

Christ is King
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church
November 24, 2024

Texts:

Ez. 34:11-16, 20-24 – We are sheep in the pasture of our King

Psalm 100 – We are to praise our King

Ephesians 1:15-23 – The current position of our King

Matthew 25:31-46 – The perfect judgment by our King

Purpose: We gather on the Sunday before Thanksgiving and pause to remember that the Lord is our shepherd and our judge. We should come before Him with praise and adoration for He is a great God worthy of our love and devotion. We should also honor Him by meeting the needs of those around us.

A pregnant woman from Washington, D.C., (whose husband was out of the country) gets in a car accident and is knocked unconscious.



When she wakes up 3 days later, she sees that she is no longer pregnant and frantically asks the doctor about her baby.

The doctor replies, "Ma'am you had twins! - a boy and a girl. We couldn't reach your husband and since your brother was the first one here the day they were born, we let him name the children for you."

The woman thinks to herself, "No ... not my brother ... he's not very bright!"

She asks the doctor, "Well, what's the girl's name?"

"Denise."

"Wow, that's not a bad name, I like it! What's the boy's name?"

"Denephew."¹

Today we gather as the people of God caught between two greedy holidays. About four weeks ago, our community celebrated the pagan holiday Halloween. This is the time of the year when boys and girls dress up in various costumes and roam the streets looking for candy.



The stores have already begun their annual push for you to put up the right decorations, decorate the perfect tree, display the perfect wreath on the door, and find that perfect gift for the ones you love. Children are making their lists and parents are scrambling to find the latest "must have" items available. Maybe a few of you will venture out later this week for some Black Friday shopping.



In the middle of these two greed centered holidays – Halloween (candy) and Christmas (presents), we have Thanksgiving (food). Each year we hear how expensive a traditional Thanksgiving meal will be. Instead of grumbling and complaining, maybe we need to stop and realize that we are a blessed people.

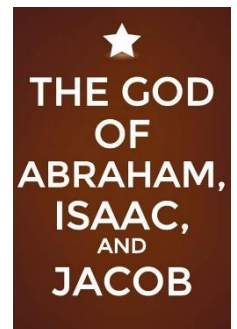
We need to recenter our lives and embrace the truth that God is a great God and worthy of our praise and adoration. For our lives to be in the center of where God would have them to be, we need to recognize that God is our King. He is the one that rules and reigns over all of creation. We are only a small portion of what God has planned for His creation. We need to give Him the reverence, honor, respect, allegiance, loyalty, admiration, and love due His Holy name.

On the church calendar, today is the last Sunday on the liturgical calendar. We celebrate Christ! It is known as **Christ the King Sunday**. The church year begins over with Advent next week.

I. Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 – We Are Sheep in the Pasture of Our King

The passage of scripture from Ezekiel that **Doug Blizzard** read for us this morning is one that describes one of the activities of God. God is actively seeking those that want to be in the fold of God.

God, in His divine plan, chose one man by the name of Abraham with whom He entered into a covenant relationship. This covenant relationship grew to include his offspring Isaac and Jacob. Out of Jacob came twelve sons that became the foundation for the nation Israel. God had specifically chosen these people as His chosen nation. They were to be a holy priesthood totally dedicated unto the Lord.



Over time, they drifted away from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and began to worship idols and other gods. God chastised them time and time again, but they still continued to rebel against God. God finally chose the Babylonians to punish the children of Israel. Thousands were killed while only a remnant was taken into captivity for a period of 70 years.



The prophet Ezekiel was the man chosen by God to speak to those in captivity and remind them that the Lord was one who loved those who loved Him.

In Ezekiel 34:11 we see that the Lord is one that “*will indeed search for My sheep and seek them out.*” After the completion of the seventy years of punishment, the people of Israel returned to their home land and rebuilt Jerusalem.



But God’s love did not stop there. He continued to love them and care for them as a shepherd would care for his sheep. God knew that in the fullness of time that He would need

to send His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for their sin and our sin. The reason God sent His Son to us was so that our relationship with Him could be restored. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world back to Himself. All that would call upon the name of the Lord for salvation would be saved.

The purpose of the shepherd is to search for the sheep, separate the sheep and to succeed for the sheep. The power of the shepherd is to provide refreshment, rest, and restoration for the sheep. The promise of the shepherd is an eternal promise, with His eternal presence, and our eternal home.²

Jesus Christ, from the Upper Room, invites us all to enter into a New Covenant that was instituted by the blood of Jesus Christ. We can do nothing to earn it. We can do nothing to be worthy of receiving it. All we can do is accept it and in return, give our adoration and praise back to God. Those that are under the care of the shepherd can say, “Thank God for His providential care.”

II. Psalm 100 – We Are to Praise Our King

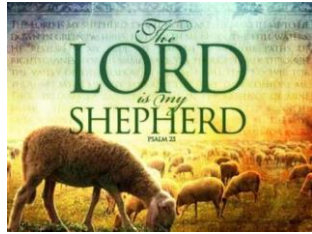
The passage of scripture that **Bess Hooks** read for us this morning is the traditional Thanksgiving Psalm. This passage is actually a call for everyone to join with the reader or singer in praise to the Lord. Many of the Psalms invite us to enter into the occasion that the writer is experiencing.

We are invited to praise God. This type of outward praise is often difficult for reserved individuals because we are afraid of what others may say if we raise our hands or say an occasional amen. We become so paralyzed by the opinions of others that we fail to give the Lord the unencumbered praise He deserves. In 2 Samuel, David unashamedly loved the Lord and was willing to praise Him with all of his strength. He didn’t care who saw Him dancing, shouting, and praising the Lord.



We should praise the Lord because He is our shepherd.

- He leads us to rivers of quiet water.
- He leads us in paths of righteousness.
- He leads us to luscious green pastures.
- He walks with us during the valley of our darkness.
- He gives us quiet rest in the midst of life.
- He is the nourishment of our soul as we meditate upon His word.
- He protects us from our enemies, and fills our cup to overflowing.



He not only meets our needs but He provides what the Psalms describe as “*loving-kindness*.”

The Hebrew word for that is “*hesed*.” It is the mercy, love, and tenderness of a Loving God who loves His chosen sheep. God has been so good to us! Our lives should reflect the words of the song, “*Thank You Lord, For Your Blessings*.”



Our thanksgiving should also reflect the nature of God. Of all the things I have learned in my extended time of studying the Bible, is that **He is God, He is grace, and He is good**. Time and time again, it has been impressed upon me that God is worthy of our praise and adoration because of His **personality, power, and position**. He reigns from Heaven over nature and all of creation. His grace is both a **saving grace** and a **securing grace**. When we call upon him, we are both saved and secure.

But the number one characteristic of God is His **goodness**. He is a watchman looking over his sheep. He provides protection and provision. Through His word we learn of His commands and His guidelines for life.³

Because of all of this, we should shout, “Hallelujah,” which means, “Praise the Lord!”

III. Ephesians 1:15-23 – The Current Position of Our King

Ella Wade read from Ephesians 1:15-23 in the New Testament that describes the current location of the One that we worship.



Jesus Christ came as the total fulfillment of all the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. Sometimes we feel that we are alone in this world to work through our life’s problems. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians was a letter of encouragement to the believers there in the city of Ephesus.

Paul wanted them to have the spirit of wisdom that aided their understanding of the word and work of Jesus Christ. He wanted their eyes of understanding to be opened so they could realize our hope was in Jesus Christ and that our inheritance is a rich one. When we accept Christ as our Savior, we become joint heirs with Christ. We are able to participate in the abundant inheritance of eternal life. We are welcomed into the family of God and our sins are forgiven.

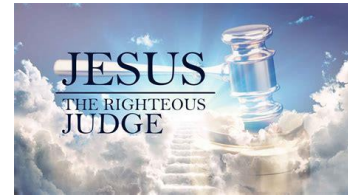
We are able to receive this because of the power of God. The same power that raised Jesus from the grave is the same power that is able to save you from your sins.

At this very moment, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father interceding on your behalf so that we are made justified in spite of our sin. Jesus has been elevated above every king and kingdom on this earth. Throughout the centuries, political kings and leaders have acted as if they were not accountable to anyone. One day they too will discover that there is only one King and that is Jesus. He is the head of all creation because when He spoke – it was created. He sustains all of creation by the power of His word. And He is able to redeem it through the precious blood shed at Calvary. All those that repent of their sins and ask Jesus to be the Lord of their life shall find salvation for their souls.

IV. Matthew 25:31-46 – The Perfect Judgment by our King

As we look around in our world we cry for justice. We see a person commit a great crime and we may see that they are sentenced to 20 years in jail. Yet, after some negotiations the guilty person's sentence is reduced to 3 years and then they are given credit for serving 10 months with good behavior and are released.

We read of drug dealers being set free after posting a small bail. We hear of politicians going to jail only a few months – but if we had done that crime, we would spend decades in jail. We read of murderers getting only a fraction of the sentence due them. We cry for justice and sadly fail to receive it.



The passage of scripture that **Beth Crisp** read from Matthew tells us of the justice of One perfect judge. That perfect judge is Jesus Christ. God has placed Him in the

position to make the determination between those that will enter into perfect rest and peace with God eternally and those that will receive punishment and eternal separation from God.

I find it most interesting that the criteria used by God for the “sheep” and “goats” is not the list of crimes that have been committed. If God began to list the sins of each person and failed to forgive them by the blood of Christ, no one would ever enter into the rest of the Lord.

The criterion used by God was, “What did you do when it came to our neighbors?”

- Were we willing to feed the hungry?
- Were we able to visit the sick?
- Did you go to prison and visit the one that was incarcerated?
- Did you provide clothing for someone that was in need?
- Did you give a cup of water to someone that was thirsty?



In the Old Testament, through the word of the prophets, we see that the Lord got the angriest about the injustice that prevailed among the people of Israel. The wealthy sought ways to defraud the poor and defenseless. Those in

business used two sets of faulty scales to defraud those they bought supplies from and those they sold to. Many individuals were placed in slavery because they failed to pay their debts. Leviticus insisted that interest not be charged to a fellow Israelite and the people did it anyway. The law provided that a man's outer coat was to be returned to him in the evening if it was used as collateral. Some wealthy abused the poor.

If we are to honor the One we call – King of Kings and Lord of Lords, He has instructed how we can practically do that. Take care of those that are in need of care and attention. Feed and cloth those in need. Forgive those who have defrauded you. Go and visit those that are sick and in jail. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

Our church supports many of the ministries that meet these needs of the least of these. We support Mary's Kitchen, Friends of the Homeless, Hope Restoration, The Refuge, The Gate, ICOR, and many others. We send money to support missionaries through various mission organizations. Several years ago, we put up a blessing box and receive monthly gifts of food to help many in our community facing problems with food insecurity. Our church and its members have given of themselves and their resources to help others.



What are you doing to help those Jesus called the least of these?

God is calling us on this Sunday before Thanksgiving, to give unto others as if we were giving it unto Him. Let us turn this season of Christmas into a season of genuine giving of ourselves to others and genuine giving of our resources. Let us give liberally as God has liberally blessed us. In doing so – we celebrate our love for our Lord, our God, and our King – King Jesus! Amen.

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹Mikie's Funnies, A Name Funny, Aug. 13, 2024

² Sermon Notebook – Eze_34-11-16

³ Sermon Notebook – Ps_100