

The Feast of Christ the King...Series A
Good Shepherd Episcopal Church-COMMITMENT SUNDAY
(November 22nd, 2020)

Text: Matthew 25: 31-46

Title: ***Is Christ REALLY KING???***

Today, on this final Sunday of the Church year, we join our sisters and brother's in Christ around the world in celebrating the great Feast of Christ the King. A Feast which acknowledges and proclaims that Jesus (the humble Carpenter from Nazareth)...Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and suffered death and was buried and, on the 3rd day rose from the dead...Jesus, the first-born of all creation; the Son of the Living God...Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and He shall reign forever and ever...

But, my friends, I think you would agree that there is a difference...a large and a significant difference between acknowledging and proclaiming that Christ is King and acknowledging that Christ is Your King and he is My King and He is King of this congregation! It is the difference between reading a cookbook and eating a gourmet meal...it is the difference between saying, "I Love You" and acting in a loving way to another human being.

So, as we celebrate this Feast, we need to be aware that there are two very real and very present dangers...dangers which must be avoided. The first danger is the danger of "self-deception" ...the danger that I might actually think that because I come to church week after week and sing Crown Him with Many Crowns and enthusiastically acknowledge that Christ IS King...that it automatically means that Christ is MY King. That is the danger of SELF-DECEPTION. The second danger is like the first, only different...it is the danger that we might make Christ into a kind of "figurehead" king...like Queen Elizabeth II (the longest reigning monarch of Great Britain)...she has the exalted title of **Supreme Monarch of the British Empire**...she lives in a castle and wears a crown, but ask anyone in Great Britain and they will tell you that Elizabeth II is just a figurehead, and that the real power; the real authority in Great Britain resides not at Buckingham Palace but at #10 Downing Street!

So, how do we avoid these two dangers...the danger of self-deception and the danger of making Christ into a figurehead King? And how do we really know if Christ is King and Sovereign Lord of your life and of my life, or if someone or something else occupies the throne of our lives? That is the question I would like for us to ponder for a few moments this evening/morning...

Well, the only way I know to answer that question...the only way I know...the only true and reliable TEST to determine who or what occupies the Throne of your life is to examine your personal Stewardship of Life. First, look at your checkbook (or bank statement) Does a careful analysis of your personal finances; the way you allocate your financial resources bear witness to the truth that Christ is King and Sovereign Lord of your life...or does it suggest that someone or something else occupies the Throne of

your life? Next look at the way you spend your TIME...the most precious and "non-renewable" resource that you have. Would a careful and honest inventory of your "time management" bear witness to the truth that Christ is King and Sovereign Lord of your life or would it suggest that someone or something else occupies the Throne of your life? Finally, ask yourself this question, "What is going on in the world today that brings heartache and grief...what is happening today that causes your heart to be broken...to be torn apart?" Are they the same things that caused Jesus' heart to be broken when he walked the dusty roads of Palestine more than 2000 years ago...things like injustice and the violence of poverty...when poor people were treated with contempt...when the welfare of the most vulnerable: women and children; widows and orphans; refugees; immigrants and exiles; victims of violence, oppression and persecution...when the welfare of the most vulnerable were neglected...when people were systematically fleeced and exploited in the name of religion; people who suffered in body, mind and spirit...and the list goes on and on and on..."Is your heart broken by the things which broke the heart of Jesus? The answer to that penetrating question will reveal who or what occupies the throne at the center of your life and my life and the life of this congregation!

My friends, you will know in your bones, that Christ is King...that he is the sovereign Lord and he unquestioned master of your life, when a serious inventory of your personal Stewardship of Life (how you allocate your Time and Your Talents and your Treasure) reveals that it is so...

My friends the Good News that we celebrate on this final Sunday of the Church year...on this feast of Christ the King...on this COMMITMENT SUNDAY...is that we are free; totally and completely free to respond with "Faith-Filled Generosity" to the invitation to expand our Stewardship of Life. Now I know that these are extraordinary and unprecedented times,,the economic and financial impact of the pandemic has taken a toll on many people. I know that some will not be in a position to increase your commitment to support God's mission and some of you may actually have to decrease your commitment. But I also know that for many of us (maybe most of us) there is room for growth...there is more to give and today as we make our commitments of Time/Talent/Treasure for 2021, we have an opportunity to do exactly that. But, regardless of how we respond today, please remember three things that we believe...three things that our Faith teaches us: First, remember that all God expects is that we be faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us. Second, please remember that even when we fail to acknowledge Christ as King and Sovereign Lord and even when we make Christ into a figurehead King, Christ remains King of Kings and Lord of Lords...and Christ is a benevolent King...He is a compassionate King...He is a caring King...a king whose only crown was a crown of thorns and whose throne was an old rugged cross...a king who in the end laid down His life for all of his subjects. And finally, let us never forget what we believe, and what our Faith teaches us...that ne day...one bright and blessed day, every knee shall bow in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father and He shall reign forever and ever...THANKS BE TO GOD...**AMEN...**

