

Sermon 21 November 2021

My I speak and may you hear in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Amen

When the queen didn't attend the Remembrance Sunday parade at the Cenotaph last week I, like a lot of people thought the worst. Was she more ill than they were saying? Was it something to worry about? Of course, we all pray for her, but she is 95, so she is not going to be around that much longer.

It did get me thinking though. I am only 40, I have only ever known Queen Elizabeth as head of state. As all of you look so youthful, I think that many of you have the same experience. Certainly, the world has grown so used to Queen Elizabeth that it will be a sea change when she does depart this world.

When this does happen, we will be facing a world with a King. I have no idea what to expect from a King. History tends to tell us about Kings that were either weird, useless or mad. Stories tell us of heroic Kings and Hollywood tends either shows us corrupt or heroic Kings. Now I can't see Charles or Wills killing a dragon; or rescuing a princess from the enemy hordes. But likewise, I can't see either of them subjecting the realm to a reign of terror.

I expect them to carry on pretty much the same way that the queen has, but with their own flavour to things.

The Jews in Judea however had a very different expectation for their King. They were expecting a King of the line of David. A king that would lead them back to the glory days of Israel.

For Israel the King was that link to God. If they ruled the country as per Gods wishes Israel would prosper and be strong. If they ruled against Gods wishes the country would suffer.

This is a theme through all the books of the Prophets in the Old Testament. Prophets telling Israel to follow the word of God, or to suffer the consequences.

Those consequences had been awful for them to suffer. The division of the great nation of Israel. The exile into Babylon. The loss of the Temple and

Jerusalem. And even when they returned from Exile they found themselves quickly subjected to foreign rule.

Much the same as we are promised King Arthur will return when our country is in it's darkest hour. The Jewish people looked to this Davidic King to return and rescue them from the Romans. To reunite the tribes and make the nation of Israel great again.

Can you imagine how it must have seemed to them that Jesus, the carpenter, the wandering preacher and healer, claimed to be that promised King. How galling it must have been to hear Him say "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's". To preach tolerance and obedience to the laws of the oppressor?

For many of the people of the time the idea of the King leading Israel to glory in the then and now was so deeply ingrained that anything would have been totally inconceivable to them.

But that is exactly what Jesus offered. A new Kingdom, not of this world. One that promises Glory without measure, but the possibility of suffering and struggle in this world.

So when Jesus says to Pilate "My kingdom is not of this world" He is telling the absolute truth.

Jesus as part of the Trinity has the full power of God to hand. He could have cleared the Romans from Israel. He could have taken the world by force and established Kingdom and Empire unknown then or now. He could have easily fulfilled all the prophecy in it's most basic form. But that was not what He was here for. It was not what He was born for.

Jesus Christ, with all the majesty and glory than comes with His Kingship came to earth to serve and to love. He fulfils prophecy in a different way. He moves us on from a pursuit of earthly glory and conquest, to a pursuit of a much more holistic and holy life reflecting the glory of Him.

When we think of Jesus most of us think of the humble man preaching, healing and serving those around Him. It isn't until we read Revelation that we truly get to see the level of Glory that Jesus has. Whilst the language and the imagery is difficult and challenging it does give some idea of the sheer majesty of God, and of Jesus Christ.

So Jesus Christ is a king beyond our understanding of the term. More glory and honour and power is His than we can really begin to apprehend. But

what does this really mean to us? How does this shape our lives in this world?

He says to Pilate "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice".

Which sounds simple. We listen to what He has to say, and we belong to Him. Much the same as the Kings of old sent out proclamations and set laws. People followed them and hoped not to be sent to war.

But Jesus doesn't send out many proclamations. We gather each week to hear what He said thousands of years ago, as well as to worship and receive Him in the sacrament of Communion. But we don't hear any brand new updates from Jesus. He doesn't tweet or Instagram His every thought to us. He doesn't have a weekly column in the paper for us to read.

We have to work out for ourselves how to listen to His voice.

We do have a lot of things that help us. We have our bibles. Which record many of the things that He said. As well as some of the apostles thinking about how this applies to our lives.

We have two thousand years of Christian tradition and learning as well. There are thousands upon thousands of books that can help us to hear what Jesus is saying. We do have to be careful with this. As they are written by Human hands they are flavoured by Humans minds. Just as what I am saying now is flavoured by my mind. Every word written is flavoured.

Even within the Church of England we have nearly 500 years of Anglican thinking. All of which is there to help us come closer to Christ Jesus.

Our liturgy also helps us to see the Glory of Jesus Christ as King. Liturgy when done well, as you are lucky to have here in Boxford reflects the Glory and Majesty of Jesus. The time honoured traditions of worship help us to settle into a knowledge of the Glory of God through Jesus.

How then does this affect us on a personal level. Does our understanding of Jesus as a King above all others mean that we have to be any different in how we act and think? Do we need to change how we pray and how we look to Him for support.

Yes. It should change how we think. To a certain degree. We should rejoice that one so important. One so glorious and powerful. Came to earth, suffered and died. For me. And for you. For each and everyone of us, as individuals, and as His people.

A knowledge and understanding of this should awe us everyday. We should be staggered and amazed that this was done for us. Yet we all get on with our lives despite knowing this.

I can't help but think that sometimes we need to dwell in that sense of amazement. That someone so Royal and Glorious and Powerful, came to earth for us, died and rose again for us. That a King of such majesty Loves each and everyone of us that much.

Lord Jesus,

King above us,

We are not worthy of you Love,

Yet you Love us all, each and everyone,

We give you thanks for your love Lord Jesus,

And work each day to repay it.

In your name,

Amen