

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: John 18:33-37

"Some Kind of King!"

Today is the last Sunday we celebrate – we celebrate on the Last Sunday of Pentecost - the feast of Christ the King. Next week the Church turns purple. All of the beautiful white hangings will be turned to purple. We are just about to enter into the most blessed "season of preparation." We have got to get ready – because one week from today we enter into a new church year. All of the readings will roll into church year C from the year B – That is what happens on the first Sunday of Advent. It begins and is often called a 'happy new year.'

We prepare for two things:

- preparing to remember the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- We need to also be aware to always be ready for His coming again. What was it Jesus said – "*no one knows the hour or the day but the Father.*"

Our Gospel reading today is taken near the end of the Gospel of John to the trial of Jesus before Pilate. Pilate knows what he has heard – but he has to ask. So out he comes right out with it. "*Are you the King of the Jews?*" The idea is so laughable that he already knows what the answer is. He sees before him a poor man from the wrong part of the country. I mean - "*what good ever came from Nazareth?*" He sees before him this poor man with a small band of followers and they have all run away. He thinks of course He's not the king. But... maybe He thinks He is. Maybe He's really deluded. Better ask Him and find out.

Toward the end of the reading – after being questioned by Pilate – Jesus tells him why He came to be born. Pilate tells Jesus, "*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.*" (John 18:37) Jesus came to testify to the truth – to set the world back on track – and save the world from the penalty that comes with sin – eternal death. To pay the debt that no one else could pay!

God promised a means for someone else to pay our debt – and to shed His own blood – for us. I love this time of year. People will often pay other people's Lay Away Plans. That has happened a couple of times when someone went to a Walmart and they paid for all of the people on Lay Away. Jesus showed us so much in His Word to let us know what He would do. That He would pay it forward. All the way back in Genesis 22 – Abraham was leading his only son, Isaac, up the mountain that would one day be called the Temple Mount. Isaac was carrying the wood for his sacrifice right on his back - and he asked his father: "*The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*" Abraham said, "*God himself will provide the lamb.*" (Genesis 22:7-8) All the way back in Genesis – God promised that He Himself would provide the lamb – He Himself – in the person of His Son – Jesus Christ. "*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.*" (John 1:14) John's Gospel continues with verse 18: "*No one has ever seen*

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God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. **My brothers and sisters in Christ – God, Himself, provided the Lamb!**

- 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 recall His death, Resurrection, His Ascension and His promise to come again!
- He is Christ the King – which literally means “Messiah the King” - the one who paid our price – and died in our place – born once – so that we might live! Sacrificed ONCE – so that we might live. There is no sacrifice taking place over and over again – it is once, and we recall that oblation – that offering that He made.

I want to remind you of the prophecy that Daniel referred to in chapter 7 verses 13-14. He wrote, *"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was 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 worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."* Does that make more clear *"the alpha and the omega – the first and the last"*? 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 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. In order to free us!

This time of year everybody loves the baby in the manger. Tomorrow, I will be putting my nativity set in front of my house, and it seems like people are really into decorating this year. How many trees are up already in your homes? There is something this year that is special; - a feeling. I know, there are all of the Christmas songs, the presents, the star, the shepherds, the angels, the wise men – the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh. But not everyone loves what that represents - because that is only the beginning of the story. In order for salvation to come:

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

Unfortunately, some people have a difficult time accepting a Savior who convicts us as sinners, asks 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

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forgiveness in order to give us the opportunity to make the choice 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!** Now that it SOME KIND OF KING! Instead of saying ‘kneel and kiss my ring’ – He decides to give everything for His people, and we are His people! Now that is a gift.

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.”*
Now THAT is some kind of King!

My dear friends in Christ,

- Shouldn't our lives be about the Lamb that took our place on the Cross;
- Shouldn't our lives be about preparing to join Him when He comes again; and
- Shouldn't our lives be about living the message of forgiveness and love that can only be found in Jesus – and sharing that message in everything we think, do and say.
- When you are confronted with an issue with a family member – the two best things you can do: pray for that person and second – love them. Don't argue with them – love them!
- We should be about telling and showing others what Christ the King did for us.