

Christ the King – John 18:33-37 – November 2018

As we prepare to begin a new church year with the First Sunday of Advent, the coming of Jesus, we pause and reflect upon who Jesus the Christ is in our lives.. If we are to live in God's reign we, like Pilate, need to know who this man Jesus is, "are you Christ the King?"

The author has been telling us, from the beginning of the gospel, that Jesus is in fact the King of Israel. When seeking Jesus, whom his brother, Phillip, has told him is the one spoken of by Moses and the prophets, Nathanael declares, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:49). The gospel then goes on to explore that Jesus is not a king that the world would ever recognize. This is a king who speaks to the lowly and the rejected. This is a king who serves rather than being served. This is a king who enters the holy city, not triumphantly on a horse, but seated on a donkey (John 12:14).

He is a king unlike any other king, and his kingdom is unlike any other, for it is not of this world. What is this kingdom, this reign, like? That is the important question for us today as we reflect upon Christ as our king.

Ultimately Pilate unknowingly speaks the truth. He declares to the Jews, "Here is your king" (John 19:14). And over the cross Pilate places the announcement for all to see, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19).

We can ask ourselves today - Are we willing to accept Jesus as our king? We, too, are tempted by the allure of secularism and the power of the world. In the end, according to John, the Jewish leaders rejected their faith and bowed to the empire, "We have no king but the emperor" (John 19:15). In what ways do we bow to the empire?

Do we live in the reign of God following the servant king? Do we live lives that reflect that service? Do we reach out to the least and the lost? Do we seek to serve rather than be served? Do we testify to the truth of God? It is the truth that Jesus came to the world to bring love and forgiveness. Are we citizens of that kingdom?

This is the kind of reflection we have been doing these past few months for our Hope for Tomorrow vision - as we seek to understand how God wants us to engage and encourage those in our community who are not yet in relationship with him through Jesus.

We have completed the sessions and are now in the process of using the collated ideas and reflections to form a plan with suggested ideas and actions that will take place within 6 months – quick wins – 6-18 months – and 18 months to three years – there are sheets to take away that will give you the detail of the outcomes of the sessions – really interesting actually...

We will be framing the ideas in the form of a work plan that we will share – but in the meantime, continue to pray that we will be mediators of God's kingdom – that it really is on earth as it is in heaven – that God is with us through Jesus Christ - the head of the church – Christ – the King

Jesus Christ is God with us through the indwelling spirit of wholeness - we bear this presence of our High King no matter how we do church – how big or small church - it is the heart of who we are...

Christ the King whose kingdom is not of this world – as followers of Christ - we are citizens of his kingdom – we have a world view spiritualised with his grace. He is our King

And that is why this King of Kings - Jesus - can be with us - and is with us Christ's family - and those outside - through thick and thin - good and bad - right and wrong - because he walks in all places of community – drawing us all into the one body – and is waiting to be revealed and to lead us - all - to the light of eternal life and love

This is the mystery of salvation – to know the oneness of us all in Christ...

The church becomes the church when it seeks Christ through others – we reach out to others so that in turn, Christ can reach back to us....

And on that note let us end with the vision of St Peter's – the vision that God is helping us to make manifest –

St Peter's church stands at the heart of Wrecclesham offering in Christ's name a warm welcome, faithful witness and loving service.'

We're doing our best – God will do the rest... so let's give thanks, take heart, and celebrate in trust that the best – God's best – is yet to come...

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ – king of endless glory....

Rev Jacqueline – November 2018