

Christ the King Sunday

[Revelation 1:4-8](#), [John 18:33-37](#)

How would you handle it if you were to encounter a king? Would you find yourself speechless? Would you fumble for your camera or a pen and paper for an autograph? Would you hold out your hand and when it was accepted, swear you would never wash your hand again? Would we want to make ourselves known or would we want to fade into the background?

We do not have kings in this country per say, however; I think through the years we have crowned certain persons as King for various reasons. Here's a little quiz. See if you can name the 'king' for whom I am referring:

- The King of rock 'n' roll – Elvis Presley
- The King of pop – Michael Jackson
- The King of comedy – Milton Berle
- The King of Late Night – Johnny Carson
- The Queen of Soul – Aretha Franklin

Perhaps we do have royalty even in this country. If anyone has ever encountered someone famous, you might recall your reaction. Were you nervous? Talkative? Did it seem like your brain cells wouldn't work? I wonder – how will we handle an encounter with the King of kings?

Today is Christ the King Sunday. Of all the titles given to Jesus Christ, King may not be as commonly used. We refer to Jesus as the son of God, the Messiah, Savior, Prince of Peace, Emanuel, Redeemer. But what about referring to Jesus as King? Is Jesus King in your life?

That's a hard question to answer I think until we define what it means for Jesus to be King. In our gospel lesson from John, Pilot had very little interest in Jesus until he saw Jesus as King. At that point, Jesus became a threat to the Roman Empire. We have heard the saying: A kingdom divided will

surely fall. Jesus himself says you cannot serve two masters. So what does it mean if Jesus is King? If Jesus is to be king of our lives, what does that mean?

Jesus states his kingdom is not of this world. Jesus is not like other kings. Jesus reigns in our hearts. Jesus provides the way to salvation and eternal life. What is important for Jesus' kingdom are qualities such as humility, kindness to others, generosity to those less fortunate. All that sounds good, but can we just do good things for others and say that Jesus is our King? Not really. First, we must accept Jesus as King of our heart. Jesus needs to rule where no other king can.

This all sounds good. It sounds Christian. It sounds important. But if it is not real for us, than as Paul says, our love is like a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. It is one thing to say we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength

and another to truly believe it. God created us and wants a relationship with us. But as humans, Romans tells us that “all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory.” But God does not leave us in sin. God sent the King to pay the price for our sin. Our choice is whether or not to accept this gift of God’s grace.

I think sometimes understanding the principle of grace is difficult as well because we have very little to base it on. Often if we accept something from someone else, there is an unstated expectation of a return gift – quid pro quo. It can be hard to believe there is a gift of salvation offered to us without price. God’s grace is available to anyone who wants it. We don’t have to pass through a screening process or present credentials to receive God’s grace. The hand is extended to everyone.

Our choice comes in whether we accept that hand. Do we say ‘yes’ to God’s grace and accept forgiveness for our sins?

What's in it for us? I heard a Christian comedian describe it this way. He was talking about what Christians offer to non-believers and what atheists offer. Christians offer God's love and grace for forgiveness and a peace and joy that cannot be manufactured but comes from deep within the soul. Christians offer God's promise of eternal life because the King of kings died for our sins so we would not have to die. Christians are able to approach death with an unbelievable peace knowing they are one of God's beloved children. Atheists offer people the opportunity to sleep in on Sundays!

Once we have accepted Jesus as King of our lives, we are no longer the same. We do not see things as the world does. The world will tell us to take care of ourselves and work to build our wealth here on earth. We know that God has set aside treasures in heaven for us, and our earthly treasures include joy

and peace and kindness that come from helping others as a result of accepting Jesus as King. The world tells us to think only for today. We know that there is a wonderful life beyond this one. In John 14, Jesus says, “I am going to prepare a place for you...and I will come back and take you to be with me that where I am you may be also.” Our entire outlook on life has changed. That is why we can cling to God during times of trouble. That is why we can approach our own mortality with hope and peace. That is why we see this world as our temporary home – this is not our final resting place.

Do we make Jesus King of our lives only to gain eternal life? I hope not. What do we get while we are in this life? It is interesting that people tend to turn to God during times of trouble. After such incidences as 9/11 people flocked to churches looking for answers from God and comfort from their

pain. When we walk hand in hand with Jesus in this life, we have the internal peace that comes from knowing we are not alone in this world. Jesus walks with us on our faith journey, during the wonderful times and the trying times. Many of you may have seen the poem entitled 'footprints in the sand'

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed
that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from
anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord,
"You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during
the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one
set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most,
you have not been there for me?"

The Lord replied,
"The times when you have
seen only one set of footprints in the sand,

is when I carried you."

Mary Stevenson

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That is God's gift to us offered without price. That is what we receive when we make Jesus Christ the King of our lives.

I would like to close with a slide show that seems to bring everything together for me. I found this on the internet and the artists of the various slides are noted. I like the power of these images along with the words which I will read for you as it may be hard to see. I think you could entitle this – How will your encounter with the King of kings play out?

1. God won't ask what kind of car you drove. He will ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.
2. God won't ask the square footage of your house. He will ask how many you welcomed into your home.
3. God won't ask about the clothes are in your closet. He will ask how many you helped to clothe.

4. God won't ask what your highest salary was. He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.
5. God won't ask what your job title was. He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.
6. God won't ask how many friends you had. He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.
7. God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived. He'll ask how you treated your neighbors.
8. God won't ask about the color of your skin. He'll ask about the content of your character.
9. God won't ask why it took you so long to seek salvation. He'll lovingly take you to your mansion in heaven, and not to the gates of Hell.

Let us all be prepared for our encounter with the King of kings so that we too can hear those words, "well done, thou good and faithful servant. Amen.