stuck with me. He said, **there's lots to think about, but nothing to worry about.** How true it is of our battle in this world. There is lots to think about, but in the end, we know who our king is and we know that he's already won the victory for us. We live in his kingdom now and forever.

To Christ the King Belongs not only the kingdom, but the power as well. It only makes sense doesn't it? Kings without power we call puppets. They really aren't kings at all. Someone else is behind all the decisions and makes all the rules. Not so here. **To Christ the King belongs power.** Real power. It's pretty amazing when you think about it. When Jesus lived on earth, he demonstrated his amazing power over the laws of nature, over sickness and injury, over people's evil thoughts against him, and even over death. That's the power of our Savior Jesus. Why do we think that just because he ascended to heaven, he no longer has that power? Maybe I should ask do you think that? My guess is that logically you say, No I know he still has that kind of power. But I also know that for many of us, holding on to that trust all the time can be really difficult. Things happen in life

that can shake the very foundation of our faith. Being told by a doctor, You've got cancer is one of them. In times like that it's quite easy to begin questioning Jesus and either his love for us or his power. Because if he truly loved us and if really had power our reason says, those things wouldn't happen. Yet sometimes those things happen precisely so that Jesus' power might be made known. Think of the Apostle Paul, he said, **Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take the thorn away from me. But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.** (*II Corinthians 12:8-9*)

When we are weak, then Jesus is strong. When we see how weak and frail and pitiful we are, then only can we see Jesus' power. And it's his power that has won the victory for us. To Christ the King belongs, the kingdom, the power and the glory.

When we see his power. When we see that he **works all things out for the good of those who love him,** (*Romans 8:28*) then and only then can we give him the glory due him. **To Christ the King belongs the glory.** People today have a level of respect for others in authority. With each perceived level of authority, the level of respect and honor goes up too. What does that mean for our heavenly King? How can we show him the kind of glory that the King of kings is worthy to receive?

The ways are limitless. The opportunities to show glory to Jesus abound. First lets understand something more that Daniel adds to this. He says, **All peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.** It follows from this passage that worshiping Jesus with our brothers and sisters here is one way that we can give him the glory due him. But, trust in Jesus isn't limited to our little corner of the world. It's not limited to First Lutheran church or even the WELS. There are people around the world who trust in Jesus and will be saved. More than that, Jesus wants that number to grow and he gives you and me the distinct privilege of telling others about our wonderful King.

That's not some kind of threat or burden he places on us, it's an opportunity to show him glory and honor. We love to talk about things that are important to us, things we love. Jesus is important to us and we love Jesus. It should follow that we love to talk about him to others, our children, our neighbors, people in our community, everyone we can. That's one simple way of bringing glory to his name.

There are some many others. Paul spoke of it this way, **Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.** (*Romans 12:1*) When we live as God's children, brothers and sisters of Jesus, we bring glory to Jesus. When we are guided by him in thought, word and action, then he is glorified and his name is praised. So long as we live on earth that is our worship. On judgment day we will join all the Saints praising the King of kings and Lord of lords forever and ever. Amen.