



Sermon
Rev. Dr. Lang Yang

“Are You the King of the Jews”

The Last Sunday of the Church Year
St. Michael’s Lutheran Church – Richville, MI
11-21-2021

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

John 18:33, “Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” This is the Word of God. (Cross-reference – Matthew 26:3, Luke 3:2, John 11:49, 51; 18:24; 19:11)

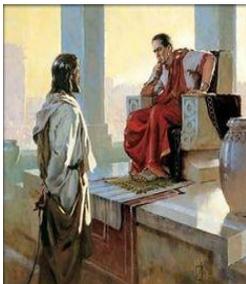
Illustration “King?” (Show General Vang Pao)



General Vang passed away on January 6, 2011, at 82, in Fresno, California. Many Hmong people worldwide ask another Hmong brother, “Is General Vang Pao the King of the Hmong people?” He had passed away. What are we going to do? Who will be our next leader? Will other people respect the Hmong people? Can the Hmong people go on living without their leader? Is he like a father to us? He’s like a king to the Hmong people.”

An estimated 40 thousand Hmong people worldwide came to pay their final respect to the General. Many Hmong people look to him like a king, an unrecognized king. Is he the king of the Hmong People? Indeed he was not a king, but amid people clouded minds, the question remained to some?

I. In our Gospel reading, Pilate said a similar question to Jesus, “*Are You the King of the Jews?*” (Show Jesus before Pilate)



How did Jesus respond to Pilate? “Is that your idea,” “or did others talk to you about me?” Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world...” Then Pilate said, “You are a king, then!” Jesus said, “You say that I am a king.” You can see the scene here just like our modern-day courtroom drama where the prosecutor questions the defendant. But the truth was that Jesus wants to know if Pilate repeating what someone else has told him, or is he making an inquiry of faith? And Pilate realizes that this is what Jesus is asking of him. But what Pilate missed was that the man who stood before him was no mere earthly king. He was

The King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus, the Son of God, was the ruler of all heaven and earth. (Show bowing to King)

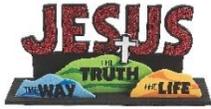


Most of you know that in other parts of the world with a king rule, he’s expected his people to bow, pay tribute, and vow their allegiance? Their life, their wealth, their hearts were forever the kings to command. They are to be loyal subjects to the King no matter what the consequence. There are many kings in the world. A few of the kings remaining have lost practically all the power and authority that kings used to have.

These days, it is sometimes challenging to recognize a king because they often dress and behave just like everyone else. There is a story about the King of one of the monarchies in Europe. On a trip through his kingdom, he decided to spend one Sunday in Church, went to a small Church alone, sat down

quietly, and began to pray. A woman who claimed he was occupying her seat interrupted him and told him to move somewhere else. He quietly moved to another pew without saying a word and sat down again. At the end of the service, the minister announced the presence of the King and asked him to say a few words. That woman must have felt embarrassed - not because she did not recognize the King but because of the way she had treated him.

- II. Many of us find ourselves behaving in the same way when relating to Christ as our King. We not only fail to recognize Him as our King, but we often treat Him with disrespect. **(Show way, truth, and life)**



The Jews failed to recognize Christ because He did not act and behave like they wanted Him to. The way we treat Christ does not change the truth that He is the King of kings since truth is not subject to the opinions of men. The fact remains the truth no matter how we view it. The truth is that Christ came into the world to bear witness to the truth about God, Himself, that He is the way the truth and the life. **(Show Jesus Baptism)**



God's purpose and all the prophecies about the coming King were fulfilled in Christ. At His baptism, the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove, and God pronounced Him, *"This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well please."* (Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5 - Transfiguration). It is unimaginable that a king like Caesar would be obeyed more than Jesus Christ. Pilate recognized Caesar as a king and served and obeyed him. But he failed to recognize the King of kings and had Him treated worse than a criminal. Caesar wanted to be the only one to be called King and to call someone else a king was

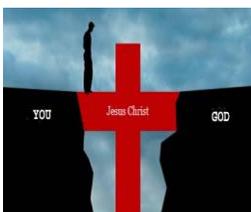
punishable by death. So he had people like Pilate enforce his will. He had to rely on human beings and military strength to impose his power and authority. **(Show Christ the King)**



Christ is the King of kings because He has been given all power and authority in heaven and earth. He created and sustained all things by His power. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall have no end. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Who is and who was and who is to come.

A worldly king has power and authority and can demand or enforce obedience using human strength and human weapons. But our King uses His power by serving others, forgiving others, healing others, giving to others, and sacrificing Himself for others. His power is the power of truth, faith, the power of hope, the power of love, and the power of life itself. A King who would sacrifice Himself for us on the cross forgives our sins and reconciles us to God, thus saving us from the penalty of sin, death, and the devil.

- III. Instead of Pilate asking Jesus, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* **(Show you to Jesus Christ to God)**



You can ask yourself, **"Is Jesus Christ my King?"** In a human king, the only way to come before a king is by invitation. We can, however, always come before the King of kings because Jesus the eternal King has bridged the gap that took place on the cross on our behalf. Jesus Christ paid the price for our sin by taking our place. He was punished that we might be forgiven and have life and peace with God. We can go to our King anytime without an invitation.

There was once a story of an orphaned boy living with his grandmother. The grandmother died in the flames of a fire that destroyed their home as she tried to get upstairs to rescue the boy. A man who heard

the boy's cry for help climbed an iron drainpipe and came back down with the boy hanging tightly to his neck. Several months later, a public hearing was held to determine who would receive custody of the child. A farmer, a teacher, and a rich man all reasons why they felt they should be chosen to give the boy home. (Show a boy hugging a man)



The boy showed no interest in the proceedings at all and kept his eyes focused on the floor. Then a stranger walked to the front and slowly took his hands from his pocket, revealing horrible scars on them. As everyone looked at him in horror, the boy suddenly got up and ran towards him. It was the man who had saved his life burning his hands when he climbed the hot pipe. With a leap of joy, the boy threw his arms around the man's neck and held on to him. The other men silently walked away, leaving the boy and his rescuer alone. Those marred hands had settled the issue.

Similarly, Jesus Christ, our King, did for us. (Show Jesus hand nail to the cross)



He rescued us from a life overwhelmed by sin, under the control of Satan, and heading for eternal judgment of God. The nail-pierced His hands remind us of how He rescued us from sin and its deadly consequences. The King has rescued each one of us. The scars in his hands speak of His love for us. Like the orphaned boy whom would you entrust your life to? Many want us but only to satisfy their need, but there is only one who can bring us the forgiveness, purpose, and peace we need. He is Christ our King. (Show the thieves asking Jesus to remember him)



Let us for a moment think about these words when the thieves on the cross said to Jesus, "*Jesus, remember me when you **come into your kingdom.***" (Luke 23:42). The condemned criminal who spoke these words acknowledged Christ to be a King. He believed that the King had a kingdom, and he wanted to be included in that kingdom. He was assured of his inclusion in that kingdom with the words, "*Truly I tell you, today you will be **with me in paradise.***" (Luke 23:43) (Show King of king and Lord of lord)



Brother and sisters in Christ, we can be in paradise because Jesus Christ is our King. Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Amen.

Now may the peace of God's which passes all understanding keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.