

Poole Bay Methodist Circuit worship

Sunday 21st November 2021

“Christ is the King” - Led by Dr Julian Tawn

This service can be found on my YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/ONHP-w-oGMc>

Hello, friends. I'm Julian Tawn leading worship for Sunday 21st November 2021. Welcome to you all, wherever you may be. Today is the last Sunday of the Christian calendar, which is the festival of Christ the King. Looking back, I noticed that I prepared an audio service for the equivalent Sunday last year, so I could've recorded and printed the same service again and see if anyone had noticed. Don't worry, I haven't done that! Let us worship God together!

We come today to acknowledge Christ as King.
His throne is a cross, and He reigns from high heaven.
Beauty and holiness are the marks of His kingdom.
He is the face of God revealed in human form.
Let us keep our eyes fixed on him:
King Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life.

A gathering prayer

King of kings and Lord of lords, you are our God.
Before time began you were.
Your voice, Lord God, is louder than the roars of the oceans.
You are more powerful than the crashing waves of the sea.
You are forever and forever and forever.
You were. You are. You will be.

Amen.

We are now going to read or sing our first hymn, “Crown Him with many Crowns”, number **347** in Singing the Faith. As usual, there is an organ accompaniment on the video and audio files, and here is a YouTube link for those who can access it. https://youtu.be/YuMh_ept-Js

Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.

Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed over the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

*Crown Him the Lord of peace, whose power a sceptre sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end, and round His piercèd feet
Fair flowers of paradise extend their fragrance ever sweet.*

Crown Him the Lord of love, behold His hands and side,
Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

Crown Him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou has died for me;
Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.

Let us pray:

God of mystery and magnificence, we see you as our king.
We read of visions of your throne, flaming and ethereal.
You are beyond our imagining,
beyond our dreams and visions and wildest hopes.
You are in us and with us and among us.
You are all we could imagine and wish for and more.
You are our God, our king of all creation.

Amen.

O Lord our mighty God,
we have heard but not always listened to you:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.
We have seen need and closed our eyes to it:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.
We have closed our ears to cries for help:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.
We have known your truth and yet followed lies and falsehoods:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.

Amen.

The Lord God says:
be assured your sins are forgiven,
your slate is wiped clean.
Listen to the word of God and know its truth.

Amen.

For the vastness of your being, our God and king:
we give you thanks and praise.
For your promise to be with us always, our God and king:
we give you thanks and praise.
For the giving of your truth, our God and king:
we give you thanks and praise.
For your voice that calls us, our God and king:
we give you thanks and praise.

For the life of Jesus, our God and king:

we give you thanks and praise.

For the indwelling of your Holy Spirit, our God and king:

we give you thanks and praise.

For the promise of your kingdom, our God and king:

we give you thanks and praise.

For the promise of your eternal welcome, our God and king:

we give you thanks and praise.

Amen.

We are now going to sing or read our next hymn which is number **348** in Singing the Faith, “He is Lord, He is Lord.” As before, there is an organ accompaniment with the video and audio files, and a YouTube link for those with access. <https://youtu.be/OTbhnTeF4yE>

He is Lord, He is Lord.

He is risen from the dead and He is Lord.

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord

He is King, He is King,

He will draw all nations to Him, He is King:
and the time shall be when the world shall sing
that Jesus Christ is King.

He is love, He is love

He has shown us by his life that He is love:

All His people sing with one voice of joy
That Jesus Christ is love.

He is Life, He is Life

He has died to set us free and He is life:

and he calls us all to live evermore,
For Jesus Christ is life.

The Gospel reading for this morning is taken from the Gospel of John, chapter 18, verses 33-38, using the Passion Translation:

Pilate Interrogates Jesus

³³ Upon hearing this, Pilate went back inside his palace and summoned Jesus. Looking him over, Pilate asked him, “Are you really the king of the Jews?”

³⁴ Jesus replied, “Are you asking because you really want to know, or are you only asking this because others have said it about me?”

³⁵ Pilate responded, “Only a Jew would care about this; do I look like a Jew? It’s your own people and your religious leaders that have handed you over to me. So, tell me, Jesus, what have you done wrong?”

³⁶ Jesus looked at Pilate and said, “The royal power of my kingdom realm doesn’t come from this world. If it did, then my followers would be fighting to the end to defend me from the Jewish leaders. My kingdom realm authority is not from this realm.”

³⁷ Then Pilate responded, “Oh, so then you are a king?”

“You are right.” Jesus said, “I was born a King, and I have come into this world to prove what truth really is. And everyone who loves the truth will receive my words.”

³⁸ Pilate looked at Jesus and said, “What is truth?”

Reflection

“What is truth?”

Jesus has already answered that question by affirming that He is King – not in this world, but in the Kingdom of God, and therefore, over this world.

So, what I would like to do today is help you hear Jesus' own declaration of his Kingship. I want you to see how Jesus has been saying, "I am your King" all through Passion week. This reading from John's Gospel comes towards the end of the week which began with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and ended with His crucifixion. The beginning of the following week saw His resurrection, and the beginning of the season of salvation. For the nature of His kingship now is different from nature of His kingship when He comes a second time.

The nature of Jesus' Kingship now is creating a season of salvation in world history during which we can still switch sides and be saved from wrath and judgment. There is still time for us to accept the amnesty that King Jesus holds out to us and renounce our allegiance to self and success and money and family and physical pleasure and security – and whatever else rules us more than Jesus. We can still bow and receive Christ as our King and swear allegiance to Him and be at His side with everlasting joy.

We must consider that the day is coming, and perhaps soon, when the Kingship of Jesus will be very different than it is now. Here is a description of that Kingship, as John saw it in the last book of the Bible:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-16)

When the kingship of Jesus appears in the skies like that, it will be too late to switch sides. "Behold, now is *'the acceptable time,'* behold, now is *'the day of salvation'* (2 Corinthians 6:2). What Jesus wants us to see is that, yes, He is king, yes, His kingship is not provincial or tribal or national, but international and global and universal. But it is *for now* meek, lowly, welcoming, seeking, forgiving, patient. He will, in a matter of hours, shed His own blood to save all who will accept His free gift of amnesty and come over to His side. And until He comes again this is the wonder of His Kingship. It saves sinners like us.

There were many ways in which Jesus declared His kingship during Passion week. All of them were Jewish. He was a Jew, and He was fulfilling Jewish promises of a coming king and Messiah. But all of them are bigger than just Jewish. Jesus knows that He is the king over all nations, not just Israel.

Yes, Jesus declares Himself King of the Jews and King of the nations.

1. Jesus Declares His Kingship by Riding on a Donkey (Zech. 9:9)

Jesus chose to act out the fulfilment of a prophecy in Zechariah and to declare his Kingship in the action of riding on a donkey. This means, yes, I am King, for that's what the prophet says it means: "Behold your king." "But," he is saying, "I am gentle and lowly. I am not, in my first coming, on a white war-horse with a sword and a rod of iron. I am not coming to slay you. I am coming to save you. This time. Today is the day of salvation.

But is He only coming for the "daughter of Zion," Israel? Listen to the context in Zechariah 9:9-10, and Jesus knew the context –

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. **And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion [His kingship] will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.***

That's declaration number one. Jesus very intentionally acts out the fulfilment of these verses and declares His humble, gentile, saving, Jewish and global kingship. And invites us all to receive it.

2. Jesus Declares His Kingship by Cleansing the Temple (Isa. 56:7)

On the following day, Jesus acts out another Old Testament text. In Matthew 21, it says He "*entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves.*" Don't think that this meek, gentle, lowly Saviour-King was without passion for his Father's glory!

To explain what He is doing He quotes Isaiah 56:7: "*And He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer;" but you are making it a robbers' den.'*" There are two things that make this action and this Old Testament quote so significant. One is that the context in Isaiah is about the coming kingdom of God, and so Jesus is putting himself in the position of the coming king. And the other is that the context is global, not just Jewish. Listen to Isaiah 56:6-8:

***Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord. . . .⁷ Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. . . . For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."** ⁸ The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "**Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered.**"*

So, when Jesus chooses a prophetic word to interpret His action in the temple, He chooses one that underlines His coming on a donkey as King and the fact that His Kingship is "for all the peoples." It's for us all today. He is jealous to open his Father's house to us for prayer.

3. Jesus Declares His Kingship by Healing (Isa. 35:4-6)

Also, in Matthew 21 it says, "*And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.*" Imagine what an impact this must have had. We are talking about the most public place in the city – the temple. We are talking about blind people, and people who can't walk – lame, paralysed

people. Not people with headaches and sore throats. This was a public demonstration of something. What?

We've already been told at least once. When John the Baptist was in jail, he sent and asked Jesus, "*Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?*" In other words, are you the coming king of Israel, the Messiah? And Jesus sent this word back to John in Matthew 11:4-5, "*Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk.*" In other words, "Yes. I am the coming king."

Why? Why does the healing of the blind and the lame in the temple after coming into Jerusalem on a donkey mean: I am the coming king? Because in Isaiah 35 the prophet describes the coming kingship of the Messiah like this: "*Take courage, fear not. . . . The recompense of God will come, But He will save you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened. And . . . Then the lame will leap like a deer*" (35:4-6).

Jesus comes on a donkey, lowly and gentle and patient; He comes cleansing His Father's house to make it a house of prayer for all the nations; He comes healing the blind and the lame – all to show what His Kingship is now in part and will be fully in the age to come. It is not just a Kingship over other kings, but over disease and all nature. We will not just be safe and sick when He comes. We will be safe and whole – absolutely whole. Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. Trust Him. Receive His amnesty. Become His subject.

The King Has Come and Is Coming

So here is the concluding declaration and invitation: Jesus came the first time, to herald the coming of the Kingdom of God into the world and He will come again, as the King over all kings. King of Israel, king of all the nations, king of nature and the universe. Until He comes again, there is a day of amnesty and forgiveness and patience. We are living in that day, but it won't last forever! He still rides a donkey and not yet a white war-horse with a rod of iron. He is ready to save all who receive Him as Saviour and Treasure and King.

His invitation is simple and for all. Come to Him. Know Him. Receive Him. Live your life in allegiance to Him, and only Him.

Amen

Before we come to our prayers of intercession, let us sing, or read, our third hymn, “And can it be?”, which is number 345 in Singing the Faith. There is an organ accompaniment, or there are two YouTube links, one traditional the other contemporary:

Traditional: <https://youtu.be/dC8HSEKtuio>

Contemporary: <https://youtu.be/lpOfHxmr8tk>

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design? I
n vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above
So free, so infinite His grace
Emptied Himself of all but love
and bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray.
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Prayers of intercession

Loving God,
we pray for those in authority, that they may not manipulate truth to retain power.

May the kingship of Christ guide them.

We pray for those exploited or abused by those in positions of power.

May the kingship of Christ guide them.

We pray for those robbed of their freedom for challenging injustice.

May the kingship of Christ guide them.

We pray for our church, that in confidence we would share your truths that we know, and in humility seek out the truths we have yet to learn.

May the kingship of Christ guide us.

We pray for one another and ourselves, that we would be open to truth and eager for wisdom.

May the kingship of Christ guide us.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our final hymn is “At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow”, number 317 in Singing the Faith. There is the organ accompaniment on the audio and video files, and a YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/r4d4UXSJXig>

At the Name of Jesus, every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call Him Lord,
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season, to receive a name
From the lips of sinners unto whom He came,
Faithfully He bore it, spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious when from death He passed.

Bore it up triumphant with its human light,
Through all ranks of creatures, to the central height,
To the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast;
Filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone Him; there let Him subdue
All that is not holy, all that is not true;
Crown Him as your Captain in temptation's hour;
Let His will enfold you in its light and power.

For this same Lord Jesus shall return again,
With His Father's glory, with His angel train;
All the wreaths of empire meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him King of glory now.

A sending out prayer

Christ our King,
as we close our time of worship,
assure us of your presence with us –
for we belong to you.
Help us to look for truth in all places,
to seek and listen to your voice,
and to use your power to serve.
Bring heaven to earth and reign in our lives.
We pray in your name, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

May God bless you all today and throughout the coming week.

Julian Tawn

14th November 2021