

Jesus is... King
Isaiah 9:6-7, 1 Corinthians 15:22-28

Well brothers and sisters, let me ask you this morning... why do you call Jesus King? Why use that particular term for Him?

It probably feels more natural for us to call Jesus King than it does to call Him Prophet or Priest – And it probably feels even more natural to call Him “Christ” or “Savior” or “Lord.”

Which is something we should take note of. When you speak of Jesus, when you speak to Jesus what do you call him? And why do you call Him that? It probably says a lot about who you understand Jesus to be, and as I’ve been stating over the past two months; understanding what it means to have a high view of Jesus enables us to be at our best as His followers.

And learning to have a high view of Jesus has shown us there are many aspects to who Jesus is. He is God, He is human, He is the Mediator, He is the Messiah, Christ – the anointed one. And thus, He is also anointed as Prophet, and Priest, and King.

And as I said, we’re already pretty familiar with calling Jesus King. It comes up when we celebrate Palm Sunday, and then after Easter when we celebrate Ascension Sunday. It comes up in many of the songs and hymns we sing; Crown Him with Many Crowns, Praise forever to the King of Kings, Jesus you are my King, Let the King of my Heart... and so on.

But let me ask you again, why are we calling Jesus King? Is it just part of the language and terminology that we find in the bible – so we use it? Is it because we have some sense that Jesus is important, that Jesus is God, and so calling Him a “King” is a way to acknowledge that? Or does it come from the realization that we’ve asked Jesus to come into our heart and rule over our lives and so he’s “the King of our hearts”?

Brothers and sisters why do we call Jesus King? What do we mean by that? What should we mean when we call Him that?

Well, as good as it is to use terms from the bible, and its definitely true that Jesus is important and He’s God, and He

rules over our lives, these are not the reasons why we call Jesus our King.

Saying Jesus is King isn't a descriptive term for His work or a metaphorical way to understand His relationship to us, or even acknowledge His Divine nature as fully God.

We call Jesus "King" brothers and sisters because He literally is one. Jesus is an actual and real earthly King, every bit as much as King David was, and every bit as much as Charles the 3rd will be when he's crowned on May 6 later this year.

Now this might be hard to get your head around brothers and sisters, but its true. And you might be willing to accept the fact that Jesus is an earthly King like David because the scriptures show us how He was connected to the house and the line of King David, but having Jesus compared to Charles III just doesn't feel right.

Well, I will confess that I've deliberately picked Charles III as an example because our reaction to his kingship reveals a

problem with our understanding of the term King; it no longer means anything in our lived experience. It's something from the past that really isn't really connected to our daily lives.

A modern king no longer has the ability to make laws or to enact justice or command the army or demand obedience from his subjects. A modern king – in the nations who still have one – is a symbolic functionary, and should he, or one of his representatives like the Lieutenant Governor General of AB, consider withholding royal assent from a piece of legislation passed by the Provincial Legislature – like the Sovereignty Act – it would provoke anger and criticism that the Monarchy was interfering in the government.

Truth be told, a modern king like Charles III and his royal family have far more in common with modern celebrities than they do with the government.

And while political scientists might appreciate the need for a head of state that is separate from the head of government, more and more regular folks are questioning whether our

gov't system should continue to have a King, why not become a republic like France or the United States?

So our contemporary democratic political context has essentially stripped the title of King from having any meaningful impact for us, and furthermore – none of us would want to return to a period of time where the word of the King was law, where his whims could be put upon you at any given moment. Where speaking critically of the King could have you executed for treason. where you were expected to kneel and show homage before another human being.

It's difficult enough for us to respect politicians and bureaucrats and gov't officials already as it is – and while there were terrible abuses of the office of Kingship in the past that justified the development of democracy as gov't by the people, for the people – the truth is that these days much of our resistance to government over-reach is equally about our libertarian streak as it is about countering bad governance.

We are become accustomed to being the authority over our own lives as well as the source of the authority which the government has. It's to the point that we now believe '*authority*' now means we will comply with something **if we** like it or agree with it. If we don't... we won't.

There's no longer any belief that we submit to authority because it is authority. That we understand authority is the right to expect you will do something we don't want to do, or disagree with or think is wrong. Take note of how you feel inside when I say "authority has the right to be obeyed." My reaction is to say "oh yeah! you're not the boss of me!"

Now, given all the abuses of authority that we've seen throughout history – this is understandable, but it doesn't change the fact that behind our reaction to the abuse of authority, lies the sinful nature that we've all inherited from Adam and Eve when they decided to disregard God's authority as God, and eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which He had forbidden them to eat from.

So the point of all this brothers and sisters is to show us the very real way in which Sin has affected the office of King that we human beings received as being created in God's Image – right from Adam and Eve's rebellion against God as God, to the abuses of authority perpetrated by kings throughout history, the development of democracy as a safeguard against that – right up to how you and I are now hardwired to automatically challenge any authority that says "you must!" and believe that authority is something comes from us and we confer upon a gov't.

So, I ask again, what do we mean when we say Jesus is King.

It doesn't really hit us the same way as it would have for someone who lived in the 1500's. It doesn't raise the prospect of persecution like it did for those said Jesus is King and Lord... and not Caesar...

So, my prayer for this message on Jesus is King, is that Jesus would use it re-establish the majesty, the authority and rule that is inherent in Kingship, and the respect and reverence

and willing obedience that is rightly due from us – as we respond to what it means that He is King.

Because as we've begun to talk about it – it reveals our own issues with authority and obedience, and whatever else being a follower of Jesus might mean – If we are going to call Him King, and we do, it involves submitting to His authority and being obedient to Him. As our Lord himself said in Luke 6:46 *"Why do you call me Lord Lord – but do not do what I say?"*

So, let's look at our passage from 1 Cor 15 this morning because it contains a number of good references that will guide our exploration of what it means that Jesus is King and we'll look at this passage in three sections; vs 22, then vs 23-26, and finally vs 27-28.

So in the first section, vs. 22 where Paul states *"as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."* We pick up the thread that we've already mentioned about Adam and Eve rebelling against God's authority, and we're reminded that the consequences of this rebellion is death.

If we look at Adam's rebellion from an authority perspective, once he rebelled against the God's rightful authority over him, he lost his own authority as king – which is why God states that his work will be painful toil, and the ground will produce thorns and thistles for him. He no longer has the God's active authority to rule over the earth...

And God also curses the serpent – the devil, saying *"you will crawl on your belly and eat dust."* I've wondered... Is this where Satan is thrown down out of heaven and damned? I'm not sure, but eating dust is a poetical way to say that from now on the devil will deal in death.

And I'm also not exactly sure when and where the Devil is given control over the world the people in it, but it happens. When Satan is tempting Jesus in the desert he says *"I will give You authority over all these kingdoms and all their glory," he said. "For it has been relinquished to me, and I can give it to anyone I wish."* (Luke 4:6)

The point for us in all this brothers and sisters is that we are not our own authorities. We don't give gov't authority in elections, we're not the masters of our own destiny, for as much as we think we make our own choices and decisions the truth is that we're deceived. We might think we're our own boss – but we're actually under the power of Satan.

As Paul points out in Ephesians 2:1-2 *"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."*

So with regards to our calling as kings over this world, since Adam rebelled against God's authority and the world came under the authority of the devil to instigated this rebellion – we too are failed kings, because we come into this world under the power of sin and the devil which only leads to death. There is no neutral ground. In Adam all humanity dies.

But the good news is that under the authority of Christ as King, all those under that authority will be made alive. Matt 8:8-9 illustrates this when the Roman Centurion says to Jesus *“Lord.. say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”* Jesus was amazed at this man’s understanding of His authority – and He healed the man’s servant.

And in Mark 1:22 it says *“The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.”* And to those who would submit to that authority Jesus says in Matt 7:24 *“Everyone who hears my words and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock.”* And we know how that turns out...

And lastly – but certainly not the final example of Jesus’ authority in the N.T. – we have the incident in Luke 5:24 where Jesus says to the paralyzed man who had been lowered through the roof *“I want you to know that the Son of Man has*

authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

Brothers and sisters, there is no middle ground where we are the authority of ourselves, and the authority we think we bestow upon our gov’ts is an illusion. We are either in Adam’s rebellion against God’s authority, failed kings under the power of sin and the devil – heading for death, or we are under Christ’s authority and we are heading for life. Which is it for you brothers and sisters??

Now, while you mull that over... let’s move on to the next section. Vs. 23-26, where Paul writes ²³ *But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.* ²⁴ *Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.* ²⁵ *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.* ²⁶ *The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

Now the key term in this section is the kingdom.

If Jesus is King there must be a Kingdom and while there are many kingdoms mentioned in the scriptures, the kingdoms of nations of the world, the kingdom of Israel, the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, there are two particular kingdoms referenced in this section that we want to take a closer look at – and they are kind of theologically distilled summaries of the kingdoms we just mentioned.

The first kingdom is referenced when Paul mentions “those who belong to Christ” and is referred to as the kingdom of Grace. The second kingdom is referenced when Paul mentions Jesus handing over a kingdom to the Father and this is known as the kingdom of Power.

So, what is this Kingdom of Grace? It is what the scriptures are describing whenever the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven are mentioned. It originates in the redemptive work of God and thus only the redeemed are part of it. It is a spiritual kingdom that was prefigured in the earthly kingdom of Israel and born out of it upon the arrival and work of the Messiah.

As a spiritual kingdom it knows no geographical boundaries or ethnic distinctions, it is a realm created in the hearts of humanity in which Christ rules and dispenses great blessings and privileges. It spreads and advances and conquers through the power of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, it is primarily concerned with hearts of mankind – but it spreads out from mankind through the fruit of the Spirit expressed in love, joy, peace, patient, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. It is a kingdom that is both now present and has yet to come to a great fulfillment in the future. It is a kingdom that was planned from eternity past and will last into eternity to come and is focused on the salvation of the elect.

And the Church is central to this kingdom, it is the means by which this kingdom manifests and the spiritual becomes visible, especially as the church gathers together for worship and service as the Body of Christ.

And Jesus is the King of this Kingdom of Grace. He has the authority to rule it and to rule over His Church because He has established this Kingdom through His death and resurrection.

God himself has given to Jesus those who belong to this Kingdom and confirmed Him as its King when He raised Jesus to His right hand in Heaven.

Now brothers and sisters, with regards to submitting ourselves under the authority of Jesus the King in this Kingdom of Grace, there is no better word to speak to our sinful nature which resists this than what our Lord himself says in John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit...”*

The kingdom of Grace and the church is not a voluntary association brothers and sisters. We don't choose to enter it because we wanted to, and we can't choose to walk away and leave it. Paul reminds us in 1 Cor 6:19-20 *“You are not your own; you were bought at a price.”*

Our only options are submitting to the authority of the King who bought us with his blood, or rebelling against it in disobedience.

Brothers and sisters – let me encourage you, to bring that defiance and rebellion - which hearing this stirs up in your spirit... bring it to the King – for he has the authority to forgive our sins and the power to set us free from our sinful nature. He is a gracious and good King – and He has brought us into His kingdom of grace!

Now as you complete that brothers and sisters, let me tell you about the Kingdom of Power.

The Kingdom of Power is what the Devil referred to when he offered to give Jesus authority over the kingdoms of the world and all their glory. God in his sovereign wisdom had allowed Satan to exercise power and authority over the nations in their sinfulness but when Jesus obediently completed His work to redeem Israel and the nations Satan's power was broken and his authority was revoked.

God has now given the Kingdom of Power to Jesus Christ and this is what Jesus is referring to in Matt 28:18 when He says

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Now go and make disciples of ALL nations.”*

Now brothers and sisters, God has always been and will always be sovereign over all things and all events in His creation. That’s why He can make use of Satan’s instigating Adam and Eve’s rebellion and usurping power over humanity through sin and death and use it to break Satan’s power and revoke his authority over sinners.

And Jesus’ in His divine nature has always been a part of this Sovereignty – so when we are talking about Jesus becoming King over the Kingdom of Power it is Jesus’ human nature that is being exalted in this way, ruling over all things in the same manner as Jesus’ divine nature.

And the essence of Jesus kingship over the Kingdom of Power is His will to use His authority and power to control and direct all powers and forces in this world, whether they be spiritual or human or natural, animal or cosmic, to save ALL those whom He has purchased – and bring them into His Church,

and direct the course of world history to ensure they are sanctified and purified, while protecting and preserving them, and bringing them to completion and perfection.

This is why Paul says *“in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”* (Rom 8:28) Because Jesus is King of the Kingdom of Power. Brothers and sisters this is what sets the course of our lives, this is what sets the course of human history, this is the end that every planet and galaxy in the universe is heading towards. So take comfort brothers and sisters – because whatever power, or authority, or dominion or person or devil presents itself as an enemy of this end, will.. in the end... be destroyed.

In ruling this way over the Kingdom of Power and bringing all things to this end – King Jesus is fulfilling that divine commission first given to King Adam in Gen 1:28 *to “fill the earth and subdue it, rule over it”* And when this task is completed, then Jesus will hand over this Kingdom of Power to God the Father and relinquish it – because Adam’s purpose,

being made in God's image to represent God and fulfill God's will for the Creation will be completed, and representatives of God will no longer be needed.

As you marvel at this brothers and sisters, let's wrap it up with the final section in vs 27-28. ²⁷ *For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.* ²⁸ *When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.*

Brothers and sisters when King Jesus hands over the Kingdom of Power to the Father, He is bringing everything full circle. God gave Jesus all authority and power and sets all things under his feet, because in Jesus' exalted humanity there is a perfect King who will always recognize God as God and not attempt to take what is not His to keep, especially when His brothers and sisters have been glorified and clothed with immortality and it is no longer needed.

God is able to rule directly over the new creation as it is described in Rev 21:3 *"God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them."* and in Rev 22:4-5 *"They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever."*

You see brothers and sisters, there is a third kingdom where Jesus is King and we are kings. It is the Kingdom of Glory and it occurs when Kingdom of Power has been brought to completion by the Kingdom of Grace, and in it God's glory is shining and reflecting in all things that have been brought to completion in the new heavens and the new earth by the rule and reign and authority of King Jesus, especially us...

So, brothers and sisters, why do you call Jesus King? And what do you mean when you call him King? May this exaltation of Jesus as King be used to bring you under His authority in His kingdom of Grace and give you great comfort and hope in all circumstance as He rules the Kingdom of Power.

King Jesus – may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. For yours is the kingdom, and the power... and the glory – forever. Amen.

Let's pray...