

Worship at Home on Sunday 21st November Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit

Daniel 7 ⁹ "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat....

Thousands upon thousands attended him;

ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

STF 333 Majesty, worship His Majesty: Unto Jesus be all glory, honour, and praise.

Majesty, kingdom authority, Flow from His throne unto His own, His anthems raise.

So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus.

Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King.

Majesty, worship His Majesty, Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all Kings.

Prayer God of life, whose love enfolds us, and spirit fills us,
we praise your holy name.

God of joy and hope and peace, whose sunrise wakes us, and sunset amazes us, we praise your holy name.

God of all ages, who from generation to generation has heard the cries of your children humbly seeking forgiveness, and has welcomed sinners back into your embrace, hear the thoughts of our hearts, examine our motives, forgive us our faults, of word and action.

We ask this through your Son, who died that we might know the true cost of forgiveness.

AMEN Our Father who art in heaven....

Revelation 1.7-8

⁷ "Look, he is coming with the clouds,"[Ⓜ] and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him."[Ⓜ] So shall it be! Amen.

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

STF 177 1. Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for favoured sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

2. Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

3. Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture,
gaze we on those glorious scars!

4. Yea, Amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
Thou shalt reign and thou alone.

JOHN 18.33-37

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" ³⁴ "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" ³⁵ "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

³⁶ Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷ "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

SERMON What a wonderful exchange between Jesus and Pilate. What amazing use of words between them. Words are so powerful, and the **emphasis** that we put on words makes them even more powerful still.

Pilate asked Jesus a question - 5 words "So you are a king?" But I wonder, how do you think he said it? Maybe ...So YOU are a king? Or maybe ...So you ARE a king? Or perhaps ...So you are a KING? Each question with its different emphasis just brought a little more unease into Pilate.

Yes, it was Pontius Pilate's question, but I got a sneaky feeling we would have wanted to ask the same thing too. It all just seemed so odd.

Imagine the scene, it's early morning, and the air in the room is laced with both lamp oil and irony. Jesus stands before Pilate bound, his cheek battered and bruised from a slap by the high priest's guard. And the question is posed. So you are a king? You can see why he needed to verbalise the question as it just seemed so ridiculous! It's interesting that in Mark's version of the account, Pilate is at one point described as amazed. Indeed I am sure that we would have been pretty flabbergasted too, although our sympathy and emotion on behalf of Jesus would be immense, and we do indeed feel for him standing before Pilate, yet the gift of human curiosity still wants to know - and we repeat with Pilate, **So you are a King?!**

Even now we can struggle with the kingly description - probably due to what the word king signifies in earthly terms, our antennae are out due to the word King itself. For some it makes their hackles go up - patriarchy, triumphalism, for others the word is fine in itself - but it just doesn't fit here. And maybe that was the problem that Pilate had. In general this Roman Governor is a fairly laid back man and He doesn't care too much about what the Jewish people around him, as long as they lead a quiet life. But this talk about a **new king**

particularly when it's a weekend of festivities, and people were meant to come and enjoy themselves and spend their money and then go home peacefully, well any talk of a new king could prove a bit dodgy, anyone pretending to be a king in this restless province on a festival weekend is an unnecessary annoyance and requires attention, could start to put a few cats among a few pigeons and well we don't want that do we..

But surely not this man standing before him - I mean, really???? If it had been one of old testament kings - maybe David in later life standing there, Pilate wouldn't have needed to repeat the question - David...he certainly would have fit the bill and been a king that Pilate would recognize. David knew how to handle his enemies when he saw them.

This is why **we** don't always completely get it when Jesus is called a King, for in so many ways he is so different to the average King, This is one who feeds the hungry, welcomes the stranger and visits the prisoner. Kings don't do that! This is the one who would gladly sit at the tables of gluttons and drunkards. Kings don't do that! This is one who washes feet and touches the diseased. Kings don't do that! Maybe they should and the kings followers!!!

Jesus could see what was going round in Pilate's head and says, I know what you are thinking, Kings have kingdoms and they rule them by the sword, you've seen it time and time again, but you're not seeing that in me are you, and that is what you are struggling with. I am different - I look for peace not war, if I was like the kings of this earth I would have an army behind me and you'd be mincemeat, that's not my style, I admit that one of my friends took out a sword, trying to protect me but I told him, put that back.

"So you are a king?" repeats Pilate - you can almost imagine him thinking - where is this going?

And Jesus doing what he is so amazing at does not give a perfectly straight answer "You say that I am a king." How frustrating. Is that yes or no? Or yes and no? Couldn't he just have said a straight forward answer but that's not his way. He says, "It depends on what you mean by king." You're using the word He says, "That's your word." If we are uneasy about the idea of Christ as king, it almost looks as though Jesus is too.

If you look at the other gospel writers for their version of this conversation between Pilate and Jesus, you find that it stops there, but John adds something else, he adds the famous dialogue about truth - Jesus says that he has come to bring truth. And Pilate has to ask another question - what is truth? You almost have to feel sorry for Pilate - so many questions... but maybe he is asking them on our behalf...

What is truth? Well Jesus himself said 'I am the way the truth and the life'. The truth has been standing there all the time. This Jesus, the one with the puffy cheek and the bound hands, is God present in the world. This is the one about to be "lifted up" in order to draw "all to himself," the one about to be enthroned as the greatest one in the universe as we heard in Revelation. Yes, the one who feeds the hungry, welcomes the stranger, visits the prisoner, eats with gluttons and drunkard, washes feet and touches the diseased.

So if all this talk about Kingship makes us uneasy, perhaps it is because we've just got it wrong and he's got it 100% right. If Christ's reign as King hasn't looked how all the other kings look, if he hasn't ticked all the boxes of the storybook regal, then there is still time for us to relearn the story. There is still time to redraw the picture of the King and his kingdom, and if we think he has been slow in bringing his kingdom in all its fullness, then perhaps he has been slow in order to allow us still to have time, time to rethink, time to redraw, time to say with greater understanding with greater appreciation with greater wonder and with greater love ;'Yes You are a king'. My King, the King of Kings, and its your kingdom that I seek.

Introduction to our Prayers

We have thought about the word King, but what about the word Kingdom, well surely that is where we need to step up. Sometimes we get the idea that the Kingdom of God is something out there somewhere (bit like the circuit is this thing out there somewhere - it isn't - we are the circuit - we make up the circuit each individual person and church) and it's the same with the kingdom. We are part of it, part of making it happen.

Remember Jesus said I give you a prayer that you can pray every day. And what was in it? Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Wow,... that seems a tall order - make stuff down here like it is in heaven! Well, we need to give it a go.

We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere
We long for heaven's demonstration here
Jesus your light shine bright for all to see
Transform, revive, and heal society

Prayers

Creator God we pray for the world, asking that those with power, wealth or influence might show commitment to the welfare of their peoples and communities - that they might show commitment to your principles of justice and freedom, mercy and compassion, peace and understanding that they might wash the feet of those they serve. We pray for all the discussions that have taken place at COP26 that much fruit will grow from that. Your Kingdom come, and together may your will be done.

Saviour God, we pray for humankind, asking that each of us, whoever we are, might show commitment to caring for one another, that we might wash the feet of our neighbour, eat at their table and they at ours, that we might reach out a hand... Your Kingdom come, and together may your will be done.

Spirit of God, we pray for the church, asking that as your people, we work together, humbly using the gifts and talents that you have granted, make us aware of those times when we can wash one another's feet, and they can wash ours.

We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere
We long for heaven's demonstration here
Jesus your light shine bright for all to see
Transform, revive, and heal society Amen

STF 347 Crown him with many crowns

1 Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne,
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died to be
and hail him as thy matchless king through all eternity.

2. Crown him the Lord of life Before the worlds began,
and ye who tread where he has trod, crown him the Son of Man,
who every grief has known that wrings the human breast,
and takes and bears them for his own, that all in him may rest.

3. Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the fight, for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring and lives, that death may die.

4. Crown him the Lord of life, whose power a sceptre sways
from pole to pole that wars may cease absorbed in prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end, and round his pierced feet,
fair flowers of paradise extend their fragrance ever sweet.

5. Crown him the Lord of love, behold his hands and side
rich wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified.
All hail Redeemer hail, for thou hast died for me,
thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.

CLOSING PRAYER Lord, thank you for being a different kind of King.
Thank you for your goodness and kindness in our lives.
Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for loving us.
Thank you for your Kingdom that is unlike any
Kingdom in this world. May we go now and join you in bringing it about. Amen

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