

“Is Christ Your King?”  
 Sermon for 7 February 2021  
 Texts: 1 John 5:12

Having Christ as our Heavenly King is the third way that we may know if we have Christ; and therefore, having Christ, have “life.” **God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.** (Acts 5:31) And **But he** (Stephen), **full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.** And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:55-56) There he is, our **King!** And if we receive him as our King, he is King to us indeed. And this having him as King guarantees that we have life. Not physical, natural life, actually, but life in Him, eternal life, even ***spiritual life***.

Given that I started with the third way, some of you may be wondering, “What were the first two ways of knowing that we have Christ?” And here they are: first, that we desire Jesus Christ, and God the Father ***above all*** for who ***they are*** and not chiefly for their blessings, gifts and/or benefits to believers. The second pathway is determined by our “possessing the spirit of the Son,” his indwelling presence and power. While the first two are well worthy of exploration, I believe that the press of **turning our eyes towards God**, because **we know not what to do**, due to the trying times we are in, is required, as a first order of business, that we know who is king! Who is in charge around here, and who rules over everything, yes, everything. We know that we have life if Jesus reigns in our hearts as he reigns in heaven, if he is our exalted head and Heavenly King. As we are taking on the world, we best know who we are in Him.

Regardless of what form of government we experience here below, it is incumbent upon us to know Jesus as our King, our sovereign head *above local authorities, governors, congressmen and, yes, even presidents*. Our dual citizenship is inviolable. We are citizens of Christ’s kingdom, and the kingdom of heaven ***first and foremost*** and our allegiance in that matter is ***evidence*** of our possession of Christ, the possession of Christ is our guarantee of eternal life. Reportedly Martin Luther, which he fell into confusion or spiritual difficulty, cultivated the habit of self-remembrance. He would repeat to himself, “I am a baptized child of God.” So are we! And that well bears repeating. We could also remind ourselves that we are a.) born again and regenerate persons, b.) we are heirs of the promises of God, c.) we are the church and d.) we are citizens of heaven, bound for glory and for everlasting fellowship with our King and with one another. If we would remember this fourfold response to the question of who we are, it would stay us well in our walk and, imagine this, it might even shape our behavior because walking worthy of the gospel is incumbent on everyone who claims to be saved by the gospel. If you are a Christian, live like one!

It is, I think, incontestable that far more believers are eager to own Jesus as a Savior, than there are those who own Jesus as their ruler, their spiritual governor, their king—Jesus as Lord and Prince. If we think on this matter, which I fear we all too seldom do, we would realize that it only makes sense for Jesus to rule over all whom he has saved . . . what good would it do for him to save people from death, the grave and evil ***and leave them in their sins?!*** Surely that makes as little sense as refusing to rule over the saved! But here's the chief concern: There is no other way out of the idolatries into which we have convincingly fallen.

Jesus is our Savior, from all sins . . . and in all ways, in all miseries, any sickness, every turmoil and all distresses. He is an “entire” Savior. I spoke last week of America’s political idolatry, but here is an equally reprehensible and no less unhappy spiritual idolatry: it is a pronounced tendency to look to other “saviors” (legislation, a government program, free markets, the global economy, socialism etc.—any and all solutions drawn from within creation to save creation . . . from us . . . from consequences . . . from error . . . the unhappy fall-out from sin, greed and stupidity . . . from history!?). Scripture demands that **all the ends of the earth look unto Him** (Isa. 45:22) which is to say, look unto our Savior and be saved. Conspiracy theories aside, God has the program, not man! Let’s draw a parallel to the bronze serpent raised on a pole for Hebrews bitten by poisonous vipers, God’s remedy through Moses. The parallel is apt. There was no other cure, and there weren’t bronze serpents on the end of every row of tents! If you want to live, you obey. Looking to Christ is just like that. He is the Savior, look to Him for healing.

In Isaiah 8:17 we read, **I will wait upon the Lord who hides his face from Israel**. Why was God hiding his face? Because of their idolatries and sin. Isaiah had waited, personally, upon princes/kings, the way some wait on Parliaments and Congresses, whose “princes” are hardly royal and are largely ignoble. The nation did not desist from provoking God’s wrath, they were not inclined to repent (perhaps they considered it “normal” and acceptable—all the evil and corruption was natural). And, despite the wrack and ruin, despite the earnest expectation of judgment and catastrophe, he decided to **look to God for salvation, even in the hour of his displeasure**—we must do the same. Look up, look to King Jesus, make your appeal to the King of kings; he may yet overrule those in power, bringing down whom he will and raising up whom he will. *There is salvation in no other name*. You have heard it. Do you believe it? And if you don’t believe it, what are you believing?

Let’s suppose that it is our own souls that God is hiding his face from, from either our outward distresses, or our inward struggles and pain. Where else do we go? Suppose the church, or the country is in sinful distemper—as our country most certainly is!—we should not be casting about, in despair, wondering whom we should trust, who we could expect salvation from: **we go to our King!**

We look to the Holy One, our Maker and Creator . . . we cry out, with tears and with anguish, if need be: **O God, we do not know what we should do, but our eyes are on you.** (2 Chron. 20:12) That works, that's suitable, that fits such an hour as this perfectly. Take the obsession with hatred, take the violence and fear, take the contempt and arrogance and spread it at his feet, saying, "Lord, you see the straits we are in—you see them more clearly than we ever can—stoop to our necessity, have mercy on us! Surprise us with your justice, display your power, bring about your outcomes and, we pray, be merciful for we are stymied in our foolish ways.

Do not expect the world to cooperate in any of this. It won't. We are God's gathered ones, his gleanings. By election and salvation, he has called us into fellowship with him. Let's not behave as strangers. The wall of hostility is down, let us boldly go into his presence as his people, his children, his sheep and let us go willing to be shepherded. I say go, while the gate is open, let's make sure we enter in! **While it is day**, as the scriptures say. But if we look to other saviors, if we are casting about, looking hither and yon for some other help, we cannot expect him to move anything on our behalf—like the double-minded, we cannot expect anything from him! Have respect to the King! Plead our need and insufficiency! Sound forth our inadequacy? Make us bold to say, **Do not send us up if you will not accompany us.** We will go anywhere with you. We count "having you" to be sufficient . . . all of heaven would be worthless if we arrive and you are not there.

Whether it is famine, warfare, poverty or pestilence—of which three seem apt for us, hear our anguish of conscience over this state of affairs. Even we allow that we got here with the best of intentions, we have man-made this disaster.

If the freedoms we hold so dear are not what you have for us, show us what you do have for us. **I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.** (Psalm 121:1-2) Of course, we must translate this from its setting in Israel where Mt. Moriah, and Mt. Zion were places God chose, momentarily, historically, to dwell . . . we must embrace him in the ordinances, his church, no longer trusting in hills and valleys as such, **but our help cometh from the Lord.** Regardless of our condition, just or unjust, complicit or uninvolved, we must look to our Savior and look to our King. He is able and willing to deliver us *and rule over us.* It comes wholly from him and when it comes, let us be sure to worship him and not the means wherewith he works salvation, or deliverance. Let our hearts be glad with welcome and full of worship.

Do you remember Jonah? That unruly man . . . he was unwilling to be directed by God. And that attitude got him thrown overboard, where he was

overwhelmed and where the Lord sent the most unruly of all creatures, the Leviathan, to deal with him. I know . . . but the swallowing was God dealing with him. . . in part. I notice, by the way that there's a whole lot of redemption going on around this unruly and surly man—a whole shipload to sailors and an entire city of 120,000 souls (give or take), *all saved despite Jonah pathological hatred*. There's some encouragement in that! Jonah barely delayed the Lord! God is not deterred by the rebellious or the hateful. He *gets it done* despite them. His executive orders are of an entirely different order than those of tyrants, dictators and earthly kings.

Do you remember the horrible tempest, the violent swirling havoc of the storm surge? Do you notice the magnificent fail of idolatry (the sailors went there, tried that—the Ninevites were also idolaters—but *all of them turned to God*, the one true God and they were, unexpectedly, saved! What an implicit lesson there is here: focus on the hateful and angry one *and we miss the rest of the story!* There are quite a few Jonah's out there these days. Let's give God more play, more attention than them! Let's leave it to God to break the hearts of those who hate, and lie, and cheat and steal . . . in fact, let's ask Jesus to accomplish that so that many “unrighteous” might be saved in our day, where and when we live.

Did you notice that Jonah in the belly of the beast had no compass, but when he cries out, he says, “My heart was toward Jerusalem.” Even Jonah chose to look to God! And that was when God allowed the beast to deposit him on the shore for “Mission to Nineveh: Take Two.” Jonah had God in his heart—it was all the compass he needed. And we, beloved, we are in the same straits as he. Regardless of the hub-but, the turmoil and strife, barricades, troops and concertina wire, God's redemptive purposes proceed undeterred.

So, reign yourselves in to be *ruled by the King*. The way of Jonah is hard, unenviable. Unnecessary. We will be entirely ruled, every thought, every word, every action—all of our paths will align with his—all taken captive to Christ!

***What I need to know, deeply and compellingly, is that Christ is born for me, that a Son is given for me.***

And how should I know this? I know it **because the government is upon his shoulders**. The party system has nothing to say about it. We are to be wholly governed by our heavenly king regardless of the form of popular government we have on the ground. Our governments pass away, his does not. They last but for a day, his kingdom lasts forever! He cannot be removed, terminated, or impeached—well, praise God for that! We learn of this king that what he thinks of us matters much, much more than what we think of him. His is a wonderful and glorious majesty—royal, princely and divine. We should get used to those terms because our king is coming and we will bow before him, and before his throne. All of us! All bowing, **all declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord**.

Here are some points to ponder, *as his royal subjects*: there is, outside of Christ, not one good thought. All and every imagination of our hearts tends toward evil, continually, until Christ enters in and alters us. Invite him in now. Yield the entire frame of your being to him and his will. **Thy will be done.** Invite his thoughts, they are 100% good. That will improve things. Be godly, welcome his influence, submit to his power, trust in his rule. Remember the king is good. Practice rejoicing while we are under reconstruction! What we lose in the process was not worth having! It actually wasn't us—we only thought it was. Take in his gladness, be reconciled to his Father who is our Father. Lodge these truths in your hearts, conscience, mind and affections. God knows where he's going and those who are in Christ aren't confused, they are trusting.

We get to warm up in glorifying God, we desire it, we are fed by it. Be loyal to God, devise no treachery, or mischief . . . and if an evil thought shows up. send it packing immediately (don't rent it a room, or join it in the lounge). Call upon your Christian friends and share your struggles with them, "I need alit help with . . . Would you please pray for me?" There's strengthening and victory in that. Be like David, pray out, **Search me, O Lord, and know my heart . . . see if there be any wicked way in me.** And if there be any such way in me help me rid myself of it immediately. Cleanse me, heal me, help me . . . make me more serviceable day by day. **Lead me in there way everlasting for your Name's sake.** You do not rule over the outward man only, but I ask you to have your entire way with all of me. Take from the desire to be provocative and unruly—my own person. Let me be your happy servant forever and ever.

Amen.