

Worship Service for November 21st: 26th Sunday after Pentecost - Reign of Christ
- Legacy Giving Sunday.

- **Old Testament:** Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
- **New Testament:** John 18:33-37
- **Psalms:** Psalm 93

Announcements:

- **Sunday November 21st:** 4-H Sunday Service at St. David's PC.
- **Sunday November 28th:** Communion Service – 1st Sunday in Advent and Food Bank Sunday.
- **Sunday December 5th:** Baptism Service at St. George's PC.
- The Winifred Grant Opportunity Shop in Pictou has reopened. They are open Tuesdays 10:00-12:00 and 1:00-3:00. Winter clothing of all kinds is especially needed.

Sermon Title: Is Jesus Your King?

Today in the Presbyterian Church in Canada we are celebrating Christ the King Sunday. This feast is in honour of our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord of all creation. As Christians we are celebrating the One who is affirmed as God clothed in human form. We affirm together that we all have a King, One who rules by divine right, One whose word is final, One who has the final say in life and the life eternal.

In our gospel reading today, we are picking up John at the tail end of his gospel and at this stage a lot has happened. Jesus has been betrayed by Judas and Peter cuts someone's ear with his sword. Jesus is bound and taken first to the high priest's father-in-law named Annas and then the high priest Caiaphas. Peter denies Jesus and Jesus is brought before Pilate. John doesn't tell us much about these encounters, but he makes it clear that the authorities want Jesus dead. They also don't want to do it themselves and in verse 28 Jesus is brought to Pilate the Roman governor. There are two things that are made clear here in the lead up to today's passage. First, there is no real accusation to be made against Jesus and secondly, they want Jesus dead. In verse 33 Pilate's direct interaction with Jesus begins.

Pilate asks Jesus if he is the King of the Jews and Jesus answers Pilate's question by asking him a question of his own, flipping back the script to the authority figure. This is one of the most fundamental questions of the gospel and it's one of the most fundamental questions for you and for me. Jesus himself asks it elsewhere in the

gospels – “who do you say that I am?” It’s the question upon which everything else hinges and depends. It’s a question of life and death.

If we were asked that question this morning, what will our response be? Who is Jesus? Who do you say he is? Jesus had this conversation with his disciples in Matthew 16:13-20. He asked them who people said he was. They replied and said, “some say you are John the Baptist; others say you are Elijah, and some say either Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” And Jesus asked them who do you say I am? The apostle Peter answered and said, “you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

My question to us this morning is, “who do you say Jesus is?” Our response will make a great difference in our lives. If we consider him as John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets, we will treat him as such. But if like Peter, we see him as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, our relationship with him will take a totally different turn. Is Jesus your Messiah?

Pilate on the other hand, just wants to know who Jesus is, what he has done, why he is here and why does everybody want him dead? Jesus answers “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” Jesus says “my kingdom is not like all other kingdoms. We don’t fight the same way as other kingdoms.”

Pilate gets back to the original question – “are you a king?” This is the question that Pilate really wants to know the answer to because there are political implications just as much as there are personal implications. And it’s the question whether Jesus is the King that ought to matter deeply for you and for me. Jesus answers “you say that I’m a King. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

This is perhaps the central part of this passage. Jesus first states his purpose, “I have come to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. This sounds just like John 10:27 where Jesus says my sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me. It also sounds just like Jesus’s declaration in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

And Jesus says here that everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. If you belong to the truth; if you belong to me, Jesus is saying, you will listen to my voice.

So the question that Jesus is asking Pilate, the question that is in fact the ultimate question of Kingship that Jesus is asking is “to whom do you belong? Because if you belong to me and my Kingdom, well that changes everything.

We live in a postmodern world today and many in our culture reject the concept of absolute truth. Truth to them is relative – that is, what’s true for one person isn’t necessarily true for another. But this is outrageous. Truth is the absolute standard by which reality is measured. It’s not something that changes based on feelings or perspective. A person can deny that gravity is true, but if he decides to jump off a building to prove it, he’s going to find that truth doesn’t care about his feelings or perspective. Truth exists whether you embrace it or not.

And the absolute truth is that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The One who was sent by God while we were yet sinners to come and die on the cross for our sins. The absolute truth is that this Jesus who was God, took the form of a human, came on earth, took upon himself our sins and he was crucified, dead and buried. He defeated Satan and took the keys of hell and on the third day he resurrected. And he is now seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. He has been crowned as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

The absolute truth is that he will come again to judge the living and the dead as we heard last week. The question for you is, “**is Jesus your King?**” If he is your King, then make sure it stays that way as you spend time reading the Bible and learning more about him; as you spend time fellowshiping with him in the quietness of your home; as you spend time fellowshiping with him with other children of God in His presence. If the answer for you is no or that you are unsure, there is still hope for you. Do not wait any more. Repent today, ask God to forgive all your sins and invite Jesus to come into your life and to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

If you are asking why you must accept Jesus into your life, then that is a good question. As we heard last week, Jesus will indeed come again and when he comes, he will be coming not as Saviour but as Judge. He will judge everyone, and some will inherit eternal life while others will inherit eternal damnation. And this is not one of those truths that we think are relative. Whether you believe that God exists or not, whether you believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah or not, the absolute truth is he will surely come again to judge the world. And if he is not your Messiah,

your Saviour and your King, then you will inherit eternal damnation. The question for you and for me today is, **Is Jesus your King?**

Prayer

Holy One, the Source, Story and Spirit of Love, We praise you for the signs of your reign among us: For hope overcoming despair, trust rising above hurt, love prevailing over hatred, and peace restoring harmony after discord.

God of Hope Beyond Fear, We pray that you will comfort this broken world. May the vision of your peaceable kingdom take root— in your church, in our families, in our community, and in countries marked by violence and struggles for power.

God of Wholeness Beyond Fracture, We pray for a world where differences are overcome by understanding, and everyone can find a place of dignity and respect. Shape our hearts soft with the kindness of your Spirit so that all our relationships honour your image in each person, and our actions and attitudes help you mend the world you love.

God of Life Beyond Death, We pray for all those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, the loss of hope or the loss of a dream. Be present with each one living through a time of sadness or discouragement. Bring them comfort through your presence and show us how to be good companions on the journey to renewed hope.

As we honour Christ, the only King and head of the church, we pray for the continuation of Christ's ministry through the church. We have faced many challenging months, separated by the pandemic and the divisions it has created among us.

Almighty God, you rule in this world through your love. Receive our gifts as tokens of our love for you. Bless and multiply them through the power of the Spirit, so that they will spread your love in ways we have yet to imagine.

Send your Holy Spirit to knit the church together; bring renewed life and commitment to each congregation and parish; enliven ecumenical action on needs in every community; open minds and hearts that have experienced disagreement to mutual understanding; and refresh all who are tired out with a vision of the

future you will create for us, with us and through us, in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour, who taught us to pray together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

Let the majesty of the Father be the light by which you walk, the compassion of the Son be the love by which you walk, the presence of the Spirit be the power by which you walk. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father Almighty, and the sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and abide with you now and forever. Amen.