

Feast of Christ the King – November 22, 2015, Year B

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: Various

“What Christ the King Did – So That We Might Live ”

Today we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. We are just about to enter into the most blessed “season of preparation” – the season of Advent.

- Just one week from today we will be embarking on that season – readying to remember the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Meanwhile we are also to be aware – at the same time - that we need to always be in preparation for His coming again.

Our readings today show us the reality of the True King of the Universe – in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle John gives an account in our reading from Revelation 1:7 *“Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.”* Face the reality of it my friends – when Jesus comes again everyone will not only see Him but will recognize Him as Lord and King. I don't know about you – but if I am alive – I want to see that, and if I am not alive I want to be there anyway! That is the day that we live for! Those who denied Him to that point will seek forgiveness, mourning their rejection of Him and seeking reconciliation for their sins. No one will miss His coming - that is for sure. The Prophet Daniel saw the culmination of this event – taking it even further, with Jesus, the Son of Man coming into the presence of God the Father, God Almighty, the Ancient of Days, when all has been completed. Daniel 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.”* (Daniel 7:13-14) A message of hope and encouragement all in one – *“all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.”* This ties in completely with John's vision from Revelation that everyone will recognize Him – and through that – those who sought forgiveness received it! *“All peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.”*

When Jesus stood before Pilate on that Friday morning He boldly professed of His kingship and His kingdom as He 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.”* (John 18:36-37) Let me clarify that when Jesus spoke of *“this reason”* Jesus spoke of His own torture and death. That is why He was born.

When Jesus was crucified the two criminals on either side of Him are a perfect example of the two ways in which people live: one denying Christ, making a mockery of everything that He is, and that He has done; and the other - seeking Him, acknowledging His Lordship, *“on the side of truth”* asking for His forgiveness and wanting to spend all of eternity in His glorious presence. The choice is yours. You can Know peace in Jesus Christ – or Know No peace without Him!

Sin separates us from God. As sinners, (and we are all sinners) we cannot come into His holy presence - God is holy – and because of that - sin simply cannot come into His presence. Please listen to these words from the Prophet Isaiah: *“See, the LORD's hand is not too short to save,*

nor his ear too dull to hear. Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” (Isaiah 59:1-2) God does not want us to be apart from Him. Only God can save us – only God can bridge the divide so that we can cross over to Him and be in His grace, His mercy, and His presence. Isn't it interesting that the way we “cross the great divide is the Cross that bridges the great divide?” It is the cross. Sin has to be punished! If God left us alone – we would have absolutely no hope!

Have you seen the movie “National Treasure?” Nicholas Cage is searching for the supposed greatest physical treasure known to mankind – and is following clues supposedly left by our colonial forefathers. When he was captured and confronted by the FBI – the lead agent tells him – “Somebody's got to go to jail!” That line recurs several times in the film – the fact that the price had to be paid holds true in all of our lives. The price – the cost – **the wages of sin has to be paid** – and we all know that *“the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23) If that is not good news, I don't know what is!

Since the price is death – the price for the covering of our sins – for reconciliation or atonement – that price has to be paid. God promised a means for someone else to pay our debt – and to shed His own blood – for us. All the way back in Genesis 22 (we talked about this just a few weeks ago) – Abraham was leading his only son, Isaac, up the mountain that would one day be called Mt. Zion. 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 God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.”* **God, Himself, provided the Lamb – Jesus Christ!**

- That is why we celebrate today.
- That is why we begin to prepare for the remembrance of His birth.
- That is why we recall His death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
- He is indeed Christ the King – the one who paid our price – and died in our place – born once – so that we might live!

Everybody loves the baby in the manger – it is such a wonderful time - the Christmas songs, the presents, the star, the shepherds, the angels, the wise men – the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh, the unending shows about Christmas on the Hallmark Channel. 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,
- there has to be three nails,
- and there has to be a cross.

Some people have a difficult time with a Savior who convicts us as sinners, asking us to repent and be transformed by His love. Some people only hear what Jesus said in Luke 23:34 On the cross Jesus said *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”* Thinking that Jesus was letting the world off the hook – because of ignorance! No, 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 and washed clean by His blood – and the sacrifice that He made, once – “*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!**

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.*”

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

- our lives should be about the Lamb that took our place on the Cross;
- our lives should be about preparing to join Him when He comes again; and
- our lives should be about living the message of forgiveness and love that can only be found in Him – sharing that message in everything we think, do and say. As consistent Christians – we can tell others what Christ the King did – so that we might live.

“All peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.”