

Christ the King / The Reign of Christ
24-11-2024
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

- 2 Samuel 23: 1-7 David's last Words - Those who rule with the fear of God will receive Salvation
- Psalms 132: 1-12 God's promise to David
Be faithful and God will honour you.
- Revelation 1: 4b-8 Grace and peace from God who is the Alpha and the Omega – Doxology
- John 18: 33-37 Pilate questions Jesus about his Kingship
Jesus' kingdom is not of this world

Introduction

Today we celebrate the Christian festival of Christ the King. As far as Christian festivals go, this is a relatively new one.

The feast was originally instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 and celebrated on the last Sunday in October. It has been observed on the last Sunday before Advent since 1970.

Pope Pius XI called for this day to acknowledge Christ as King, in the face of rising dictatorships in Europe. In our current age of self-centred consumerism and materialism, I think it is good to have a specific reminder of the all-embracing authority of Jesus Christ as King of the Universe.

But in doing this we need to be mindful that Jesus is a different type of King than we might envisage. Jesus is a King who leads us to seek His peace, in His Kingdom.

Today I would like to look at how we think of the word King, where we are in our society today in terms of Kings, and why it is such a good thing for Jesus to be our King.

The word King

Firstly, what do you think of when you hear the Word King?

Kings really don't have as much of an impact on our lives as they would have had in Jesus's day. In the time of Jesus, to be a King, was to have ultimate power and complete control over a Kingdom.

So, for Jesus to be our King, it means that we need to place Jesus in charge of, and in complete control of our lives.

I think our western society has evolved into a place where we don't really think of the word "king" in the way that it was originally used. Because modern day kings have so little actual power, compared to what they wielded in the time of Jesus, I think the consequence is that we don't give to Jesus, the power and influence over our lives, that was originally intended, when the first disciples of Jesus, called Jesus their Saviour, Lord and King.

In the Gospel reading from John today, we hear Jesus confirming that he is a King, but that his Kingdom is more than just a part of our worldly affairs. Jesus Reign or Kingship extends beyond the purely physical, and extends for all eternity. The King Jesus claims to be, is in fact, the arbiter of all Truth.

Jesus as King – Our current Society

To look at what we place as the most important things that control our lives, I would like to take a step back and look at the society we live in and its foundations.

So, how did we get this Western society we live in now?

In a book by John Hirst called "The Shortest History of Europe", the author basically describes how our Western society has been significantly shaped by three things:-

The "German Warriors" or "Nation States" which supported the "Roman Christian Church" which preserved "Greek and Roman Learning".

These are the foundations of Western culture and society, but what has happened?

We still live in nation states, and we still value learning to a certain degree, but as a society in general we have significantly disbanded the Centrality of the Christian Faith. In Australia, at the time of federation in the 1901 census, 96.1% of the population identified as Christian. In our most recent census in 2021, that figure had dropped to 43.9%.

The 17th Century Mathematician Blaise Pascal is famously quoted as saying that there is a "God-shaped hole" in the heart of every person. And if we no longer fill that hole with "Jesus as our King", then we are likely to fill it with something else.

I believe, that is why in recent years, we have seen young people protesting and following many and varied fashionable causes, because they are trying to fill the yearning for God within them.

I have also heard commentators use the analogy, that our society is like a “cut flower”. It looks good, but because it has been removed from its roots, it is only a matter of time before it will die.

I believe in our current society, it is more usual to place ourselves as King in our lives. Which means we fill the “God-shaped hole” with whatever we see as important or desirable, at a particular point in time, and we are never truly satisfied.

Jesus as King – A Good Thing

So, what does Jesus offer us that is so different?

I believe we need to look at the two terms, both “Saviour” and “King” to understand what Jesus offers and how it is the best thing for our lives.

Let’s begin with Saviour. Jesus died on a cross for us, so that we could have forgiveness from sin, through repentance.

If we think we’re ok and we can do this thing called life all on our own, then we won’t need a Saviour.

But if we acknowledge that we are fallible human beings who are capable of great good, but also of great failings and sin, then we will welcome a Saviour. This is primarily what God offers to all humanity. The opportunity for us to be reconciled to God through Jesus. When we repent before God, and choose to make Jesus our King, we receive forgiveness, and can live in a right relationship with God.

Making Jesus our King, means that we are no longer cut off from God because of our sins, but rather, that we are free to live into the restored relationship with God, we receive when we turn to Jesus, repent, and accept Jesus.

This right relationship we have with God, by making Jesus our King is not something we can earn, but rather, it is a free gift from God, that we are called to accept. And if we make Jesus our king, then we should be drawn to following Jesus in all we do.

It isn’t something that we should feel a burden over, but rather something we will want to seek to live into. It won’t necessarily be easy, but it will be something we are drawn into. And as we live with Jesus as our King, we will continue to discover day after day, how good it is, and how much God helps us, and how much we are loved by God. As we seek to live with Jesus as our King, we will be continually drawn into God’s peace and God’s calming presence, that comes with being a part of God’s Kingdom.

Conclusion

You might be thinking I made Jesus my King a long time ago. You might be glad you made Jesus your king recently. There may be someone here today, who hasn't really thought of Jesus in this way before.

Living with Jesus as our King begins as simply as turning to God and saying sorry, thank you, and please.

Saying sorry to God for not treating God as your king.

Saying thank you to God for sending Jesus to die so that you could be forgiven.

And asking God to please forgive you, and help you live with Jesus as your king.

You can trust Jesus.

Jesus is the best King we can ever hope for in our lives. Amen.