

**St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas, GA**

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: John 18:33-37

***"The King is Coming!"***

Today we are celebrating the Feast of Christ the King, it is the Last Sunday of Pentecost, which is known as the Feast of Christ the King. And in celebrating the King we are decked out in white. Next Sunday we will enter into the very special "season of preparation" called Advent. In which we change to purple. In Advent, we prepare for two things: to remember the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and we also need to be ready for His coming again. Remember Jesus said – *"no one knows the hour or the day but the Father."*

Our Gospel reading today is the account of the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate. Pilate knows what he has heard about Jesus from others – but he has to ask Jesus himself. And so he comes right out with it. *"Are you the King of the Jews?"* He sees before him a simple man who comes from the wrong part of Israel. People would say, *"what good ever came from Nazareth?"* This is a man with a small band of followers and they have all run away. He thinks this cannot be a king. But, then again, maybe He is – or maybe He's really an imposter. He thinks, it would be better to ask Him and find out.

After being questioned by Pilate, Jesus tells him why He was born. So Pilate says to Jesus, *"You are a king, then!"* 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."* (John 18:37) Jesus came to testify to the truth and to set the world back on track, saving the world from the penalty that comes with sin, which is eternal death. He would be the One to pay the debt that no one else could pay!

- That is why we celebrate today.
- That is why we begin to prepare for the remembrance of His birth.
- That is why as we celebrate at the altar - we are mindful of His death, His Resurrection, His Ascension and His promise to come again!
- Jesus is Christ the King – which literally means He is "Messiah the King" - the one who paid our price – and died in our place. He was born ONCE – so that WE might live! He was sacrificed ONCE – so that WE might live.

In today's Old Testament reading from Daniel 7 – we heard a prophecy about a Son of Man coming before Almighty God, the Ancient of Days, with authority, glory, and power. He was worshipped by *"all peoples, nations and men of every language."* *His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.* This was a vision of the Alpha and the Omega – the First and Last – as referenced in our reading from the Book of Revelation. God gave Daniel a vision. A majestic vision of Jesus – the son of God in the kingdom that He referred to in his statement to Pilate: 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."* (John 18:36) If Pilate only knew Who

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he was talking to – his decisions might have been quite different – there would have been no exchange for Barabbas - but Jesus had to go to the cross – in order to fulfill His mission. He had to go to the cross in order to set us free!

We are getting ready to be plunging into the season of preparation for the “most wonderful time of the year.” Thanksgiving is traditionally the start of that season. You watch the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, and it used to be filled with Christmas songs, and now there are hardly any, until Santa comes at the end of the parade. Their perspective is a little different – being all about sales, while our perspective is yes, we are getting there, ready for the time to celebrate the birth of Jesus. People will be putting up decorations, lights, the angels, the wise men. It is exciting and fun, but not everyone loves what this all represents - because that is only the beginning of the story. The truth is that in order for salvation to come we need to look past Christmas and fast forward:

- there has to be a Good Friday –
- there has to be a scourging,
- there has to be a crown of thorns on our King,
- there has to be three nails,
- and there has to be a cross.

Some people have a rough time accepting a Savior who convicts us as sinners, asking us to repent and be transformed by His love. There are some people who only hear what Jesus said in Luke 23:34 *"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."* They may think that Jesus was letting the world off the hook, but instead, Jesus was asking for forgiveness in order to give us the opportunity to make the choice for ourselves – which way to live – in sin - separated from Almighty God, or forgiven – washed clean by His blood – and the sacrifice that He made – *“so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”* (John 3:16) He asked for forgiveness – so that we might live! He gives everything for us, His people. Now that is a gift.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Colossians 1:15-20 reminds us, that Jesus *“is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - - all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”*

Just a few weeks ago, Deacon Bob preached about the Shema – *“Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one.”* That is the position He is supposed to take in our lives. That is not just saying He is one God; it is saying God should be number one! He should be the one that we think about all of the time, we pray to all of the time, and we thank all of the time.

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Let us get prepared for the celebration that is to come – because the King is coming!