

Sermon Text for November 20, 2016

By Rev. Robert K. Bronkema

Colossians 1:11-20, Luke 1:68-79 **“The King reigns”**

And just like that we transition toward Advent. Today is the Sunday before Thanksgiving so our bulletin covers, our hymns all address his American secular holiday that we have come to love and rely upon. It is the one time of the year that all four of the Bronkema boys get together, and mom is there as well. It is a time that our girls and their 7 cousins so look forward to.

It is also a time of the year that as a church we are especially busy and the activities are happening fast and furious. In less than 24 hours the following events took place in our hall: youth group lock in, Scout Food bags, Christmas shoe box preparation, and parent night out. But while Thanksgiving may be our cultural holiday, we find ourselves today celebrating as a church something which most of you may not know much about. Today we are celebrating the last Sunday of the year before the first Sunday of the year. And you thought we told time by beginning in January and ending in December. Not in the church. Today is Christ the King Sunday which is the last Sunday of the year. Today is the Sunday not just before Thanksgiving, but also the Sunday before the first Sunday of the year, which is Advent. Next Sunday we begin the season of Advent and today we celebrate the fact that Christ is King and our King reigns, He is in power, He has all things under his feet.

Both of our Scriptures today speak of Christ as our King, but give us a very different picture of what his Kingdom looks like than what we are used to. Normally when we speak of a king and a kingdom, we think of armies and a political reign. Actually, what we read in both of these Scriptures is that the kingdom of God has one thing in common. Jesus Christ is going to usher in peace. The mark and the sign of a true, we hear, is that he instills peace.

We are going to have a little different approach today to our sermon, it is one where you will need to have your Bible open because we are going to go through the verses that we read earlier. So follow along with me as we hear these Scriptures and how they describe Jesus as our king and what the reign of that king would and should look like.

Let's start from the end of our Colossians reading and we hear Paul make the statement: that God came and walked upon the earth as Jesus our Savior and when he came he made peace by the blood of the cross. Think of that statement. We worship a king. A king that earlier in these verses he is described at vs. 11 as strong, full of glorious power, vs.16, he has reign over all

things, visible and invisible, over thrones, dominion, rulers. Jesus as king, Paul begins in this passage is, I love this one, look at vs. 18, he is a winner. He comes in first place in everything. Kind of like the Cowboys!

Paul really builds up Jesus as King in these verses until we get to that unfortunate verse, vs. 20, where he states “he made peace through the blood of the cross.” Our king was arrested stripped, beaten, nailed to a cross, he died as a criminal and his blood was shed on that cross. What kind of a king is that? He sounds like a choke artist, a loser, weak, sad. But that’s our Jesus, that’s our King. One who took our weakness and said, my blood and my grace is sufficient for you, this is all you need.

Don’t let anyone paint a picture of Jesus as a triumphalistic nationalist who was able to drive the money changers out because he was powerful. No, that one scene in the Bible is the exception. The rule is Jesus the bruised reed who bends, and is crucified and his blood washes us clean. A Christian is never triumphalistic, a Christian never tries to make his life more important than others. A Christian always looks for ways to allow others to precede them in the kingdom.

What does Luke say? Let’s start at the end of our verses in Luke as well. We read in vs.79 that Jesus will guide our feet into the way of peace. These Scriptures are strongly consistent so we can see that the reign of our king is marked by his people being led to lives of peace. Are our feet being led to the way of peace? That’s a fair question for all of us as we consider how we interact with the waitress who serves us for lunch today. Do we as Christians give that person a 30% tip because they know that we are coming from church and we want to leave a good impression and set a good example? Are our feet on the way of peace in this post election season or do we continue to look for things that might divide us?

So who is speaking here in Luke? It is Zechariah and we need to somewhat set the stage for this Scripture. Zechariah is a priest and he was the husband of Elizabeth. Elizabeth was the relative of Mary who was barren but then in her old age conceived after an angel spoke to Zechariah and struck him mute. Elizabeth gives birth and she says he is to be called John, Zechariah confirms and then he is able to speak again. These verses, are you with me, are the first words that Zechariah speaks in 9 months.

He begins by breaking his silence by saying: “Blessed be the Lord.” His gratitude, he gives thanks for a son with his first words which are, blessed be the Lord. Go real quick to I Kings 1:48 and what do you read? King David at the enthronement of his son Solomon, after he had been down a tough road, is able to say: blessed be the Lord.

So Zechariah gives thanks to God for the birth of their son. In vs. 66 they ask, who is he to become? We find that answer in vs. 76: you are the prophet of the Most High. It sounds a lot like the words of Malachi 3:1: I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me. Before the king reigns a messenger is coming to prepare the way. To, as vs.77 states to give knowledge of salvation to his people.

These verses might seem like they are about John, but they are really about the king who is coming. A king who humbly died on a cross and whose blood was shed for our forgiveness. He came not to instill a military nation but rather a nation, a people who are servants first and last.

Probably some of the most beautiful verses in Scripture are found in 78-79. READ. Have you all seen the dawns break over these last few days, not counting this morning. It has been some of the purest, crisp dawns with the sun filling the sky. It has been spectacular and it didn't take up just the sky, but it seemed like it took up all of creation. Jesus will come like the dawn is what this Scripture states. Our King will come and reign just like the sun reigned over all of creation. Jesus will come and guide our feet in the way of peace. Could anyone use some peace right about now? Psalm 119:105 states – Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Isaiah 9:2 states “the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, and those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.

No one should love the darkness. The followers of Jesus Christ the King have to be bearers of peace. Some news agencies are saying that there is a spike in hate and racist graffiti against people of color and jews. I don't know if it is true or not, but I do know that a disciple of the king who died on the cross and shed his blood is king of all people. I don't believe I feel compelled to say this, but I do. There is no room in our society or culture for that. If a friend or a member says something at coffee hour or while you're hunting or at work about a person of color that is offensive, don't laugh, call them on it. Jesus' blood covers us all.

Paul and Luke thought alike. The king will usher in peace, and he is going to do it through us. I hope we are ready. Amen.