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John 18:33-37¹
Jesus' Names of Wondrous Love –
King
Northwestern Publishing House resources
for the 2013 Lenten season

Pastor A. J. Kunde
Grace WELS Durand MI
6:00 p.m., Lenten Meal
7:00 p.m., Wednesday
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JESUS IS KING
I. FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM
II. OVER THOSE WHO REJECT HIM

In the Name of Jesus, our LORD and our Savior and our King, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

During this Lenten Season of 2013, we have been considering the various Wondrous Names of Jesus' Love. You have heard that Jesus is the Son of man – “true man, born of the virgin Mary” – and that Jesus is the Son of God – your “LORD.”² Thus, Jesus is Immanuel – the virgin-born “God with us” (cf. Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:32a). Jesus is the Savior – that is what his Name, “Jesus,” means (cf. Matthew 1:21b). You also heard Jesus say about himself, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6) – those words, “The Way” and “The Truth” were also examined in this year's Lenten Season sermons. All of this points to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. As the Messiah or Christ, Jesus is the Prophet, the Priest, and the King. This evening, we have the privilege of examining the fact that Jesus is the King. JESUS IS KING ... I. FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM; and, II. OVER THOSE WHO REJECT HIM.

JESUS IS KING
I. FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM

The Roman Governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, correctly draws the conclusion that Jesus is King. This evening's text is John 18:33-37,

***³³ Then Pilate again went back inside the palace [the praetorium],
summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”***

¹ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

² Cf. Kuske, David P., *Luther's Catechism – The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther and an Exposition for Children and Adults* Written in Contemporary English (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House), 3rd edition, 1998, pp. 5 & 151.

³⁴ “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “It was your people and your Chief Priests who delivered you over to me. What is it you have done?”

³⁶ Jesus said, “My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my being delivered over by the Jews. But now my Kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷ “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, that I might testify to the Truth. Everyone on the side of Truth listens to me.”

Jesus is King.

Old Testament Kings ruled their people and protected their people. Old Testament Kings, unlike today’s leaders, fought for the benefit of their people. Jesus would fight for his people – he would fight for his people by way of the cross.

By way of the cross, Jesus would fight the battle against sin, death, and the grave, against hell and against the devil and his power. He would fight the battle against sin by committing no sin and living a perfect life (cf. 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:15); Jesus’ perfect life is credited to all. Jesus would fight the battle against death and the grave by his suffering and death on the cross and by rising from the dead (cf. Matthew 16:21, 28:1ff; Mark 9:31, 16:1ff; Luke 9:22; 24:1ff; John 12:32,33; 20ff & 21ff; Acts 1:3ff; 1 Corinthians 15:1ff). Jesus would fight and win the battle against the devil by never succumbing to the devil’s temptations (cf. Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1-13; Hebrews 4:15). Jesus would fight and win the battle against hell by claiming all believers in him to be his own and live under him in his Kingdom forever (cf. John 17:22,24; Kuske, pp. 5 & 151). In addition, after Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection, he would ascend into heaven to the right hand of God, ruling, governing, controlling and directing all things for the benefit of his Kingdom – all believers in him (cf. Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:19; Ephesians 1:15-23; Kuske, pp. 170-174). Jesus is King. Moreover, King Jesus’ believers would also be his servants.

Jesus said, “My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my being delivered over by the Jews” (18:36a). Jesus refers to his “servants”; these “servants” are all those who believe in him. How did they become Jesus’ “servants”? How did they become believers in Jesus?

Jesus tells Pontius Pilate, “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, that I might testify to the Truth. Everyone on the side of Truth listens to me” (18:37b). Jesus’ servants, his disciples, became his servants and disciples – believers – through the “Truth” – the Truth of Jesus’ Word – God’s Word. It was through the Truth of God’s Word, Jesus’ Word, that people became disciples –

believers. The Holy Spirit worked through God's Word to create and sustain faith in Jesus. Jesus speaks further to Pilate about his servants – his disciples.

Jesus says, “My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my being delivered over by the Jews. But now my Kingdom is from another place” (18:36). Jesus is speaking about the Kingdom of God – the Kingdom of Heaven – which all of his servants, disciples – believers in Jesus from all times and all places – would enjoy in eternity. Jesus also refers to the fact that his servants did not fight physically to prevent his being delivered over by the Jews. But, Jesus' servants would contend, fight and struggle.

As the Truth of God's Word had brought people into faith in Jesus as his disciples and believers, so Jesus' disciples and believers would use that same Truth of God's Word to bring to others. Through Jesus' believers speaking the Truth of God's Word to others, the Holy Spirit would bring more and more to faith in Jesus. By that faith, all believers would inherit the Kingdom of Heaven with Jesus. The “fighting” for Jesus would, therefore, not be with might or sword but with the Truth of God's Word and the Spirit, even as God said through the Old Testament Prophet Zechariah, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6).

APPROPRIATION/APPLICATION

The Truth of God's Word has brought you to faith in Jesus, my dear friends. Through that Truth of God's Word, the Holy Spirit has created and strengthened faith in Jesus as your Savior and King. The process that the Holy Spirit has used to do this includes the broad understanding of the Truth of God's Word.

The Truth of God's Word includes the fact that you are a sinner from birth – even before birth. King David testified to this when he confessed, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). Both before and after the flood, the LORD God said that every thought of the imagination of mankind's heart is only evil continually – evil from childhood (cf. Genesis 6:5b; 8:21b). The Truth of God's Word also declares the result of this innate sinfulness: “The soul who sins is the one who will die” (Ezekiel 18:4b); “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a). And, you know that the death of which the Bible speaks is not just physical death but eternal death in hell – complete separation from God and torment and pain forever. That is the punishment you deserve ... you ... and you ... and you ... and I. But the Truth of God's Word also points to Jesus as our King and Deliverer.

Jesus our King won the battle against sin, death and the grave, against hell and against the devil and his power. Jesus won that battle for us. Through his Word of Truth, Jesus has sent to us the Holy Spirit, who has brought us to faith and kept us in faith in Jesus. By faith in Jesus, we are members of Jesus' Kingdom – we are his believers and servants.

As Jesus' servants, we do fight and contend in his Kingdom. We fight and contend, not with sword or weapon or force – we fight and contend with the same Truth of God's Word that

has convicted us and that also has brought us to faith in Jesus. It is through the Truth of God's Word, that Weapon Glorious, that brings still more and more children and people into the Kingdom of our King, Jesus. Jesus is King for those who believe in him.

But Jesus is also King in another sense. Jesus is King over others who reject him. Jesus is Lord and King of all.

JESUS IS KING

- I. FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM; and also,
- II. OVER THOSE WHO REJECT HIM

Our text presents a broad spectrum of those who reject Jesus.

³³ *... Pilate ..., summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"*

³⁴ *"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"*

³⁵ *"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your Chief Priests who delivered you over to me" (cf. 18:33-35ab).*

Jesus had been delivered over to Pontius Pilate by the Chief Priests (the Sadducees), the Pharisees, the Jewish Sanhedrin (Supreme Court) – by these Leaders of the Jews. They were jealous and envious of Jesus. Moreover, the Truth of Jesus' Word had pointed out to these Leaders their hypocrisy, unbelief and rejection. They did not come to repentance but hardened their hearts. They rejected Jesus. Then, there were the Jews.

Pilate correctly states that the Jews, to whom he refers as "[Jesus'] people," had delivered Jesus over to him. The Jewish population, which six days previous had proclaimed Jesus as their King and shouted their "Hosannas" to him, now turned against him. Incited by their Leaders, the Jews now shouted: "Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!" More than that, they would call down the curse of God upon themselves by saying, "Let [Jesus'] blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). They were guilty of Jesus' innocent blood. Jesus would be King over them too, but to their destruction. Then there was also Pontius Pilate the Roman Governor of Judea.

Pilate did not live in a vacuum. Pilate was not ignorant of Jesus and the events surrounding Jesus. Undoubtedly, Pilate had heard about the events of Palm Sunday, when the crowds shouted about Jesus:

"Hosanna!" "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the LORD!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" "Hosanna in the highest!" (Cf. Matthew 21:9b; Mark 11:9b,10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13b)

Pilate must have heard with a certain amusement of how Jesus had cleared the Temple of its cattle, sheep and dove sellers and overturned the tables of the moneychangers (cf. Matthew 21:12,13). At that time, Jesus declared, "It is written ... 'my House will be called a House of Prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers'" (Matthew 21:13; cf. Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). In addition, Pilate must have heard about how Jesus continued to heal the sick, lame and ill who came to him in the Temple (cf. Matthew 21:14).

Previous to all this, Pilate undoubtedly heard about Jesus' preaching, teaching and miracles that took place in Galilee, in the Decapolis east of Galilee across the Jordan; in Judea; in Perea, east of Judea and again across the Jordan. Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent. And note well, how Jesus gives Pilate the opportunity to acknowledge and believe the Truth of his Word.

³³ Then Pilate ... summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

³⁴ "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

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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, that I might testify to the Truth. Everyone on the side of Truth listens to me" (18:33-37).

"Is that your own idea?" Jesus asked Pilate. "I ... testify to the Truth," Jesus said, "Everyone on the side of Truth listens to me." Would Pilate be on the side of the Truth of God's Word coming from Jesus' lips? You know Pilate's snide and sneering answer: "What is Truth?" (18:38a). Jesus gave Pontius Pilate the opportunity to believe and to confess him as his LORD, Savior and King. Pilate rejected that opportunity and remained in unbelief. What would be the results for all those who rejected Jesus?

Jesus told about the results for those who rejected him in a parable – a parable which he spoke during this "Holy week." In a portion of the "Parable of the Ten Minas," Jesus said,

¹² "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return...."

¹⁴ "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

¹⁵ "He was made king, however, and returned home...."

27 ‘But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them [he said]—bring them here and kill them in front of me’” (cf. Luke 19:12,14,15a,27).

Those who rejected Jesus as their King, LORD and Savior, would be killed – would suffer eternal death – in outer darkness, where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth in the lake of burning sulfur in hell forever (cf. Matthew 8:12; 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:50; Revelation 20:10,14,15). That is where these Leaders of the Jews, the Jews themselves who came under their influence, and Pontius Pilate, and all who rejected Jesus were destined to be forever.

APPROPRIATION

There are still today those who reject Jesus. There are many who attack Jesus’ servants – believers – just as Jesus himself was attacked. Some of those attack believers in Jesus physically, as is the case in China, North Korea; Indonesia, India, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and other Muslim controlled countries. Then there are also those who attack believers in more subtle ways by ridiculing them, separating from them, ostracizing them, and by holding believers back from well-deserved career-advancement, because of their faith in Jesus and his Word of Truth.

Just as Pilate succumbed to peer pressure, so today, there is pressure to denounce and deny Jesus or to keep quiet about one’s faith in Jesus in order to avoid conflict and confrontation. There are opportunities for all of these to hear Jesus’ Word of Truth ... but they reject it. At the same time, Jesus is still King.

Jesus is still King. Jesus sits at the right hand of God, guiding, ruling, directing and controlling all things for the sake of his Kingdom and for the sake of his servants – believers in him. As King, Jesus will also bring into eternal punishment those who reject him. Where do you fit in these descriptions?

You know that by nature, you and I too reject Jesus as our King, our LORD and our Savior. You know that by nature, you and I too deserve eternal punishment in the fire and torment of hell. But, Jesus, by his grace through the Truth of his Word, has brought us to repentance and sent to us the Holy Spirit who has brought us to faith and kept us in faith in Jesus. Do not harden your hearts in unbelief or rejection. Instead, hear the Truth of Jesus’ Word, repent and believe in Jesus alone for the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation in heaven. Then as Jesus’ servants, speak the Truth of God’s Word to others.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is King. For unbelievers who reject him, Jesus’ Kingship means eternal separation and punishment in hell. For believers in Jesus, brought to faith in him by the Truth of his Word, Jesus’ Kingship means forgiveness and a place in Jesus’ eternal Kingdom of Heaven. For believers in Jesus, his servants, you and I also testify to others the Truth of God’s Word. Jesus is our King. Amen.