

## ONCE UPON A THRONE

### “Christ the King”

We have come to our final sermon in our series “Once Upon a Throne.” We have learned about the three kings who ruled over the United Kingdom: Saul, David, and Solomon. After Solomon’s death the kingdom becomes hotly contested. The kingdom divides into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians, but the southern kingdom hung on. Last Sunday we learned of the last good king of Judah, Josiah. He restored the temple, tore down the altars to other gods and goddesses and called the people back into faithfulness. While their return to God did not last, Josiah is remembered for his love and deep desire for God. This week we leave the kings of old and look to our faith in Christ as our King and Ruler. As citizens of the United States, the idea of royalty ruling is not part of our understanding of government. As Christians, however, we use the image of Sovereign and Ruler in our faith. We are called to give our allegiance to Christ and Christ alone. – Pastor Cindy Watson

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#### **Daily Prayer**

Blessed art thou, King of the universe!  
We name you king lord, master,  
Governor and by such naming we  
Relieve our deep anxieties  
In confidence of your rule.  
WE name you king and pray daily  
For your coming kingdom and proudly  
Proclaim that your messiah will come  
Again....  
And yet, we grow weary with the brutal powers  
Of the day and wait for the time  
When the new world will come  
And heal our common life.  
We name you, and we wait....but not patiently.  
Blessed art thou, king of the universe! Amen.  
*--adapted from a prayer by Walter Brueggemann*

## STUDY GUIDE

### **Monday, July 26, 2021    Isaiah 61: 1-3**

In the book of Isaiah there are four “songs” or poems that are tied to the Messiah, the servant king. The first is about how this servant will bring justice and righteousness. The second is how from this servant’s birth he has known he is to lead the people back to God. In the third the servant is both teacher and learner and follows God. The fourth, usually read during Holy Week, is from Isaiah 52 and 53 and describes a suffering servant. A servant who bears the “iniquities” of many. The verses we read today; we will read in another context in a couple of days from the book of Luke. Our Jewish brothers and sisters understand the servant to be themselves. Christians see Jesus in these words: the one who leads, the one who serves, the one who loves God and rules with justice and righteousness. *How do you see Jesus in these words and how do they impact your life? If you were to follow the Jewish understanding of these words, how do you see yourself as the one to bring good news and to take care of those who need it?*

### **Tuesday, July 27, 2021    Philippians 2: 1-4**

Paul in this chapter of the letter to the church at Philippi draws a picture of a servant king. Paul calls the community into unity in Christ, by being of the “same mind” and “finding encouragement, compassion and sympathy through the Spirit.” In the following verses Paul challenges the church to be conscious of the needs of others and not be selfish and to share. Even today those words are challenging. Since when does royalty concern itself with the needs of others? The mind of Christ is the mind of a servant even as that servant is King and Ruler of all. The Christians community is constantly being reminded to have the “mind of Christ” the mind of a servant who comes to serve, and to care and to proclaim good news. *How would you describe this mind of Christ that Paul encourages? How does that “mind and love of Christ” work in your life and spirit?*

### **Wednesday, July 28, 2021    Philippians 2: 5-11**

Paul’s letters are the earliest documents of the Christian church. These verses are the first hymn to Christ we have, and it is the first kind of theological statement about Jesus. This imagery borrows heavily from the servant songs in Isaiah. Though Jesus was “equal with God” Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave and humbled himself.” God has exalted himself...every knee should bend in heaven and on earth. Knees are bent to kings and rulers. Jesus’ example of ruling was about service, and about love. Christians are called to the same kind of life: service, love, grace, and compassion. *Are you willing to serve this kind of King? Are you willing to submit your life and spirit to God?*

### **Thursday, July 29, 2021    Luke 4: 16-21**

This scripture has Jesus reading from the Isaiah passage we read on Monday. This powerful moment has Jesus announcing to those who have known him all his life, that this passage is being made real right in front of them. The people were provoked and angered. People like kings, but not necessarily ones that grow up right next door. Jesus’ proclamation was not about violently overthrowing Rome, but a mission of good news, of healing and of freedom to become all God has created people to be. *How do you understand Jesus’ fulfillment of the Isaiah text? How are they fulfilled in you?*

### **Friday, July 30, 2021    Luke 9: 18-25**

Jesus asks his closest friends about the “gossip” the conversation around who people believe him to be. The outburst of Peter: “you are the Christ,” is a powerful moment of recognition. Jesus knows they don’t know what that really means. Throughout the gospels the idea of the “Christ” was paired with a new king, a new throne, and an overthrowing of the oppressor Rome. Jesus’ understanding was of suffering and service and being in community with one another. We still struggle with that today. Even Christians vie for power and authority, but Jesus’ understanding of power comes from service and grace. *Do you, like Peter recognize Jesus as the Christ the son of the Living God? How do you embody that service and allegiance in the world?*