

## Sermon – Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### Address (part 1)

In our service this morning we are looking at what it means to say that 'Christ is King' or 'Jesus is Lord.' This is the last Sunday before the beginning of Advent – next Sunday we will begin to look again at the very beginning of the story of Jesus, at what happened in preparation for His birth, so today we are looking at where that story finally leads, with Jesus given His rightful place at His heavenly Father's side, crowned as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And so as we look at how God plans for all things to end up, I would like you each to think about what might need to change in your life for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done.

We have quite a number of different things to focus on and we're going to begin by looking forward to next Sunday when we have a special collection for a good cause that will also be our Christmas offering this year – the Sailors' Society – and Robin Webster is going to come and tell us a bit about the work they do that we are being asked to support.

### Presentation – The Sailors' Society – Robin Webster

If we believe that Jesus is Lord and that Christ's Kingdom is worth being part of, then we should be supporting the kind of work that Robin has been telling us about, so I commend the Sailors' Society to your generosity this Advent and Christmas.

Now the Anchors are going to come and sing a song they have been working on – it ties in very well with what we are talking about today.

### Song – Anchors Section

So, this is God's good world and if Christ is King we must learn to share and to care as we play our part in making it the kind of world God wants it to be.

### Reading: John 18:33-38a – Brigade member

“Pilate went back into the palace and called Jesus. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked him.

Jesus answered, “Does this question come from you or have others told you about me?”

Pilate replied, “Do you think I am a Jew? It was your own people and the chief priests who handed you over to me. What have you done?”

Jesus said, “My kingdom does not belong to this world; if my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. No, my kingdom does not belong here!”

So Pilate asked him, “Are you a king, then?”

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth. Whoever belongs to the truth listens to me.”

“And what is truth?” Pilate asked.

Address (part 2)

Now, although the theme remains the same, we are fairly jumping about the story of Jesus' life this morning, but we are looking at the big picture. Our reading tells part of the story of the trial of Jesus just before He is sentenced to death on the Cross.

Governor Pilate asked Jesus a very basic question: Are you a king? Jesus doesn't actually give him a straight answer because He didn't want to be misunderstood. If Jesus had just said 'Yes, I am a king,' then Pilate (and everyone else) would immediately have had a picture of a certain kind of figure.

What picture comes into your head when you hear the word 'king'?

We think of a king as one who wears a crown and fine clothes, someone who is at the heart of power, someone that everyone looks up to. But Jesus says, 'My kingdom does not belong to this world' – before that day was over Jesus would be crowned with thorns, lifted up not in splendour but on the Cross, the very image of weakness not of power. Yes, Jesus is King, but not as the world expects.

God's people were waiting for their king to come – the Messiah, the Anointed One. How would you expect a king to come, and where

would you expect to find him?

We expect kings to be born into a royal family in a palace. But as we will be remembering again in a month's time, Jesus was born into a very ordinary family and far from being born in a palace His first bed was a manger, an animal feeding trough.

Going back to Jesus' trial, Pilate usually gets a bad press, but he was in an impossible situation that day – whatever decision he had made about Jesus there would have been trouble. If he had tried to release Jesus there would have been a riot and perhaps even an uprising and his career would have been over. Pilate is wrestling with his decision. Jesus says to him, 'I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth. Whoever belongs to the truth listens to me.' And Pilate asks, 'What is truth?'

People are still asking that question today as they try to make sense of the world we live in and the struggles they face in life.

And I suppose those are the questions I am suggesting that we ask of Jesus this morning. Are you a king? and What is truth? What kind of king is Jesus and what does it mean for us to say that Christ is our King?

God wants His Kingdom to grow in the world and that means He wants things to be very different from the way they are now. The world's kingdoms exercise power in the way that they do, sometimes through politics and diplomacy – the kind of thing we are seeing in Brussels and at Westminster today – and sometimes on the battlefield as we were thinking a couple of weeks ago on Armistice Sunday. Jesus reigns as King not by wielding power like that but by inviting each one of us to choose His way – to choose to give our lives to Him and then to choose day by day, moment by moment, to make the right decisions and to do the right thing.