

Jesus is King - John 18:33-38, Philippians 2:9-11
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

When Jesus shows up on the scene after His baptism and temptation, the first thing He does is preach. And His first (and really consistent sermon) focuses on the immanence of the Kingdom of God. "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" (Mark 1:14-15) Mark tells us that the essence of the Gospel can be found in Jesus' words that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Let's be honest now, as Americans, we don't really understand the implications of this proclamation. We are the people who threw off the tyranny of royal rule and rejected any human king in favor of democracy. We reflect the sentiments of a sign from a colonial Philadelphia pub that read, "We serve no sovereign here." We are the people who elect our President every four years, and he does not rule over us, rather his role is to serve our wishes and desires, or we will vote the bum out soon enough.

Yet, there is no way for us to understand Jesus and really no way to understand ourselves unless we come to grips with the implications of Jesus' statement. One of the most significant themes found in the grand story of the Scriptures is the concept of the Kingdom of God. In creation, God is the King in whom every single object and fiber of the universe owes its existence. He created us, owns us, and our lives and the world only make sense when aligned with His rule. Yet quickly in the story our first ancestors attempted a coup, and now their lives and the world around them are out of line. So God calls a man and forms a covenant. Covenants were common between a king and the people under his rule, and this is exactly what happens in Exodus 20. God is the King of Israel, and they are His people. It seems the Kingdom of God has entered history again in a visible way. Yet, they spend the entire story of the Old Testament rejecting His rule. Even though they have a King who fights for them, protects them, provides for them, and blesses them, they begin to clamor for a human king, one they can see and manipulate. And while this desire is actually a rejecting of the true and better kingdom, God gives them kings. In the Old Testament the kings actually have one job, and that was to make sure the nation knew they were not really the King. As kings in Israel ruled they were to point to Yahweh as the True King of the nation. The few kings who actually understood and fulfilled this role are honored (David, Hezekiah, Josiah to name a few). But the vast majority reject this understanding of their role, thump their chest, and announce in power their rule over the people. These kings reject God's rule completely, lead the nation into idolatry, oppress their own people, and also involve the nation in despicable idolatrous practices. So the prophets begin to promise a better King who would actually bring the Kingdom of God in fullness to Israel and the nations.

So, when Jesus arrives on the scene and begins preaching, His message is gloriously simple, yet profound. He is declaring that the Kingdom of God has burst on the scene because He is this promised King who will show us what it looks like when God rules. He bursts into a world that has had illegitimate kings who have wrecked and corrupted the glorious world God created, and who have ruined the lives of the people they oppress. At the time of Jesus' entrance Rome was the human kingdom who demanded allegiance. So at the end of Jesus' story when He is before Pilate at His trial, Pilate asks Jesus if He is King of the Jews. I believe Pilate misses the whole point of Jesus' response, because if he truly understood what Jesus said Pilate's knees would have been knocking. When Jesus says that His Kingdom is not from this place, Pilate thinks, "Oh, you are no threat to my power, my kingdom, my rule." But what Jesus is actually declaring is a rule, a sovereignty, a Kingdom that supercedes all human kingdoms and will overthrow all enemies. A Kingdom whose entrance will demand allegiance, a bowed knee, and a declaration that Jesus alone is the True Lord of all. Jesus tells Pilate that this is the very purpose for which He was born and came into the world, to be this King who establishes the rule of God on earth again. And He goes on to tell Pilate that Jesus as this King is the ultimate truth on which all other truths depend. Pilate misses the point, declares Jesus innocent and sends Him to the cross anyway. Yet, he doesn't even know that he is nothing more than a rebellious pawn in the sovereign purpose of God. He rejects justice and ignores

the words of Jesus. Pilate even mocks both Jesus and the Jews by putting a sign above the cross declaring Jesus as the King of the Jews. Yet, it is here that we truly understand the scope of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is not going to be established with a sword and quest for power. It comes through the cross followed by the resurrection. The cross is a throne, the resurrection is an initial conquest of the greatest enemies, and the rule of God is established. Jesus is King, and His Kingdom is being established. We enter the Kingdom when we lift our eyes to see Him, then fall on our knees in submission to Him. His rule is expressed through the church as we as Kingdom people live out the beauty of His rule in our lives together and proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world. And one day His Kingdom will come in power destroying all earthly kingdoms and defeating all enemies. On that day, all knees will bow and tongues confess Jesus as Lord (the Roman way of saying Jesus is King).

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Numbers 13	Numbers 14	Numbers 15	Numbers 16	Numbers 17	Numbers 18	Numbers 19

Reading from this past week: John 18:33-38, Philippians 2:9-11
 Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 4:14-16

Family Worship

Song - *All Creatures of our God and King*
https://youtu.be/hhycL4h64_s

Gospel Project

Unit: Encounters with Jesus
 Story: Jesus told a woman about Living Water
 Big Picture Question: How do we know God loves us?
 Answer: We can know that God loves us because He gave us Jesus to forgive the sins of the world.
 Scripture: John 4

New City Catechism

Question #17: What is idolatry?
 Answer: Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator.
 Verse: Romans 1:21,25

Scripture

John 18:33-38, Philippians 2:9-11

- In what kingdom has Pilate placed his hope? If people were to watch your life what would they say is your true king?
- How is a king different from our form of government? When Jesus announces Himself to be the True King, what is He actually declaring?
- Do you tend to see Jesus as your King, or do you tend to actually see Him as your president? Why is this distinction important to understand?
- How do the Gospels display the rule of God in the world through the ministry of Jesus? In other words, what are the ways the ministry of Jesus show us how God's rule and reign operate in the world?

Prayer

*Pray that God's Kingdom would increase in our church and in our lives, and that we would see people bow their knees to Jesus as their King.
 *Pray for our Community Group leaders.