

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

November 2022

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, This Is The King Of The Jews. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Luke 23:33-43

November 24th marks Christ the King Sunday. It's a day set aside in the lectionary to recognize, honor, and celebrate the fact that Jesus is our king. It may strike you as odd that the crucifixion is the text for such a day. When we even hear the word “Christ the King” we think of a king sitting on a throne ruling his people. The imagery of knights locked in combat saying “for the king!” come to mind. It's not so easy to figure out why the crucifixion is our text.

We have to understand that to have a king means that you do not have control over your own individual life. If our country had a king, our lives would be in his hands. Not just the day to day, what you should do and how you should do it, but our very lives. He could order an execution for whatever reason he liked. To have a king also means that you have to swear fealty to him, bend the knee and pledge service to his defense. If a rival army comes on the scene, you are duty bound to fight and defend your king if he should call.

The final thing we have to understand is that Jesus is a king that we would not expect. He doesn't sit on a golden throne, he hangs on a cross. He doesn't put a yoke of slavery over your day to day lives but instead he frees you from the bondage of sin and death and empowers you to walk in the light of His forgiveness. He doesn't order your death, but instead He gives you life. He doesn't call you to risk life and limb to defend Him from His enemies. Instead, he sacrifices his life, he takes your place and willingly dies in your defense. His death for our sins gives us eternal life. Jesus isn't like any other king. This Thanksgiving, when we meditate on the things we are thankful for. Let us be first and foremost thankful for Jesus, thankful that his kingdom and reign are unique, and thankful that we are children of the King of Kings.

God's Peace,
Nicholas Kandoll