

“Mightier than the sound of many waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea,
mightier is the Lord who dwells on high.”
AMEN!

“I know you well, and I can tell
Somethings on your mind.

‘Cause in your dreams
the demon screams,

I know he’s gonna hurt you blind.

You say you hunger;
for something you can get at all

And love is not enough anymore.

If I was king for just one day,
I would give it all away.

I would give it all away to be with you.

If I was king for just one day
I have just one thing to say

You know that love is all we need
to get us through.”

That song by the Thompson Twins speaks about
kings and powers
that are able to change the world.

Beloved, today is Christ the King Sunday.

The last Sunday of the church calendar year,.
we dive into texts that speak about dominion,
rule, beasts, and kings.

Well, the beast part is behind the scenes
in the verses omitted from Daniel and

(the beast part) comes later in the Revelation text.

Dominion, rule, beasts, and kings all sound
like things from fairy tales and sometimes,
in our enlightened minds,
seem like words of bygone ages.

We don't live in kingdoms today nor
do we have a king as our ruler...

Or do we?

It's been popular to even say "kin-dom"
because "kingly" language is so foreign
but before we throw out the word

saying it doesn't apply to us,

let us take in the words that Jesus said
in his conversation with Pilate.

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not from this world.

If my kingdom was from this world,
my followers would be fighting to keep me
from being handed over to
the Jewish authorities."

It wasn't Jesus' "kin-dom" that got him executed.

It was his announcement that he is a king.

Kingdom language is found in other gospels,
but in John it doesn't occur.

Until now.

In the conversation with Pilate,
who considered himself a king,
Jesus calls himself king.

A king for just one day. (Pause)

Interesting side note...

“Christ the King Sunday” began
soon after World War I.

It was added to our lectionary in 1925,
almost 100 years ago.

It was added by Pope Pius XI in 1925
to counter the growing
Christian nationalism in Europe.

Let that sink in a moment. (Pause)

So, if we are going to sit in the
language of kingdoms and dominions
we might notice that Pilate and Jesus
are two different kinds of kings.

Both have gone through an anointing and
both have dominion.

Pilate had the power to put people to death
and he wielded that power in order
to maintain his authority.

Jesus, on the other hand, also has that power,
but chose to not use it to put people to death.

Jesus uses his power as king to give life.

He healed total strangers,
fed multitudes of people
who left their homes.

In other words, he fed immigrants and strangers.

He took, what Jacquelin Bussie wrote,
“People’s respectable love of family [and friends],
and bloat that category out to include
folks who were never before admitted.”

This truth was also a reason Jesus was killed. (Pause)

We live in a world where kings,
queens and tyrants jockey
for positions of authority and dominion.

They forget, but we know,
that rulers come and rulers go.

The beastly ones rise up and each of them
eventually fall by their own hand.

The beastly household rulers fall just
as the beastly nation rulers fall;
and all the beastly rulers in between. (Pause)

In Revelation, we read that Jesus is
the ruler of the kings of the earth.

We have this image in Revelation, of Jesus
being a wounded lamb instead of a roaring lion.

The wounded lamb is said to shepherd
and has three characteristics:

the faithful witness -
which means faithful martyr;

2) the firstborn of the dead -
which means he was the first
to be resurrected, and then

3) ruler of the kings of the earth.

But remember, Jesus did not use his power
to put others to death but instead uses
his power to give life. (Pause)

All of this leads us to see the ways
we put trust, sometimes all of our faith,
into earthy political leaders instead of faith
and trust in the kingdom of God.

That's why Pilate sent Jesus to the cross,
because Jesus is King.

For this was why he came into the world,

to testify to the truth.

Even if he was king for just one day.

Pilate wrote those words and had
his soldiers nail it to the cross
over Jesus' head. (Pause)

With this king is where our citizenship rests.

We are members of the kingdom of God.

A kingdom led by a crucified and raised king.

A King with power and authority.

A King that people respect,
love and represent.

This is who we are.

And this is what we know.

We know all this belongs to Jesus,
the kingdom of God always

speaks the truth,
demands notice,
beckons us to decide,

but it does not always provide us with answers.

The kingdom of God testified by Jesus
and He freely wields his power
to testify to the truth. (Pause)

This truth brings us to ponder
what we are to do now,
in the name of this King?

First, we know all we have belongs to God.

So, we give freely back what
we are entrusted with.

Second, we listen to the Holy Spirit's voice.

It gives us life and therefore
we live in ways that give other people
and animals life.

Three, we belong to an alternate society.

This church, and others like it
strive for goodness, justice, and mercy.

Operating in ways of power that reflect
our allegiance first to the kingdom of God. (Pause)

God made us into a kingdom, and
we follow a king who was not only
king for a day, but for eternity.

AMEN!