

“Who Will Be King?”

Isaiah 9:2-7 • Colossians 1:9-23

First Presbyterian Church, Corpus Christi, TX

Rev. Charles S. Blackshear • March 22, 2015

This morning we continue our study of who Jesus is and we have been looking at what in theology is called the three-fold offices of Christ: prophet, priest, and king. As we have been learning about each of these we have discovered that they address *our* spiritual needs. You and I need, first of all, to know God. We see this clearly in today’s passage, which begins with our need for knowledge. In verse 9, the Apostle Paul prays “that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” The only way for us to know God is for Him to reveal Himself to us. The job of a prophet is to reveal God to us and Jesus reveals God perfectly because He *is* God. Verse 15 says, “He is the image of the invisible God.” And then in verse 19, “For in Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”

Then last week we talked about Jesus as priest. The role of the priest is a mediator between God and people. Jesus was the perfect priest because He is both God and human. But he is not just priest, he is also the perfect sacrifice. In His humanity He lived a sinless life which He offered in our place to pay for our sin. As verse 22 puts it, “you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless.

So today we want to look at the third office of Christ, that of King. You and I don’t have much personal experience with kings but I’m sure you’re familiar with the British Royal Family. They certainly have a way of making headlines. But the reality is that the Queen of England really has very little authority. The British Monarchy is what is known as a Limited Constitutional Monarchy, which means that the king or queen must obey the nation’s constitution. The actual business of running the

government is done by the Parliament and the Prime Minister. The queen, then, becomes a symbol of national unity and loyalty. One author pointed out that when the queen meets with the Prime Minister each week, she basically has only three rights in the government: the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, and the right to warn.

A.W. Tozer wrote that in the lives of people and churches that claim to be Christian, Jesus is little more than a limited constitutional monarch. He said, “Nominally the king or queen is head over all, but in every crisis someone else makes the decisions. Among the gospel churches Christ is now in fact little more than a beloved symbol. In the week-by-week services of the church and the day-by-day conduct of her members someone else, not Christ, makes the decisions.” You and I are constantly tempted to make Jesus just a symbol rather than our Lord.

Next week is Palm Sunday, the day when we remember Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem with the crowds cheering and waving palm branches. They were celebrating Jesus as King. John 12 tells us, “So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!’ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!’” In Luke’s gospel we read that some Pharisees who were with them told Jesus to make the people stop calling him king. Jesus said, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

During his entire ministry Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God. Over and over again he told people that the Kingdom of God had arrived. Dallas Willard wrote and spoke a lot about this idea of living in the Kingdom of God. He defined a kingdom as “the range of your effective will.” In other words, your kingdom is the extent of where what you say goes.

Obviously some people have bigger kingdoms than others.

If you think about it, most conflicts or disagreements are a clash between kingdoms. When you were a kid riding in the back seat of the car you and your siblings would establish your kingdom. Don't cross this line or else. Well as soon as there's a line someone's going to cross it and then war breaks out between the two kingdoms. Meanwhile, dad thinks the whole car is his kingdom.

What we discover is that there are basically two kingdoms in the world: the Kingdom of God, which is where God's will is done, and then everything that is opposed to God's will. The old preachers often talked about the world, the flesh, and the devil. That's all the kingdoms opposed to God's will. Too often that includes my kingdom and yours. God's Kingdom is wherever His will is done. When we say the Lord's Prayer we pray, "Your kingdom come." What does that look like? We say it in the next line: "thy will be done, on earth just as it is in heaven." What we're praying is for God's perfect will to be done in our lives and our relationships. As John Ortberg puts it, "Lord, make up there come down here."

Looking again at Paul's Letter to the Colossians, we discover that as King, Jesus is not like a constitutional monarch. He has real authority. First of all, he has authority over creation. Verse 16 tells us, "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him." As the creator, Christ has retained the right of ownership of everything. That's the basis for biblical stewardship. We give to God because we recognize that it belongs to him anyway. He merely gives us things to manage for him. Second, as verse 17 says, "in him all things hold together." By his power, Jesus keeps the world running.

Third, verse 18 shows us that Jesus "is the head of the body, the church." The Church is like an embassy in a foreign country. We are to

be the official representatives of Christ in our culture. The purpose of the Church is to show the world that Christ is King. How do we do that? In Romans 14:17 Paul says, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

So here's my question for you today: In your life, is Jesus important? Most of us would say yes, I think. I don't think that's enough. How about this: In your life, is Jesus essential? Who makes the decisions in your life – Jesus or you? In other words, which kingdom are you living in? I like the way Dallas Willard put this. He said, "If you want to go to heaven, now is the time to do it. Confidence in Jesus leads us ... to become apprentices to eternal living." What do apprentices do? They do what their teacher shows them and they practice it over and over. Are you practicing eternal living? The word for that practice is "discipleship."

Some of you may be familiar with an evangelism technique where you ask someone, "If you were to die tonight do you know for certain that you would go to heaven?" Dallas said the more important question is the question of discipleship: "If you *don't* die tonight, what are you going to do tomorrow?" He goes on to say, "You trust Jesus to the extent that you believe that he knows the best about everything and you want to learn from him." That means you believe that Jesus knows best how you should run your business and your home and your various relationships. Discipleship means studying what Jesus has to say about these things and bringing them all under His control and authority. It means putting Jesus in control of your calendar and your checkbook. It means living in His kingdom, which is why He came. As verse 13 says, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Which kingdom are *you* living in? And what are you going to do tomorrow?

Amen