

WELCOME AND NOTICES

Roger Hales' funeral – Monday 22nd November, 10am at the church.

Hope Café – every Tuesday in term time from 10am -12noon.

Prayer evening – Tuesday 23rd November, 7.30pm at church

Church Meeting – Sunday 28th November after the morning service.

CALL TO WORSHIP: Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty – he is the King of glory. (Psalm 24:9-10)

OPENING PRAYER & CONFESSION

Loving God, we gather before you as Christians across the world have done for centuries. We come as we are, bringing all our gifts and our personalities, all that we do well and for good.

We come in the hope and expectation that we will meet with you here today, as the Scriptures are read and opened to us, and as the music and songs touch our hearts.

We also bring our weakness and our sorrow and all the ways in which we fail. Lord, forgive us and set us free to praise your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SONGS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

COME PEOPLE OF THE RISEN KING

Who delight to bring Him praise
Come all and tune your hearts to sing
To the Morning Star of grace
From the shifting shadows of the earth
We will lift our eyes to Him
Where steady arms of mercy reach
To gather children in

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice
One heart one voice,
O Church of Christ rejoice*

**Come those whose joy is morning sun
And those weeping through the night
Come those who tell of battles won
And those struggling in the fight
For His perfect love will never change
And His mercies never cease
But follow us through all our days
With the certain hope of peace**

Rejoice! Rejoice!...

**Come young and old from every land
Men and women of the faith
Come those with full or empty hands
Find the riches of His grace
Over all the world His people sing
Shore to shore we hear them call
The Truth that cries through every age
Our God is all in all**

Rejoice! Rejoice!...

**YOU ARE THE KING OF GLORY,
You are the Prince of Peace;
You are the Lord of heaven and earth,
You're the Sun of righteousness.
Angels bow down before You,
Worship and adore, for
You have the words of eternal life,
You are Jesus Christ the Lord.**

**Hosanna to the Son of David!
Hosanna to the King of kings!
Glory in the highest heaven,
For Jesus the Messiah reigns.**

**KING OF KINGS, MAJESTY,
God of heaven living in me.
Gentle Saviour, closest Friend,
Strong Deliverer, Beginning and End:
All within me falls at Your throne.**

**Your majesty, I can but bow;
I lay my all before You now.
In royal robes I don't deserve,
I live to serve Your majesty.**

**Earth and heaven worship You,
Love eternal, faithful and true,**

**Who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
Brought this sinner near to Your throne:
All within me cries out in praise.**

OFFERTORY

Lord our God, we offer to you our worship and all we have for the glory of your holy name. Bless now these gifts that through them your kingdom may come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR SUNDAY CLUB

Lord, bless now our children and those who lead them that together they may draw close to you and know your presence; in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

HYMN TO CHRIST THE KING

<https://youtu.be/mDvk5RWw1xk>

**Oh we were wandering in the dark
We had lost our hope and way
And we were restless in our hearts
How we needed to be saved
And so to rescue all your own
You sent to us your only son
A light to fall, a peace to bring
The coming of our Christ, the King**

**The word made flesh, the light from light
A cry that pierced our endless noise
A child to speak into our pain
Restoring unto us our joy
To teach our hearts and heal our wounds
Replace our doubt with heaven's truth
The broken, healed; the lost, redeemed
The beauty of our Christ, the King**

**Though heaven's glory he had shown
All our praises turned to scorn
The gift of mercy that he gave
We returned with cross and thorn
Yet to the end, he loved us still
Surrendered to the Father's will
Forgiveness was his offering
The mercy of our Christ, the King**

**And though they laid him in the tomb
In the silence of the grave
No stone could keep the love of God
From the ones he came to save
And so in power and radiant light
He vanquished death and rose to life
Now with the heavens I shall sing
The glory of our Christ the King**

READING: JOHN 18:28-40

²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, 'What charges are you bringing against this man?' ³⁰ 'If he were not a criminal,' they replied, 'we would not have handed him over to you.' ³¹ Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.' 'But we have no right to execute anyone,' they objected. ³² This took place to fulfil what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, 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. 'Your own people and chief priests handed 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 arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.' ³⁷ 'You are a king, then!' said Pilate. Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.'

³⁸ 'What is truth?' retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, 'I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release "the king of the Jews"?' ⁴⁰ They shouted back, 'No, not him! Give us Barabbas!' Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.



REFLECTION: CHRIST THE KING

In history there have normally only been two ways you could become a monarch: you were either born the eldest son of a monarch or you went to battle to take the crown. The way to the monarchy was either through inheritance or through violence. In the land of Jesus that is what happened two centuries before Jesus had this conversation with Pilate. Judas Maccabaeus established his dynasty through military revolution against the Syrians, winning independence for the Jews. Thirty years before Jesus was born, Herod the Great had defeated the Parthians and in gratitude Rome had made him king of the Jews.

We have here in this passage in John's gospel the clash of two kingdoms, the kingdom of this world, represented by Pilate, and the kingdom of God represented by Jesus. So when Pilate faced Jesus, he knew what kings were all about, how they gained their crown. So he asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (v33). Pilate wants to know whether Jesus has committed the crime of making himself a king against the authority of Rome. Now, when Pilate says 'Are you the king of the Jews?' the 'you' is emphatic. 'Are *you* the king of the Jews?' It's an incredulous exclamation. The idea that this poor Jewish man was king was a joke. He didn't look or act like a king. Jesus wore peasant clothes and was probably stained with sweat and blood from Gethsemane. A king? really? Even his own chief priests didn't want him. His own followers had all deserted him. Pilate knew what was obvious, at least from a human perspective. Standing before him was an ordinary man, not a king.

Pilate, in asking Jesus a question, discovered what many others had discovered before, that when you ask Jesus a question, he often responds by asking you a question. "Is that your own idea or did others talk to you about me?" (v34). The question is, who is on trial here, Jesus or Pilate?

Life is not always as it seems. In God's economy there is often a reversal of appearances – the meek rule, the least are the greatest, the poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish are wise. On trial is in fact Pilate, the Roman Empire, the Jewish authorities, and ourselves.

"What is it you have done?" asks Pilate, intending to get Jesus to incriminate himself. But his answer reveals the truth to Pilate. "My kingdom is not of this world..." (v36). This sounds like Jesus means his kingdom is other-worldly, spiritual, and therefore nothing to do with this present world, which would be no threat to Rome. But that is not what he means. Jesus' kingdom is not *from* this world but it is *for* this world. After all Jesus taught us to pray for God's kingdom to be on earth as in heaven, and one day heaven and earth will combine and God's kingdom will be established in its fullness for both people and planet.

Here Jesus announces God's kingdom in front of Rome's representative, and this is the point in which the ruler of the world is being judged. The cross in John's gospel is the moment when God takes his power and reigns over Caesar. We see in the next chapter even Israel's representatives, the chief priests declare, 'we have no king but Caesar' (19:15). They had forgotten their own ancient traditions in which it is said that their king is to be king of the whole world. All they can see at the trial and at the cross is the death of Jesus by Rome's violence. However, Jesus' kingdom will not come by violence but by truth, which is shown in Jesus' own death.

So, through this conversation, Jesus was claiming to be king but not the kind of king that the world knew in Herod or Caesar or even Judas Maccabaeus. Politically, Jesus was guilty of nothing. However, Jesus is a king who brings truth to the world. In times of deceit and treachery, truth is a gift. Pilate and Rome and all other kingdoms can only see truth in terms of power and force, but Jesus' truth is seen in the power of weakness, the power of the cross. Jesus' truth belongs to Passover, where one man dies so that others could go free. Jesus himself is the gift. He is the truth. The main theme of the gospels is the truth that through Jesus, Israel's God reclaims his sovereign rule over Israel and the entire world.

What a contrast between Jesus and Pilate. One would do anything to receive glory. The other gave up his glory. One valued only what he could touch, see and feel. The other taught that we are not to lay up treasures for ourselves on earth. One was dressed in royal robes. The other had "no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty

that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). However, at his trial Jesus was the one in control, not Pilate.

A Christian man shared his faith with a Jewish friend. The friend did not want to listen, but there came a time when the Jewish friend was dying. The Christian went to see his friend but the doctor wouldn't let him in because the man's health was too frail. As the man's condition worsened the doctor eventually said, "You can go in now. It can't do any harm, but don't say anything." So the Christian went in and knelt by the bed of his friend. He took hold of his hand and began to pray silently. Just before he died, the Jewish man opened his eyes and said, "Not Barabbas, but this man."

What is the truth? Jesus' kingdom is made up of those who listen to his voice. Many have had the opportunity of listening to him, including Pilate. They only belong to the truth if they accept his words. Many will get the opportunity of listening to Jesus, and that includes us here today. Why wait until the last moment to turn to Christ and discover he is the world's true king. Do it today, and live your life with truth within you. Pilate didn't know what truth is, and many today don't either. Truth is whatever they want it to be. Yet those who live in truth know this is a lie, a deception. We cannot decide Jesus is not king, just as we cannot decide Elizabeth 2nd is not queen. On this feast of Christ the King we acknowledge his right to rule and we bow down to him, he who is the truth now and for eternity.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led by Godwin

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from
evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours now and for ever. Amen.**

HYMN: JESUS IS KING

**JESUS IS KING and I will extol Him,
Give Him the glory, and honour His name.
He reigns on high, enthroned in the heavens,
Word of the Father, exalted for us.**

**We have a hope that is steadfast and certain,
Gone through the curtain
and touching the throne.
We have a Priest who is there interceding,
Pouring His grace on our lives day by day.**

**We come to Him, our Priest and Apostle,
Clothed in His glory and bearing His name,
Laying our lives with gladness before Him;
Filled with His Spirit we worship the King.**

**O Holy One, our hearts do adore You;
Thrilled with Your goodness
we give You our praise.
Angels in light with worship surround Him,
Jesus, our Saviour, forever the same.**

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

Gracious Lord, you are the Way, the truth and the Life. Help us this week to acknowledge you as our King so that others may learn of your rule and know you as their King; for your kingdom's sake.
Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us and with all whom we love now and always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.