

Final Lenten Service

Text: Mark 15:1-17

Theme: A Look at our King

The Gospels often portray Jesus as our king. In Mark's Gospel Jesus would often begin His parables with the words, "*The Kingdom of God is like...*" When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the crowd shouted. "*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David.*" (11:11)

Now the Lord stood before Pontius Pilate. The Jewish Sanhedrin had already condemned Jesus to death because He confessed that He is the Christ, the Son of God. The high priest called that confession blasphemy, but they could not put Jesus to death. The Romans had to do that, so they accused Jesus of claiming to be a king. Pilate looked at Jesus and asked, "Are you the king of the Jews?" whether he was, and Jesus answered Pilate the same way that He answered Caiaphas, "*Yes, it is as you say.*" Today I would like to look at Jesus as our king.

I. It would mean that you look at Someone who suffered and was rejected.

There are many places in the psalms where David laments his suffering as the Lord's Anointed, the king of Israel. He had many enemies. Even one of his sons tried to take his throne. It was prophesied throughout the Old Testament that the Messiah would be mocked and rejected also. In Psalm 22 the Messiah cries out, "*I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by all the people. All who see me mock Me. They hurl insults, shaking their heads: He trusts the Lord; let the Lord rescue Him.*" Isaiah 53 prophesies, "*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not.*"

The suffering of the Jewish Messiah, their King, was fulfilled when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate. He didn't look like much. Pilate saw that He didn't present a danger, so he made a weak attempt to free Jesus by offering the people a choice between a convicted murderer or Jesus. They chose to set the murderer free. Pilate asked, "*What shall I do, then with the one you call the king of the Jews?*" They responded, "*Crucify Him!*"

Then the king was then flogged. Roman floggings were very brutal. It sometimes happened that the person died before the crucifixion. The soldiers were very barbaric. They even enjoyed it, and saw it as sport. The King of Israel was beaten so badly, that He died within 3 hours on the cross.

After Jesus had been flogged, He was brought back to the praetorium. There the soldiers began to mock Him. They put a scarlet robe over Him, and put a rod in His right hand. They found some thorn bushes and twisted a crown of thorns which they put on Jesus head. They beat the Lord over the head, pounding the thorns into His skin. They even spit on Him. The Lord had become a bloody mess, and the soldiers mocked Him, saying, "*Hail, king of the Jews!*" To them it seemed as though all this proved how weak and insignificant Jesus was.

II. But it was by His suffering that Jesus saved His people.

The nations of this earth conquer with power and might, but Jesus conquered through weakness. It was He who had given this authority to Pilate, and He allowed Pilate to judge Him unjustly. If He wanted to, He could have brought down legions of angels to rescue Him. He could have instantly healed Himself of His wounds as He healed the servant of the high priest after Peter cut off his ear. But Jesus allowed Himself to be beaten and mocked. He allowed Himself to be crucified. On that cross He bore all the sins of the world, included every one of ours. Jesus prevailed by offering His innocent life in our place. Generally kings send others into the heat of battle. Jesus fought the battle in our place, and won by giving His life for us.

When He was hanging on the cross, Pilate had the official charge nailed to the top of it, "*The King of the Jews.*" It was another way that he intended to mock Jesus and anger the Jewish leadership, but his words were true. That horrible cross is where Jesus saved His people. It is where He fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies about the suffering servant. It is where He paid the price of all of our sins.

So when we consider how much He suffered and how horribly He died, it brings grief, but especially thankfulness that He went through all that agony to save us. The first verse of Crown Him with many Crowns puts this so well,

**Crown Him wiht many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns All music but its own
Awake, my soul and sing Of Him wo died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless king Through all eternity.**

When we consider how much Jesus suffered, we see just how much He loves us, but we especially thank Him that His suffering brought about our salvation.

Pilate looked at Jesus and asked, "Are You the king of the Jews?" Jesus made the good confession that He was, even though it cost Him His life. As our king Jesus suffered, but through that suffering He won the victory for us. May God keep us in that faith, that we will see Him as our Savior and king now, that we may reign with Him forever in heaven.

Amen.

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