



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 24th November 2024

compiled by Alison Morgan – Local Preacher

May Christ our King reign over us, his love inspire us, his footsteps guide us, his peace be with us.
May Christ our King reign over us, now and always. Amen

Hymn

1] In Christ alone, my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

2] In Christ alone, who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Til on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied,
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

3] There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain,
Then bursting forth in glorious Day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

4] No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Let us pray

Eternal God, Alpha and Omega, with joy and thanks we celebrate the kingship of your Son,
For he rules with dignity not dominance
With mercy not malice;
With power not privilege;
With grace not greed.
We thank you that he empowers us to be compassionate,
Shows us the picture of perfect humility and promises us the gift of eternal life. Amen

Lord Jesus,
we are sorry for the times when we have worshipped false 'kings' and believed shallow truths.
We are sorry for the times when we have been impressed by those who have promised us the world, but
who have taken it from others.
We are sorry for the times when we have pictured ourselves being looked up to, and have not looked
around to those in need of support and encouragement.
King of kings, raise us up to serve and follow you. Amen

God of justice and truth,

You bless those who turn to you in sorrow for the things they have got wrong.

We turn to you now, and trust in your promise of forgiveness.

Thank you for hearing our prayer, for guiding our future, and being a God in whom we can feel safe and strong. Amen

Lord Jesus,

We praise you for your kingship of all that is good and generous;

We praise you for bearing witness to the truth'

For bearing the burdens of those who are struggling;

For bring strength to those who admit their weakness;

For bringing purpose to those who name their emptiness;

For bringing hope to those who acknowledge their despair;

For painting a picture of a kingdom where all are called and all belong,

We praise you. Amen

Readings

Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow, the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was the one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

John 18: 33-37

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him,

“Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Is that your own idea”, Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king, in fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Reflection

In the passage from Daniel, the God of Israel appears as the Ancient of Days, or “the Ancient One”, a figure clothed in brilliant white who has hair as pure as wool and throne of fiery flames, in which God appears in human form. This conventional depiction of God as an old man may seem a little far-fetched, but for Daniel,

in this chapter, the intention of the passage is to portray God as anything but! The writer of Daniel 7 is, in fact, trying to illuminate the deity's justice, righteousness and commitment to God's people during a time when justice and righteousness seem to be up for grabs, especially when it comes to governing the world. The claims, intentions, and activities of human kings are often the subject of suspicion in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament. This suspicion is front and centre in the symbolic vision of Daniel Chapter 7, which reflects the events in Jerusalem in 167 BCE when the Syrian Emperor Antiochus IV outlawed the practice of Judaism and forbade the population from following the Torah. The above verses from Daniel, shows the workings of our Heavenly Father, in a divine courtroom in which angelic jurors and the divine judge take their places. The divine court consults legal documents – the scrolls that contain records of past actions and/or future judgements. Then renders judgement on Antiochus IV.

The Ancient of Days clothing and description are consistent with this courtroom imagery.

White is the colour of purity and righteousness that the prophets associate with God's actions and intentions. White hair and clothing are, so to speak, the God of Israel's judge's robes.

The passage describes, "one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven", who will govern all peoples, nations, and languages with the Most High's power.

In the Gospel reading, identity, action and truth are the three questions at the heart of the conversation between Pilate and Jesus.

Identity – "Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate asks. It's like asking, "Who are you?"

Pilate wants a yes or no answer, a definition. He wants information. Jesus knows that it's not a simple question answered by yes or no.

Jesus deepens and changes the direction of Pilate's question. "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?". It's as if he is asking, "Who's direction your life? Is it you or something else?".

Action – "What have you done?" Pilate asks and Jesus responds, "My kingdom is not from this world." Jesus moves that question from the outside to the inside. It's as if Jesus is saying you can't understand what I've done apart from the values I hold. For Jesus the kingdom presents God's ultimate values, God's desires and best hopes for the world, you and me.

Our actions and words reveal the values we hold and the values we hold are expressed in what we do and say.

What have you done? Look at what you're doing in your life today.

Truth – Pilate concludes, "So you are a king?" to which Jesus says, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Jesus is once again deflecting and redirecting Pilate's question. It's as if Jesus is saying to Pilate, "Yeah whatever. You still don't get it. It's not about a title, it's about truth." And for Jesus, truth is not a fact, a concept, or a proposition. Truth is a way of being. It's something to be done not believed in.

To make truth a belief is easy. Jesus testified to the truth by doing the truth: by loving, forgiving, welcoming, healing, feeding.

What truth are we doing? What truth is still waiting to be done by you and me?

Jesus never let his identity, action, or truth way be determined by where he was or who he was with. Instead, he brought his identity, action, and truth doing to every place he went, every person he met, and every circumstance he faced.

The book of Daniel influenced the New Testament. In the gospels the grammatically indefinite phrase, “one like a human being” becomes the title the “Son of Man” and given new meaning in the person of Jesus Christ. The New Testament continues the Old Testament’s stories of kingship and oppressive power. Christ’s kingship is not in conquering terms, but in terms of his radical suffering and service to the outcast.

Hymn

1] We have a gospel to proclaim,
Good news for men in all the earth.
The gospel of a saviour’s name.
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

2] Tell of His birth at Bethlehem,
Not in a royal house or hall
But in a stable dark and dim.
The Word made flesh, a light for all.

3] Tell of His death at Calvary,
Hated by those He came to save.
In lonely suffering on the cross
For all He loved His life He gave.

4] Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
Empty the tomb, for he was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share His victory.

5] Tell of His reign at God’s right hand,
By all creation glorified.
He sends His Spirit on His Church
To live for Him, the Lamb who died.

6] Now we rejoice to name Him king:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel-message we proclaim:
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

Edward Joseph Burns (b. 1938)

Let us pray

We pray for your kingdom to come in the worldwide communities of those who believe in Jesus Christ – may our lives enthrone him.

We pray for your king to come in the nations of our world and in their leadership;
for God’s values to take root and grow;
for each person to be respected as a beloved child of God.

We pray for your kingdom to come in our homes and families, our neighbourhoods and places of work, in all thinking, all speaking and all action.

We pray for your kingdom to come in all hospitals and surgeries, and in every place of pain and sadness.
We pray for your kingdom to come in the final stages of earthly life, in the journey through death, and in the awakening to eternal life.

Spirit of the living God:
May your kingdom come.

The Lord’s Prayer

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all. Amen