

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Last Sunday after Trinity, November 20, 2011

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 244, 17:1, 221, 341, 352.

Lessons: Deuteronomy 10:1-22, Revelation 19:9-17, John 18:36-37.

Sermon Text: Colossians 1:13-20.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Today we celebrate the last Sunday of the church year which some have designated “Christ the King Sunday”. Today we can be reminded that our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, is coming to deliver us eternally.

Think if you can of what it means to have a king. Imagine if you can, a nation in which all the power of the three branches of our government are rolled into one person. That person has the final judging authority, as does the United States Supreme Court. He has the power to make laws, as does the Congress of the United States. And he has all power of administration, as does the president and the executive branch of the United States. In our country, no one man has all these powers. The writers of our United States constitution separated them into the three branches of government: the executive, the judicial and the legislative branch. But we would probably consider the president of the United States the most powerful man in government, perhaps the most powerful man in our country. He has been given authority by our Constitution, by the people, and from time to time in case of emergency the president takes powers into his own hands. But today we are talking about someone more powerful than all that, more powerful than all the power in government, and more powerful than all the power in business, and ultimately all power. That person is Jesus Christ, who said in Matthew 28:20 "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*" (New International Version) "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" (King James Version)

On this day we remember that our Lord and King is coming to deliver us. In the Advent season, which begins next Sunday, we usually look at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, both his coming as an infant, true God and true man, to deliver all mankind from sin as well as his second and final coming in judgment at the moment God has decided to end all things as we know them. Today listen as the Word of God again talks about

JESUS CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS

- 1. We have been redeemed by OUR king, Jesus Christ.**
- 2. Our king has all power and uses it for our good.**
- 3. He did all this for his body, the Church.**

Here is king you'd like to be your king. God tells us that he has "*brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.*" Jesus Christ is that King. Jesus Christ was anointed from eternity to be such a King. In the Old Testament we have the picture of a king's ruling the people and protecting them. Jesus Christ as King won the victory over sin, death, and the devil so that he might rule in the hearts of believers by his Word.

But there will come a time and place when Jesus will do more than just rule in the hearts of believers by his Word. That day is the Day of Judgment when all people, having been raised from the dead, must stand before Jesus Christ. He will give unto all who believe in him as their only Savior eternal life. And he will give unto all who rejected him and do not believe in him the eternal damnation they deserve because of their unrepented sin.

Paul speaks about our Lord Jesus Christ as King of Kings in this way, writing about "*the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time--God, the blessed and only Ruler, the*

King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen." 1 Timothy 6:14-16

By nature, no human wants to accept Jesus Christ as king. In fact, all the powers of the earth, all the powers of darkness, all the powers of what Scripture calls "the beast", meaning Satan, the Devil, ***"will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings--and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."*** Revelation 17:14.

Jesus Christ is the one who is called "***KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS***" in our New Testament lesson today. This is the one who has power to strike down all the nations and ***"He will rule them with an iron scepter."*** Revelation 19:15. This is the one who invites all who believe to ***"Come, gather together for the great supper of God."*** Revelation 19:17.

Our text begins by telling us that God the Father ***"has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves."*** He has done this by sending that only begotten son whom he loves to give us ***"redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*** This is what our king gives us – not just the kinds of things that people have come to expect from their earthly rulers, such as the kinds of things they can't do for themselves, and protection and even food. We look to government today to give us protection from our enemies. Some people have come to expect also food from government. But we who believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, of course have a government, or, in other words, we have "a king" in Jesus Christ who provides protection, food, clothing, shelter, and "all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil."

In our next worship service, celebrating Thanksgiving, we will be reminded of those kinds of things for which we thank God again. But today, and most importantly, we want to be reminded of the redemption, the forgiveness of sins that God has given us. This is what redemption means: Our sins have been forgiven. We confess in the explanation of the creed that Christ "has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death."

The word of God teaches us who this Jesus Christ is. ***"He is the image of the invisible God."*** He is what we can and did see when he became incarnate. No man can see God. But Jesus Christ came to earth and was seen, as a baby born of a virgin, laid in a manger. And in this humble way our King of Kings and Lord of lords came to earth, to redeem us.

The word of God also tells us today that Jesus Christ is ***"the firstborn over all creation."*** And of course the Firstborn is the crown prince, the one who inherits really everything from his father the king. And Jesus' power as king is more fully illustrated in these words: ***"For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."*** We know about God's power in creation from what God tells us in his Word. And we know that God created all things by his Word. John tells us that ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."*** John 1:1-3 The writer to the Hebrews also tells us of Jesus' role in creation, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit of God: ***"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."*** Hebrews 1:1-2 Creation testifies to the endless power of God, and Jesus, the very Word of God, was involved in the creation of all things.

But Jesus wasn't only involved in creation. He is involved in preserving all things: ***"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*** Things are preserved by God, and Jesus is God. In a sense we could say that he is the glue that holds the world together and preserves it until the time when God shall destroy it. ***"He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead."*** His resurrection is a fact. And because Jesus rose from the dead, we, too, shall rise from the dead.

But there is something especially comforting for us today. We read: ***"And he is the head of the body, the church."*** Jesus is the head of the church, using the picture of the body. The head is the thinking portion of the body. The head leads the body, and the body is the church.

Let us review briefly what the church is. When we think of a church, we often think of a gathering such as we have right here today right now. But as we confess in the third article of the Creed, we believe in the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. The communion of saints is what we are thinking of and are talking about today, that is, the holy Christian Church. This is the invisible gathering or joining – the communion – of every single believer of all time. This is not merely a visible gathering. But this is every single believer, every single holy person – holy because Jesus Christ has done his work of redemption and faith in that person. All believers everywhere are called holy, saints because by faith in Jesus their sins are all washed away. This gathering is Christian, because the complete hope of every believer is founded on Christ. This is called a church or a communion, because by faith in Christ the Holy Spirit gathers all believers into one spiritual body, what we call the invisible church. Then of course believers want to gather together with fellow Christians such as we are gathered here today.

And today we are reminded that Jesus ***“is the head of the body, the church.”*** Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus that ***“Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.”*** Ephesians 5:23 He also emphasizes that in the first chapter of Ephesians: ***“And God placed all things under [Christ’s] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”*** Ephesians 1:22-23 God uses the picture of Christ’s great love for the church in this way in Ephesians 5:29-30: ***“After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body.”***

In our text Paul speaks of Christ suffering ***“for the sake of his body, which is the church.”*** And all who believe are members of this body of Christ, the church. Jesus suffered and died for us!

God did all of this – sending his son into the world, having his son redeem us from our sins, ***“so that in everything he [Jesus] might have the supremacy.”***

This made God happy. We read: ***“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him”*** -- that is, in Jesus. God the father was delighted that his son, even while he was here on earth, had his full deity, full divinity dwelling in, living in him, even though Jesus’ divinity was usually hidden from men while he was on earth. We see glimpses of his divinity when he performed miracles, but his real purpose on earth was to humble himself so that as God tells us he could ***“through him ... reconcile to himself all things, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”***

All this God the father did for us through his only begotten son Jesus Christ. He sent his son to earth specifically for this purpose, to reconcile mankind to himself ***“by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”*** And that peace is yours simply by believing it.

This is your King! This is the King of Kings who wants you to be his subject, so that he may rule over you here and in eternity, and that you may serve him in all innocence and blessedness.

Can you imagine a government that would do everything only and all for you? Can you imagine a president and a Congress and the Supreme Court and every other legislator and government leader who is going to do everything for your benefit? Well, imagine no longer. You have such a government – such a king – in Jesus Christ the very son of God who came to earth to redeem you from all your sins, from yourself, from the devil, from death so that he might rule over you for ever and ever. Amen.