

Christ is King!
November 25, 2018

Since 1925, the last Sunday of the church year has been celebrated as Christ the King or Reign of Christ Sunday; it's simply the last Sunday in the church year before we enter into the celebration of Advent.

“With Tiny wrinkles and cries, he entered the world and, wrapped in strips of cloth, took his first nap on a bed of straw. Subject to time and to parents, he grew to manhood in Roman-occupied Palestine, his gentle hands becoming strong and calloused in Joseph’s woodworking shop. As a man, he walked through the country side and city, touching individuals, preaching to crowds, and training 12 men to carry on his work. At every step he was hounded by those seeking to rid the world of his influence. Finally, falsely accused and tried, he was condemned to a disgraceful execution by foreign hands. And he died—was spat upon, cursed, pierced by nails, and hung heavenward for all to deride. Jesus, the God-man, gave his life completely so that all might live.”

This is the hope we celebrate as we end the church year and look towards the Advent Season preparing ourselves to receive the King of King and the Lord of Lords.

Introduction:

The last book of the Bible, called Revelation (The End) it's a beautiful book, it's a book of HOPE. It always has been. It's not an easy book to navigate but the opening verses proclaim A promise. *“Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”* And Jesus echoes that promise in the closing chapter. *“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the prophecy written in this book.”*

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

7:9 As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire.

7:10 A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

7:13 As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him.

7:14 To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

Text: Revelation 1:1-8, 12-18

*The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John...To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him **who is, and who was, and who is to come**, and from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father -- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.*

"I am the Alpha and the Omega,"** says the Lord God, **"who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."**...When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: **"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

We live in very difficult times, with wars, rumors of wars, natural disasters, many overwhelmed with discouragement, brokenness, depression, anxiety, fear. People consumed with the weight of debt, the loss of a loved one, broken down marriages, reports of sickness, the weight of failure, guilt, shame, insecurity, rejection. We live in a world full of bad news, a people who need Good News!

Isaiah 61:1 says, "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me (you), because the LORD has anointed me (you) to preach **good news** to the poor. [JOY] He has sent me (you) to bind up (comfort) the brokenhearted, [PEACE] to proclaim freedom for the captives [LOVE] and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor [HOPE] and the day of vengeance of our God."

1) PEACE

The word "peace" appears over 400 times in Scripture. In the Old Testament, "peace" is the word shalom, and is a state of wholeness and harmony that is intended to resonate in all relationships. When used as a greeting, shalom was a wish for outward freedom from disturbance as well as an inward sense of well-being. To a people constantly harassed by enemies, peace was the premiere blessing. *"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace."*

Luke 2:14 says, *"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."*

I prefer this translation: *"On earth peace, among men who are the objects of his pleasure."*

God would want you to receive this peace this gift of peace this Christmas.

Psalm 34:18: "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Isaiah 9:6 tells us that one of God's names is "*Prince of Peace*." This literally reads: "*The prince whose coming brings peace*."

And verse seven adds: "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end." *Isaiah 53:3 says that Jesus is "a man of sorrows, and familiar with the deepest grief."* He cares for that which is broken. Jesus gives each of us personal attention; soothing the pain; healing and restoring us to wholeness. In short, He brings peace where there is no peace and as *Isaiah 40:1-2 says, he does it with tenderness: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem."*

Jesus saw us in our lowest place and he sent a savior
My prayer is that God would bring peace to your broken heartedness...this gift of peace is found in the Gift of Christmas...Christ Jesus.

Even in the loss that we feel today allow the truth of *Isaiah 57:19* to wash over you: "*Peace, peace, to those far and near,' says the Lord. 'And I will heal them.'*"

2) LOVE

Jesus is the Greek form of a Hebrew name which means "Jehovah is our salvation." The mission of Jesus is to save people from their sins. His name is His mission. That's what His name means and that's why He came on Christmas.

Our greatest need is the Love of Christ, His forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.

The reason for Christmas was that Heaven would send a Savior...The Savior came to save us from our sins.

In Matthew 7:47-50, Jesus said that if we love little it's because we've been forgiven little. God's desire is that you would experience His LOVE in big ways, so He sent a large gift in His Son Jesus Christ to a Virgin Mary and he would be called Immanuel, which means "God is with us". God is with us today...He says "I will not leave you, I will not forsake you."

3) HOPE

The gift of HOPE is something that we don't just need at Christmas but we need all year long."

Definition of Hope

Hope is not only hard to find; it's difficult to define. Some say hope is an optimistic

feeling that all will turn out well. For some it's about wishful thinking or a general feeling that some desire will be fulfilled.

That reminds of Larry and Elmer who were out hunting in the woods and got lost. Trying to reassure his friend, Larry said, "Don't lose hope. All we have to do is shoot into the air three times, stay where we are, and just hope that someone finds us." They shot into the air three times, but no one came. After a while, they tried again but there was still no response. They decided to try once more but not before Elmer said, "I hope it works this time. We're down to our last three arrows."

Proverbs 13:12: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick."

Hope is a future certainty grounded in a present reality. Here's another one: Hope is wishing for what God has already promised us. The Bible says in Isaiah 40:31 that strength is renewed for those who hope in the Lord.

In the Old Testament it means "to bind together, often by twisting." It refers to the process of making a rope by taking at least two strands of material and twisting them together. Understood in this way, hope means that I bring my pain to the Lord on the one hand and on the other hand I hold specific promises of God. **To hope means to wrap my problems together with God's promises.**

We could say it this way: **Hold on to the rope of hope when it's hard to cope.** Ecclesiasts 4:12 adds God's provision to His promises and our problems: "A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." The third strand is the Savior, Jesus Christ, born on Christmas, crucified on Good Friday and raised on Easter. He is heaven's child, the hope of the world. With Him wrapped around our lives, we are safe and secure.

The word "hope" is used some 52 times in the New Testament and is always connected in some way to God; that's enough hope for every week of the year!

Psalm 46:1: "God is an ever-present help in trouble." Everyone sooner or later, comes up against something unexpected and unforeseen. It may be the death of a loved one, unemployment or loneliness or struggling children, financial worries or a broken relationship. This is when Jesus, the HOPE OF HEAVEN, steps into our hurts. *Lamentations 3:25 says that the "Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him."* **The key isn't to hope for something; it's to hope in Someone. Not to hope for something from God but to hope in God.**

Psalm 25:5: "No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame..."

Present a Blanket

Our senses scream that this is all there is – that life is the sum total of profession plus possessions, and death ends it all. But this world is neither our home nor our hope. The Bible says that those who are wrapped in a relationship with Jesus Christ have the hope of heaven; a confident assurance in God's promises. *1 Corinthians*

15:19: "And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world."

Three last thoughts:

#1: Get wrapped up in Scripture. *Romans 15:4: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, and the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.*

#2: Get wrapped up in the Savior. Jesus is Savior. In fact, that's what His name means. Matthew 1:21 says that Joseph was to call him Jesus, "because He will save His people from their sins." We are sinners in need of the Savior. The way to have hope is to have the Holy One in your life as *Colossians 1:27 says: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."* This Christmas He can be for you an indescribable gift!

#3: Get wrapped up in salvation.

Christmas is all about the gift of salvation!

An angel made his announcement to the shepherds saying in *Luke 2:11: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."*

Life with Christ is an endless hope; life without Christ is a hopeless end.

4) Joy

God's promise is to turn your mourning into Joy

Jeremiah 31:12-14 NLT

They will come home and sing songs of joy on the heights of Jerusalem.

*They will be radiant because of the Lord's good gifts—
the abundant crops of grain, new wine, and olive oil,
and the healthy flocks and herds.*

*Their life will be like a watered garden,
and all their sorrows will be gone.*

*13 The young women will dance for joy,
and the men—old and young—will join in the celebration.*

I will turn their mourning into joy.

I will comfort them and exchange their sorrow for rejoicing.

*14 The priests will enjoy abundance,
and my people will feast on my good gifts.*

I, the Lord, have spoken!"

There is a time when God himself will call those who love him and have accepted His gift through Christ called salvation...he will call them home. In fact He calls these people "Worshippers".

The Lord is the source of LIFE, of all good things. There is a day we will pray and

praise him....the wise men found the Christ Child and worshipped.
He doesn't call them home merely for a time but he calls them continually to a place that is full of comfort.

"Their life will be like a watered garden, and all their sorrows will be gone...there will be dancing and celebration, He will turn mourning into joy, He will exchange sorrow for rejoicing, and He calls us to a celebration where there will be an unending supply of Hope, Peace, Love and His Joy...he calls them His GOOD GIFTS!

Glimpse

Revelation 21:18-27; 22:1-5

18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass. 22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. 22: 1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 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"

Conclusion

I am reminded of a scene from C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where Mr. Beaver describes the might and majesty of Aslan, the lion. When he finishes, Lucy asks, "Is – is he safe?" Mr. Beaver replies, "Safe? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King I tell you."

The Reign of Christ continues as we move beyond this year, into the Advent and celebrate another year. ***Revelation 1:8*** "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'

THIS IS GOOD NEWS!