



CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY



Our King is the Image of the Invisible God

Greetings my brothers & sisters in Christ, what a joy for us all that here, and that we can come together to worship and give thanks and celebrate the Festival of Christ the King or the Reign of Christ.

I know many of you will be watching via live stream, are unable to be here today, and we pray that as the restrictions are progressively lifted, we will be restored to normal daily lives, that we will be able to once again come together each Sunday for worship and fellowship.

I pray, that today's message, will lift all our spirits, and encourage us, as we live out our lives as Christians, committed to lives of service, in God's Kingdom!

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as we gather together as living stones, part of your Church, we ask the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts, kindling in them the fire of your love.

Almighty God, speak to us through your Holy Spirit, and as we walk in the light of your Spirit may we grow in wisdom, always rejoicing in the comfort He brings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Once again, I take great comfort & confidence from today's reading's that once again challenges our attitudes and causes us to think deeply on the passages of today's readings from Holy Scripture.

So on to today's message!

Today in the Church's Calendar is the last Sunday in the Christian year, as we celebrate the Festival of Christ the King!

Our readings focus on Christ as King, and they are a great challenge, to we Christians first and foremost, and a challenge that we should all take seriously.

To start with, have we ever answered yes to the following?

- Do we ever use our understanding of God's rule, actually to impose our own?
- Do we in God's name demand, the power and respect that we long for ourselves?
- Do we impose our understanding of the world on those weaker than ourselves, and tell them that it is God's understanding?
- And, lastly, have we ever considered the effect on others of forcing our misunderstandings of these truths?

I'm afraid that in the past my answer has often been "Yes", and if I am honest with myself, ashamedly still is!

You see, as our three beautiful readings for today, suggest, there is a most vital and central fact about Jesus, whom we believe to be **"the image of the invisible God"**, is one that we, well maybe, *haven't taken into our hearts and minds at all.*

It is the counter-intuitive thing about the Christian concept of God, and sadly, some of our systems of belief and behaviour and organization, barely reflect it in any way!

Our 1st reading from Daniel 7.1-9,13-14, begins with a vivid image of power that we could say is reasonably in line with our, possible undisturbed non-Christian understanding of power.

Maybe, now days in our modern, 'politically correct' society, we would prefer our ruler wasn't called 'the Ancient one', but at least there are thrones and fire and innumerable bowing servants.

But, then we read on and what happens?

I love these next few lines!

An ordinary human being, who looks like the rest of us, comes to the awesome throne and **instantly the fire and throne and bowing crowds fade**, and we wait to see how they will be manifested in this unprepossessing human figure.

Well our reading from Revelation takes up the story!

Now we have seen how this human figure was to exercise dominion over his Kingdom.

He came to love us and die for us!

Revelation says, His dying, has made us free people, who can exercise our freedom to act as he did, in loving service.

The reading from St John's Gospel makes the point even more graphically, because it has two pictures of power to face.

Pilate's power we recognize. Pilate exercises power over these squabbling people, whom he really can't be bothered to understand.

They have brought a man to him, and although Pilate knows that the charges are trumped up, that is not his concern. He goes straight to the only point of interest to him. **"Are you challenging my power?"**

And he reads Jesus's answer – rightly as a 'Yes'. However Pilate is too impatient to hear exactly why, but he is surely right to pounce on that central word, 'King'.

If Jesus is King, then Pilate is not!

We could ask, if Pilate had listened to the nuances of what Jesus was saying, would it have changed his mind? Jesus's kingship, after all, has let Pilate's kind apparently largely untouched.

Jesus himself points out that his followers are hardly acting like revolutionaries, bent on setting up their own king.

But when Jesus offers to explain to Pilate exactly what his kingship is, Pilate doesn't care. Pilate is obsessed with the one word, 'King'. To Pilate, it means only one thing, and that thing is he longs for and would commit any perjury and justice for **power!**

But what Jesus is offering as a description of his own kingship is truth - reality, we might say.

Revelation calls it 'the Alpha and Omega', who was and is to come'.

If the actual reality of the world, from its creation to its end, is like Jesus, then this strange human obsession with power is an aberration.

It has no ability to create, to redeem or to sanctify. Jesus's challenge to Pilate's kind of power is too slow and subtle for many of us, who long to use the weapons of worldly power to force victory for God.

But if Jesus is the truth, then any other way is falsehood, and will fail.

Reality, as it was and is to come, is shaped by a different kingship! **Amen**