

The pictures on the screen are pictures of Kings – past and present. Some Royalty, like the present Queen of England and King of Norway, have had long reigns. But a look at history tells us that peaceful reigns were the exception. Scholars tell us that the average reign of Kings throughout history has been about 4 years. Not a whole lot of job security in being royalty!

There are currently 31 monarchies in the world. Many of those are figurehead rulers only. Do we need a King today? Much of the world would say that we have grown beyond having kings.

Yet every year the Church takes a Sunday to talk about Christ the King. Against the grain of our political worlds, we take time to pray that King Jesus would rule over us now and forever.

The Bible is very clear that Jesus came to be a King.

- The angel Gabriel came to Mary one day, probably scaring her half to death. We tend to think of angels as these little cherub type of creatures. But the Bible says that whenever angels show up, people are scared half to death.

Gabriel calms Mary down. He tells her about the baby she is going to have. Gabriel says this baby will be a King. The angel uses these words: *“The Lord God will give him the throne of King David... He will rule over the people of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end.”* [Luke 1:32-33]

Jesus is introduced to us as a King. And the Bible consistently calls Jesus King from then on.

- The Wise Men came looking for – not a child – but a King. They ask King Herod, a very insecure king, if he has heard anything about a King being born.

King Herod believed that Jesus was a threat to his kingship. He had every newborn baby boy in the area around Bethlehem killed.

- When Jesus began his ministry it is described in very specific words. It is not a ministry where Jesus will form a community or a fellowship. He is going to bring a Kingdom. On his first day of work as the revealed Savior, Jesus said: “The kingdom of God is near.” [Mark 1:15]
- And in the last week of his earthly journey, Jesus came to Jerusalem and received the cries of the people, who were saying: “*God bless the King who comes in the name of the Lord!*” [Luke 19:38]

Which brings us to today’s Gospel text. See them side by side: Pontius Pilate and Jesus Christ. Two rulers.

Pilate and Jesus have this exchange. Pilate says to Jesus: “So you are a king!”

Jesus says: “This is why I was born and came into the world: to tell people the truth. And everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me.” [John 18:37]

All of this together says that Jesus came to be our King. There is no getting around it. And the question for us this morning is: Do we still need a King?

Well, we do not need a King or Queen like the 31 monarchies in the world today. But we do need a King like Jesus. Here a few reasons why.

1. We need the scars of Jesus save us.

Jesus bears scars for you and me. That is so unlike most of the Kings of history. I watched a History Channel show on Alexander the Great: thousands and thousands and thousands of soldiers who died over the 11 years or so that Alexander too to conquer the world. Then he died.

It was all so unnecessary. The scars Alexander’s soldiers carried for him. After years of battles for Alexander’s sake, the soldiers finally rebelled and begged to go home. They had borne enough for Alexander.

Jesus does not inflict scars on us. Rather, Jesus bears scars for us. Charles Colson said: "All the kings and queens I have known in history sent their people out to die for them. I only know one king who decided to die for his people."

Jesus showed his scars to Thomas. Jesus said: *"Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."* [John 20:27]

A long time ago a mother was tucking her little girl into bed when the young daughter asked, "Mother, can you tell me the greatest day of your life?"

The mother thought for a moment. Then she began her story: "Honey, I can tell you the greatest day in my life. My father fought in the Civil War. We had gotten word that he had died in battle.

"Several months later my mother and I were sitting on the porch. We saw someone coming down the long, dusty road towards our house. My mother said, 'I declare, that man kind of favors your father.' After another moment, my mother said, 'It is your Father.'

My mother burst from the porch, across the front yard, through the picket fence gate, and down the road to my father.

I was right behind my mother. I jumped for my father's arm as I often did as a little girl. I found an empty coat sleeve. I knew that he was missing an arm because of the warfare. I saw the scars of battle on my Daddy's face. That was greatest day in my life: when my Daddy came back home.'

The greatest day of our lives will be when Jesus comes back for us. We'll look into the face of Jesus and see the scars of battle he suffered for us. We will recognize that He fought a terrible battle to save us from our sins.¹

2. We need the example of Jesus to lead us.

There are so many examples in our world that are not worthy of being followed.

- This week there was the story of OJ Simpson writing a book and telling a story. Who wanted to hear that story? Who wants to follow in those footsteps?
 - Then there is the ongoing story of TomKat. Enough said.
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The example of Jesus is so refreshing, so invigorating, so renewing: so unlike Yertle the Turtle. Do you remember tis story from your childhood days?

*Yertle the Turtle was king of the pond.
The turtles had everything turtles might need.
And they were all happy. Quite happy indeed.*

*They were... until Yertle, the king of them all,
Decided the kingdom he ruled was too small.*

*So Yertle, the Turtle King, lifted his hand
And Yertle, the Turtle King, gave a command.
He ordered nine turtles to swim to his stone
And, using these turtles, he built a new throne.*

*He made each turtle stand on another one's back
And he piled them all up in a nine-turtle stack.
And then Yertle climbed up. He sat down on the pile.
What a wonderful view! He could see 'most a mile!
"All mine!" Yertle cried. "Oh, the things I now rule!
I'm Yertle the Turtle! Oh, marvelous me!"*

*Until 'long about noon. Then he heard a faint sigh.
"What's that?" snapped the king
And he looked down the stack.
And he saw, at the bottom, a turtle named Mack.*

*Just a part of his throne. And this plain little turtle
Looked up and he said, "Beg your pardon, King Yertle.
I've pains in my back and my shoulders and knees.
How long must we stand here, Your Majesty, please?"*

*"SILENCE!" the King of the Turtles barked back.
"I'm king, and you're only a turtle named Mack."
"You stay in your place while I sit here and rule.*

Mack the Turtle couldn't take it anymore. The whole stack collapsed. Yertle again became a turtle in the mud. Yertle the Turtle King was not a good example.

We need a King of example – that is what Jesus is. He is at the bottom of the pile. From there: God is in charge! From there: God is building a Kingdom!

The Kingdom is here. Here in this world of headaches and bodyaches... This world of falls and spills... This world of temptations and broken dreams... This world of dead ends and impossible choices...

Here is this world Jesus said, "Follow me." As the King of the Kingdom who is at the bottom of the pile Jesus said, "I know the way. I know the truth. I know all about life. I will show you the path." He is the King who is our example.

3. We need the promise of Jesus to take us home.

Someday we will need to go home. Just like Leon's Dad did this past week. Jesus is King, not just of this old world, but also of the new Kingdom towards which we are journeying.

Recently a group of people was asked who were mostly likely to go to heaven. At the top of the list was Oprah Winfrey.

Are you going to heaven? That depends upon if you trust Jesus to be your King. If you place your trust in Jesus you are going to be where Jesus lives.

Jesus is King. And if you trust in the King, you will receive the inheritance.

I read this story this week. Britain's Queen Victoria had a scrapbook. That scrapbook was placed on auction, and was purchased for over \$100,000 dollars.

Supposedly the person who bought the scrapbook believes that they are royalty, but somehow they have been overlooked and cast out of the royal family. They need to be prove that they are genetically connected to Queen Victoria.

The purchaser of the scrapbook is hoping that there is a hair or some other source of DNA in the scrapbook. They are willing to pay whatever it takes to retrieve some genes and do the tests and prove that they are of the family of Queen Victoria.

This is Christ the King Sunday. We have become a part of the King's family. We do not have to prove that with DNA. We place our trust in Jesus, and it is true. We are royalty: children of the King.

The Bible says: "You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus." [Galatians 3:26]

Let us pray: Lord God, sometimes we wish that we were wealthier, or had more power, or that we looked better, or that we were smarter, or that we were a better friend, or that we had better chances in life.

Lord God, today we place our trust in the fact that we have the best friend in the world. A person by the name of Jesus, who thinks we are OK to hang out with. And who is willing to accept us as we are today, and help us to be better people tomorrow.

And we trust that our best friend will be a true King for us. He will protect us and provide for us. Today we receive Jesus as our King. Amen.

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