WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CALL CHRIST KING?
a sermon for Christ the King Sunday

What does it mean to name Christ as our king on this Christ the King Sunday?

Soon, in just a few weeks, it will be Advent and we will have the opportunity to seek and affirm the Kingship of Jesus. Advent calls us to get ready for the king's Second Coming when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And then, the birth of our king at Christmas.

Yes, the church affirms the Kingship of Jesus as the year concludes. It is a time of transition and reflection. We have opportunities before us to consider the year past, what we have accomplished, what we have learned, what we can do better.

We ask, how can we treat one another better? What is God calling us to as God's children, as a people forgiven for their sins?

Are we repentant to start anew, to do things better or are we content with the way things are?

Which brings me back to the question about naming Christ as our king. Really, the question should be "Who is our king?" To whom do we owe our righteousness, our obedience, our honor?

We've just completed another election cycle. I remind you that, according to the Apostle Paul and our own Martin Luther, it is God who established government. Although governments are all different, democratic, autocratic, plutocratic, communist, socialist, monarchy and even anarchy, God has

established them to maintain peace on the earth and to bring justice.

But I remind you that government will not decide how we treat one another. That is up to us. How I treat you and how you treat me is summed up in Jesus' words: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12)

But that is not always an easy thing to do, especially if you are the one who is suffering, if you are the one being hurt or if you are the one bearing the brunt of the injustice.

So, we look for a king to make things fair, to solve our problems, to arbitrate our disagreements as we admit our need for help.

If our first response is to ask for help, then we need to let the king help us. And usually, the first place that needs help is on the inside. We need help with our sinful nature. It truly begins by inviting Jesus Christ to be the king of our lives. To rule and to reign. To confess that we are in captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. Captives in ways that we cannot even begin to imagine.

God promised to help us by sending a savior. A savior who would bear our sufferings with us, not just take them away but to bear them, endure them along with us. Jesus is a different kind of king and he rules in a different kind of way.

This king breaks the power of sin that blinds us to our own shortcomings, our selfishness, our greed, our narcissistic attitudes so that we can first admit our need for a king to rule over us.

God sent a savior to pay the price for our sin so that we might lay the punishment of our

sins on him instead of on each other or on ourselves.

But. Always beware of the but when you get to this point in a sermon. "There goes our preacher and his big but…"

But, there is a catch. Here's the catch. But, there is nothing that God needs from us. We cannot do anything for God that God cannot do.

Stay with me here, now. While we make Jesus Christ the king of our lives through faith in his sacrifice for our sin on the cross…while we humble ourselves and submit to his will for our lives…while we seek his will through prayer, worship and studying his promises in the Bible…there is still something King Jesus expects of us.

And it is this. To love one another as God has loved us. We can have a Christ-like relationship with the people that God has created and put into our lives.

Remember as the king answers, "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

Plain and simple, this is the arrangement. To be righteous with God means to be righteous with one another.

Christ is the king and you are the king's ambassador. You are not here to run everyone's life, you are here to help them know the love of God through your deeds, your words, your companionship and, if need be, through your suffering. You know what God has done for you and now you are bringing that good news to others around you

because those are the people to whom God is sending you.

Let me remind you that you are not accountable for the sins of others. But you are accountable for your failure to care about what sin does to them.

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,” we pray. As ambassadors of the king, we are one of the instruments the king uses to redeem the world from sin. Our purpose in the world is to heal it. We cannot do that unless we recognize that we have a relationship with it.

The king’s contract with us is that we are never alone. As long as sin is in the world, we will never be without something to do.

So let us embrace Christ as our king, rejoicing that Jesus has made us his people, his ambassadors, through his love and blood.

Christ is our king, our savior, our Lord.

Jesus reigns, Jesus rules.

Amen.