

King Jesus

Sterling UMC

November 20, 2011

Colossians 1:15-20, Philipians 2:1-11

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be royalty? I'm sure that there are not many of you sitting here this morning that at sometime in your lifetime, most likely when you were a child, have imagined what it would be like. For the girls there's the Cinderella story, the poor young girl who magically transforms from a mistreated stepdaughter into a beautiful princess, meets her prince charming and lives happily ever after. For the boys there is the dream of finding a sword in the stone, pulling out and suddenly finding yourself king of the knights of the Round Table.

Well in recent years we have seen that sometimes being royalty is not all that it is cracked up to be. All you have to do is watch the tabloids in the checkout lines of the grocery store to see some of the scandalous and self-destructive behavior in the House of Windsor. There always seems to be some rumor swirling around Prince Charles. And his two sons William and Harry are always getting themselves into uncomfortable positions. Hearing about these things, one might assume that most of them don't deserve their royal titles.

Why do I bring this up? Because today is a special Sunday in the Christian year. It is the last Sunday in the Christian year, the Sunday we call Christ the King Sunday. It is the Sunday that we pay homage to the one who is truly worthy of his title, King Jesus.

Paul must have had this in mind when he wrote the words of Colossians 1 Philipians 2. They are some of the greatest verses in the Bible, and some of my favorite. Paul in writing these words clearly portrays the lordship, the kingship, of Jesus Christ. He is, indeed, King Jesus! He alone is worthy of our praise, our service, our love, our worship.

Why does Christ deserve to be our king?

First of all he deserves to be our king because of who he is. Most earthly kings ascend to their throne either by being born as an heir or in some cases by seizing control by force. But Jesus was not born into a royal family nor did he seize his kingdom by force. Jesus was king from the very beginning. The Bible says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities." Jesus is God and Jesus is man. Jesus is the unique Son of God, fully human and fully God. When Jesus was here on earth, he was as fully human as anyone can ever be. He did everything that we were intended to do, except that he did it perfectly and we don't.

Years ago when Lawrence of Arabia was trying to persuade the Arabs to join the Allies in the Great War, they told him, "We'll fight with you, if you'll do one thing. If you will live like us, eat like us, drink the water we drink, live in the tents we live in, and fight like us, and do it as well as we do, if not better - we'll join you." In a way that is what Jesus did. He came among us, lived like us. He lived with us, he drank the water we drink. He wore clothes like we wear. He did everything we do, except that he did it better than anyone else ever did.

But Jesus is also fully God. He is God in the flesh. He is so unique that God says in his revelation to Paul, "I'm giving Jesus a new place as far as man is concerned. I'm giving him the name that is above every name."

Ask the angels what they think about Jesus: "A Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

Ask the Roman Centurion: "Surely this was the Son of God."

Ask the Demons: "What do you want with us, Jesus, Son of God?"

Ask John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

Ask Paul: "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

Ask Thomas: "My Lord and my God!"

Ask Jesus himself, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

All of these people and countless others through the ages have recognized Jesus for who he is, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Secondly, Jesus deserves to be king because of his authority. One of the characteristics of any earthly king is their authority. The king has authority over his kingdom and over his subjects. He has the ability to command and control all those under his rule.

The authority that God has given King Jesus far exceeds any earthly authority. That is because his authority is not from man, but from God himself.

All throughout the pages of history we see kings who have used their authority to control, persecute, and oppress others, or to further their own cause and to serve themselves.

But not King Jesus. The Bible says that Jesus, "Is the head of the Body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

Once when his disciples found themselves in the jaws of a terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus demonstrated his authority in the realm of nature by stretching out his hands and saying, "Peace. Be still!" And the wind ceased and the waves calmed. The disciples who witnessed this said, "Who is this that even the wind and the waves obey him?"

On countless occasions Jesus demonstrated his authority over sickness and disease, by reaching out in love and compassion by opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and restoring the withered limbs of the crippled and lame.

One day on the shore of the Lake of Geneset Jesus exercised his authority over the powers of evil by speaking to a man tormented by a legion of demons, commanding the evil spirits to leave the man and enter into a herd of pig, as the crowd watched in amazement as the wild man calmed down and returned to his right mind.

Then on another occasion, Jesus, gave the ultimate demonstration of supremacy, the authority over death. Jesus stood outside the tomb of his friend Lazarus, who had been dead 4 days, commanded that the stone be removed, and cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" Mary and Martha wept for joy as their brother emerged from the tomb.

Jesus used his kingly authority to help, heal, restore, and resurrect the lives of everyone he met. And my friends that is exactly what he will do for you and me if we will only let him.

Thirdly, Jesus deserves to be king because of his awesome power. The person who sits on the throne of a nation wields a great deal of power. They can control and dominate. And again this power can be used for good or evil. A king can direct mighty armies into battle; they can invade and conquer neighboring lands. They have the power to prosecute and to pardon, the power to exalt their friends and to execute their enemies.

King Jesus also has power. His power is far greater and far superior to any earthly power. And he used his power to perform the greatest act ever recorded in human history. For his is the power to bring about the redemption and salvation of the whole world. And where do we see this power? The Bible says, we see it most clearly when, "God was pleased to have his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross."

When Jesus died on the cross the Bible says that darkness covered the earth. A great earthquake shook the land. The curtain of the temple was in two from top to bottom. The power of God had accomplished its greatest feat. The ultimate sacrifice had been made and the atonement for the sins of all mankind had been made.

And the good news is that power will never fail. No one will ever stop him! Kings ascend to power and then are defeated. Kingdoms rise and fall. But not with King Jesus. His power has no end and his kingdom shall reign forever and ever. No political machine will ever bring him down! No government will ever overthrow him! No philosophy will ever stop him! Because "God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He is indeed, King Jesus!

And King Jesus wants to be, he deserves to be the king of your heart, the king of your life.

Why is it then that so many do not want to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and King of their lives?

Someone might say, "He may ask me to do something that I do not want to do."

Of course he will. If this were not so, there would be no issue involved. When Jesus is King and Lord of your life, you can count on him asking you to do things you would rather not do. Nobody likes the cross. Nobody likes to deny themselves. But that is what it is all about. It means saying no to what we want in deference to what our Lord wants. When Jesus is king of your heart, every area is under his jurisdiction - your thoughts, words, and deeds.

Someone else might say, "I am the only one who knows what is best for me."

Nothing could be farther from the truth. We don't leave our children alone unsupervised, do we? A child left alone might hurt himself. He might eat the wrong things, or run out in the street, or grab hold of a sharp knife, or play with something really dangerous. The parent must keep constant watch over their child.

When we grow up, however, we think that things suddenly change. We think we don't need anyone to watch over us and to protect us. We think we know what is best

for us. This is where we make our mistake. God is our Heavenly Father and we are his children. And left to ourselves, we also will hurt ourselves. We see only in part. He sees the big picture. He knows the things that will bring us harm. And yet we have the audacity to say that we know what is best for our lives?

Someone else may say, "I'm not sure that God has my best interest at heart."

If God wanted to make it hard on us, can you imagine what he could do? If he wanted to make us miserable and plague us with difficulties, he could make life absolutely intolerable. But listen to what God says through the prophet Jeremiah. "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

What, then, ought we to do with him?

Victoria was yet a girl when she was crowned queen of England. In preparation for her coronation ceremony, it was arranged that the climax would be the singing of Handel's *Hallelujah* chorus from the *Messiah*. The young queen had been reared in modest seclusion, and therefore did not understand all the protocol of the court. So she was informed that though every one else should rise during the singing of that great oratorio, she must not rise. It would not be proper for royalty; her position was too dignified.

Everything went as planned until the concluding moments of the presentation. As the choir began, "And he shall reign forever and ever," the young queen began to tremble with deep emotion. When the singers reached those all-glorious words: "King of kings and Lord of lords, King of kings and Lord of lords," the young queen could remain seated no longer. Against all the instructions given her as to her proprieties, she rose, lifted her eyes heavenward, then bowed her head and wept.

And shouldn't we all? He is the King of kings. He is the Lord of lords. We ought to bow before him and acknowledge him as king and Lord of our lives. For he alone is worthy of our praise and allegiance.

Who sits on the throne of your heart? We must give him our life - our future, our present, our past. We must live only for him, for only then will we experience the fullness of his love. Only then will we find his kingly authority to help, heal, restore and resurrect our life. And only then will we know his power to save and forgive. And then we will truly be able to join in bowing our knee and confessing with our tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Let us therefore, "Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all."