

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

JESUS CHRIST IS OUR KING

- I. His rule is not of this world
- II. His rule is according to truth
- III. His rule is through His word

Dear fellow subject of Christ the King,

Have you ever heard the expression "Liberation Theology?" This is the term used by those church leaders who believe that the church should not allow a bad and oppressive government to exist. So, they in the name of Christ promote and support civic revolt and rebellion with the hope that having destroyed the existing suppressive rule, they may build a better government from the ashes of the one just fallen. They completely ignore and violate the Fourth Commandment in the process. Liberation Theology is also applied in the area of social reconstruction. Where there is a wide gap between the very wealthy and the poor, those liberation activists work to overthrow the social structure in order to put everyone on a level economic plain. Whole church bodies which embrace this theology contribute large sums of money to finance these various kinds of revolution. Behind liberation theology stands a wrong concept of the kingdom of God and a wrong concept of the purpose for Christ's church.

In light of this, it is increasingly important for all of us to understand and to emphasize the biblical principles of the two kingdoms – the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of Christ. We live in both. This is the issue that underlies the discussion between Pontius Pilate and Jesus recorded here in our text. In this discourse between the political ruler of Palestine and the King of the kingdom of God, the difference of the two kingdoms is clarified.

You can't read this text and not have ringing in your ears the proclamation made by Jesus Himself. I AM A KING. This morning we pick up on this statement of Jesus under the theme: Jesus Christ is our King. The first point that is made here is that Christ our King rules over a kingdom that is not of this world. Listen to the Word once again. ***"My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*** The question that precipitated this answer was raised by Pilate when he asked Jesus if he was the king of the Jews. This was the accusation the Jews brought against Jesus. They accused Jesus of working in opposition to Caesar. If Jesus had said that He was such a king, He would have been saying that His kingdom was of this

world. But He plainly says that His kingdom is not of this world. His kingdom was not threat to Caesar.

What kind of King is Jesus Christ? He is a King of a kingdom that is not of this world. This means that Christ's kingdom is not defined by geographical boundaries. It is not established by force of arms and it is not maintained by force of arms. Jesus rules over a kingdom that does not have its origin here in this world. Its origin is in eternity. Although it exists here on earth, it is not a part of the power structure of this world.

Jesus did not come leading a powerful army. His intent was not to overthrow the governing body that ruled Israel at that time. He did not intend to set up headquarters in Jerusalem or anywhere else. He told His disciples that if someone comes with the announcement that they have discovered the kingdom in a desert place or they have it at a certain house; don't even go to look because the Kingdom of Christ is not observable to the eye. It is not a physical entity. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual. Jesus told his disciples that the kingdom is within them.

We need to be careful not to confuse Christ's kingdom with political forces here on earth. There are folks today who wonder why the church is not more politically active. Why doesn't the church lobby? Why doesn't the church support one candidate over against another? Why doesn't the church weigh in on the social issues that are such hot topics in the market place these days?

The answer to these questions is that the church is a gathering of believers who are called together to teach and preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. The church is commissioned to reach out and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world so that through the work of the Holy Spirit faith may be instilled in the hearts of the hearers.

You as individuals are to apply what you have learned when you are carrying out your responsibilities as Christian citizens. You as a Christian citizen are to address your political representative from the conviction of your own hearts. You are to exercise your convictions when you go to the ballot box. You are to work in your communities for the common good and in this way season the society with the truth of God as you live it. In doing this you are salt and light to a perishing world.

Christ rules in our hearts by faith. The text says here, ***Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.*** The truth that Jesus is referring to here is that God is His Father, that He is the Son of God in the flesh. The truth is that the Scriptures are the verbally inspired, inerrant Word of God. The truth is that God created all things perfect. The truth is that our first parents disobeyed God and by their disobedience brought sin into the world. The truth is that everyone born from sinful parents is sinful from his conception. The truth is that left in this condition, we would all be lost and condemned on the last day. The truth is that Jesus came to take our place under the law of God to present His perfect life of obedience on our behalf before God. The truth is that Jesus also suffered and died the death of hell on the cross to pay for the guilt of all sins.

On the basis of these truths God the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to believe what the bible proclaims. On the basis of our faith the Holy Spirit gives to us all the trophies of redemption which Jesus has won for us. Your sins are forgiven for Jesus sake. You have been declared righteous in the sight of God. You have a place in heaven waiting for you. This faith in our hearts makes us members of Christ's kingdom.

Jesus adds ***"everyone on the side of truth listens to me."*** The kingdom of God grows and is nourished by means of the Word of God and His holy Sacraments. Jesus wins citizens for His kingdom by His love. He holds people in His kingdom by His love. We serve in His kingdom in response to His love.

This saving love of God is revealed to us in His Word. We have tasted and seen this saving love. We now know that God has adopted us back into His family. He has embraced us

with the assurance that He will never leave us or forsake us. We are confirmed in these truths through hearing His Word.

This is why we never tire of coming to hear His Word. His Word is always refreshing. It is always active and powerful. We can always trust that it will accomplish the purpose for which God has revealed it to us. It is a life-giving Word.

There are many voices in the world around us that are trying to lead us away from the Word of God. They claim that while the Bible contains the truth of God, it is not true in all that it says. They point to mistakes in the Bible. They claim that certain parts of the Bible are not historical facts such as the crossing of the Red Sea, the three day stay of Jonah in the belly of a big fish, the virgin birth of Jesus, the feeding of the five thousand, and even the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We reject these critics and believe what the Bible proclaims. We listen to the truth.

In days gone by when a person lived under a king, that meant that he didn't own the house he lived in. He did not own the land that he worked. The harvest that he brought in did not belong to him. The animals he took care of were not his own. His whole life was lived for the king. He depended upon the kindness of the king for food, shelter, and everything else he needed for his life. If the king was kind and benevolent, everyone was happy and life was good. However, if the king was cruel and tyrannical, serving such a person was difficult and hard to bear.

We live under the King of kings, Jesus Christ. The prevailing relationship under which we serve Him is His love for us. He rules over us in our very best interest. And He always has our eternal relationship with Him in heaven at heart. He provides all our needs of body and soul as we learned as little children singing *"I am Jesus' little lamb, ever glad at heart I am; for my Shepherd gently guides me, knows my need and well provides me, loves me every day the same, even calls me by my name."*

This is why we are happy to live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. This is most certainly true. Amen