

SUNDAY SERVICE - 22nd November

Christ the King

Opening prayer

Gracious God be with us now, as in the power of the Holy Spirit, we come to worship you, who through Jesus Christ saved us.

Amen

Call to worship- Psalm 100

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his[a];
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Hymn – Jubilate Everybody – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Glorious God, we praise you;

for you created the universe, its vastness, its intricacies

all echoes with your love and care

Saving Son, we praise you;

for you came to die for us, to set us free from our sins, to enable us to live abundant lives

all echoes with your love and care

Sensitive Spirit, we praise you;

for you came to draw us together in fellowship, to empower us to be busy with the work of the kingdom

all echoes with your love and care.

Yet we know how often our lives are hollow echoes;
we forget the wonders of our world and exploit them for ourselves,
we forget the cost of our salvation and pursue only our selfish wants,
we forget the joy which come from loving others and do only what pleases us,
Forgive us Lord, come cleanse us and renew us.

As we thank you for all we receive by your grace, we ask you to bless all we bring as
our thanksgiving; our time, our skills, our money. We know they all come from you
but as we offer them bless them and us in your service.

As we say together

Our Father

Who art in heaven

Hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come

Thy will be done

On earth, as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom

The power and the glory

For ever and ever

Amen

This, believe it or not, is the last Sunday of the Christian year. Next Sunday is the first Sunday in Advent and the start of the new Christian year. So today as we reflect upon the end the old and the beginning of the new in Jesus Christ we see all is made complete. Christ is the King.

It has been an amazing year so as we sing the next hymn may it be a time of reflection, prayer and praise, rededication.

Hymn – Lord for the years – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

A piece of music to listen to (please just listen up to 1 minute 55 secs)

Music - [CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

Thought

Zadok the priest was written for the coronation of King George III by George Frederic Handel. That oh so steady processional until BANG! The words hits us. Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king. It has been the practice at all coronations from at least 973 when St Dunstan at the ceremony for king Edgar established monarchs had to be anointed with holy oil and then crowned.

On 12th May 1937 George VI was anointed and crowned. He was fearful about it all. He had never expected to be king, but saw it as his duty to do so following the abdication of his older brother, David, known as Edward VIII, who never was anointed or crowned. Indeed the authorities just adapted his arrangements for George not Edward. George VI wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury after the event, 'I felt I was being helped all the time by Someone Else as you said I would.'



So where do you think king Jesus is anointed and crowned? Does he have a Bang Zadok the priest moment? Is it at Creation? As an infant in the manger or Temple? When perfume is poured over his head? On the Cross? At the Resurrection? Or is at the Ascension?

Or will it be when Jesus returns at the Age to Come?

I wonder if this hymn helps us with the question?

Hymn – Jesus is Lord creations voice proclaims it. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Reading – Matthew 25:31-46 (The Message)

31-33 “When he finally arrives, blazing in beauty and all his angels with him, the Son of Man will take his place on his glorious throne. Then all the nations will be arranged before him and he will sort the people out, much as a Shepherd sorts out sheep and goats, putting sheep to his right and goats to his left.

34-36 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,

I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,

I was homeless and you gave me a room,

I was shivering and you gave me clothes,

I was sick and you stopped to visit,

I was in prison and you came to me.’

37-40 “Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’

41-43 “Then he will turn to the ‘goats,’ the ones on his left, and say, ‘Get out, worthless goats! You’re good for nothing but the fires of hell. And why? Because—

I was hungry and you gave me no meal,

I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

I was homeless and you gave me no bed,

I was shivering and you gave me no clothes,

Sick and in prison, and you never visited.’

44 “Then those ‘goats’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn’t help?’

45 “He will answer them, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me—you failed to do it to me.’

46 “Then those ‘goats’ will be herded to their eternal doom, but the ‘sheep’ to their eternal reward.

Reflection



Margaret and I were on holiday in Scotland a few years ago. We found ourselves on the South Deeside road, the back road, between Balmoral and Ballater. We were followed by the school minibus taking the school children home from Braemar. Approaching us were 3 Range Rovers all driving in the middle of this narrow road. The minibus pulled over, it had a

child to drop off and Margaret wisely pulled over too, for the convoy ahead was not stopping. The first car was driven by H.M. The Queen, followed by people in tweed and finally the police. I discovered later the Queen is instructed never to stop between destinations when driving. Yes, monarchs are different!

The same is true in our reading from Matthew about the end times. King Jesus returns and sits on his glorious throne. This is a scene of judgement and all will be accountable. It does not make feel comfortable, but that's my problem. There is an inevitability about what I have done, so how should I respond to this story? It gives me an opportunity to reconsider what my life has been so far.

First thought is that I do not think it will be helpful if I get up and say I will be more sheepy today! If I decide on that route I am missing a key point in the story; these sheep did not set out to do good, they were not aware they were doing good, they were simply good. I think it is because they know God's grace in their lives, they are filled with the Holy Spirit. They do not have to think about these things, they do them instinctively. This is all part of growing in the faith.

As Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 13:

'when I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.'

So how can I leave those infant ways?

In my teenage years I developed the habit of prefacing so many of my remarks with 'Oh my God!' I still remember my Mum saying to me 'I do wish you wouldn't do that, love. It's not right and it does upset me.' Over time I stopped saying it, I cut it out. Sometimes we have to stop doing things because the health specialists tell us it is bad for us. They can also tell us to things that will be good for us. My Dad in his 80's, following an overnight stay in hospital, stopped smoking; something he had done, at times to excess, from his teenage years. I was always in awe of his willpower to do that. Yet if we know something is wrong why would we want to keep on doing it? That is as true of our spiritual as well as our physical lives. If we

want to be more sheep than goat we need to begin that process of doing things that please King Jesus. It could be 'Bang' like the Zadok the priest or slowly removing what is wrong. But making sure we do it. Personally there are things I have stopped doing recently, they are not good for me spiritually and I am feeling better for that.

I think we could be more sheep if we spend time in the company of other sheep. I am very conscious this last year I have been using a phrase I heard over the years from a dear christian friend of mine; they died last year. They always used this phrase as a way of expressing delight, thanks and indeed excitement. It could be a view, a plate of food or something they had discovered from listening to a friend or reading the Bible. Every time I hear myself using these words I am reminded of them, of their powerful witness for King Jesus, their devotion and faith, often in challenging circumstances that would knock me for 6. Yes it brings sadness but also great joy and thankfulness. I am so grateful for knowing and being known by them and I have been changed for the better through all of that.

Yet I think the best way of becoming more sheep is to be in the company of the Good |Shepherd who leads me to green pastures, still waters. So, as Val reminded us a few weeks ago, I have to ensure I have said Yes to King Jesus the Good Shepherd. Have I been tagging along for the ride or have I truly said Yes to King Jesus? When I went to university I was alone. I knew nobody there. Plenty of the student societies were happy to get you drunk and take your membership subscription and then, goodbye. One group stood out from them. They called themselves the Christian Union and they were genuinely interested in me as a person. No getting drunk them taking the money; the exact opposite a real interest in me, Steven Knapton. I thought this was amazing and so as not to hurt their feelings I said I had become a Christian in the summer. I hadn't a clue what I was talking about, no change there then! However one of the group, who also ended up becoming a URC minister, every morning when praying kept getting a sense of 'pray for Steven Knapton'. It wouldn't go away. He was puzzled and spoke to somebody older in the Christian Union who came to see me and asked if I knew Jesus. I admitted I did not and he told me what Jesus had done for me. How he had died for me to save me from all the wrong I had done. How I was forgiven because of all that and could be his friend forever. After he left I knelt by my bed and asked Jesus to be my Saviour and Friend. Now that was a 'BANG' Zadok the priest moment. It continues to be Yes King Jesus every morning when I read the Bible and pray. Every time I remember to be thankful for food, shelter and friends. Every time I stop to think how blessed I am. Every time I am able to help others but don't realise it. Yes to King Jesus. I know there are many times when I do not do any of that but still I know Jesus loves me. Still by keeping closer to Jesus over the days, enjoying the fellowship of his friends, trying to more of what King Jesus wants and less of what I want am I getting more like those sheep? That is for others to say.

What I would say is; if you have never said Yes to Jesus, do not put it off, do it now, as soon as you can. I would testify it is the best thing I have ever done in my life and I know there are

so many others who would say the same. All that stuff I thought I would miss, not a bit of it. I have been so blessed in so many ways seeking to live as King Jesus would want.

As one of our hymns puts it:

Lord, for ourselves, in living power remake us
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Let us listen to these words from the letter to the Ephesians.

Reading – Ephesians 1:15-23 (The Message)

15-19 That's why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn't stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!

20-23 All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the centre of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Prayers of intercession

We pray

for those who lead and govern us in this pandemic, for scientific advisors, decision makers and church leaders.

Give them wisdom we pray

For those who look after the sick, doctors, medics, carers- especially.....

Give them rest, refreshment and strength we pray

For those we know who are ill- especially.....

Surround them with love and bring healing we pray

For those who look after the hungry, running food banks and providing for others

Give them gentleness and compassion in their dealings with others we pray

For those worrying about paying bills and providing food for the family

May they find support and generosity and love.

For those who look after children and young people, for teachers and support staff- especially...

Bless and strengthen them and keep them safe we pray.

For our young people, Junior church and Pilots who are not able to meet at the moment

May they know they are not forgotten by You or by us.

We bring You these our prayer requests, knowing that sometimes we are called to be the answer.

So, we pray- open our eyes to see You at work, our ears to hear the prompting of your Spirit and our hearts to show your love.

When you call Lord-

let us hear and answer

When you come again Lord

Let us be ready.

Amen

Hymn – I cannot tell why he who angels worship [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Blessing

Words of Richard Rolle who lived in the first part of the 14th century.

Come to us, O Christ,

as the wind that blows the autumn leaves,

as the song that soothes the troubled child,

as the melody that lifts the anxious spirit.

Fill us with

affection for you that is unbounded,

desire for you that is unrestrained

and a yearning for you that throws caution to the winds,

and this for your own love's sake.

So may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

be with us all, evermore,

Amen