

## “KINGDOM LIFE”

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

TEXT: MATTHEW 25:31-46

GOD’S WORD: PSALM 100

### **I – PSALM 100:**

This coming Thursday is going to be Thanksgiving. We’re in the middle of a Pandemic and some of our traditions may change this year, but this coming Thursday is a day we are supposed to give thanks to God for all our blessings and all our lives. I thought it fitting that we would start the service today with this Psalm of Thanksgiving and a couple of traditional Thanksgiving songs.

The Psalm spells out not only that we are supposed to give God our praise, but it also gives us the reason for such praise. It talks about God’s character and favors:

<sup>1</sup> Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth!

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

<sup>3</sup> Acknowledge that the LORD is God!

He made us, and we are his.

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good.

His unfailing love continues forever,

and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

It tells us in Vs. 3 that God made us, he gave us life. It also says that we are his people. He lays claim to us. Vs. 5 tells us that he is good and that his love is eternal. It goes on forever. God is reliable. Thank you God! We’re your people, this is your world. You are my King.

### **II – CHRIST THE KING:**

This is Christ the King Sunday by the liturgical year and that's where I want to lead us into the Advent season this year. With the fact that this is God's Kingdom and his Son is the King of all.

When we think of that little baby born in a manger as we will in the next few weeks, we need to look beyond this cute, sweet, innocent little baby and see our King. He was born humbly but we must not lose sight of the fact he was the Son of God and sent to be the ultimate King of God's Kingdom. The Christmas narrative tells us that the king of the Jewish people, King Herod was deeply troubled and upset over the prophecy that this baby was born to take his throne. Not long after we read about other kings coming from far off lands to worship this new king.

When he was crucified by the Romans on behalf of the established religious rulers of the day he had a sign nailed to the top of his cross by the Roman governor that said 'KING OF THE JEWS.'

He spent the last three years of his life traveling about and teaching and preaching about this new Kingdom that was being put into place by himself, God's Kingdom, and how we are supposed to live and behave in this new Kingdom.

### **III – TEXT:**

Today we look at the last parable Jesus taught before his Passion took place.

#### **Matthew 25:31-46 (NLT)**

The Final Judgment

<sup>31</sup> "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

<sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. <sup>36</sup> I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

<sup>37</sup> “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? <sup>39</sup> When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

<sup>41</sup> “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

<sup>44</sup> “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

<sup>46</sup> “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

The message of this parable is the same as the last two before it that pastor Beck and I have shared with you about the 10 Bridesmaids, and the 3 servants...BE PREPARED.

We are told in Revelations and other prophecies that Jesus will return. Jesus himself told us this in his discussions with his disciples. He also tells us that when he returns it won’t be as a little baby in a manger, but as a mighty warrior, a mighty king to rule over the new Kingdom when all of creation is restored by God. Here, as he tells us this last story he tells us that when he comes back it will be in all his glory, accompanied by all the angels, and he will sit upon his throne where he will call all the nations to himself. This means both Jewish and Gentile peoples. In other words...EVERYONE.

It’s what happens when he has them all together that we need to pay close attention to because it speaks about how we are expected to live in the Kingdom of God NOW!

#### **IV – LIVING FOR THE KING:**

Jesus himself is giving us a virtual example of how we are to be living in this life for the next. How we are supposed to be conducting ourselves in the Kingdom now. Not later, not in heaven, but here on earth.

He tells us that when he judges from the throne he will separate all these nations, all these people in to two separate groups. The goat and the sheep. The sheep went about feeding the hungry, watering the thirsty, being hospitable to strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the oppressed. The goats did none of this.

The line that should scare us is that whatever they did or didn't do was how they were treating Jesus, that such service was actually service to Jesus. And the sheep got heaven and the goats got hell.

We are called as subjects of King Jesus to take care of the "least of these" which are the weak and unimportant members in our community, in the world. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus by caring for, protecting, and sheltering the weak, indigent, marginalized, and persecuted members of the family of God.

That's how we will be ready, by caring for Jesus' brothers and sisters.

## **V – ARE WE READY?**

It appears that we need to rethink this thing called Salvation. According to this parable we will have to answer for our actions in this human existence. It would appear that **we are not so much judged on our decision about Jesus' Lordship but on the basis of living under that Lordship.**

So as we enter into our Advent season – the beginning of the church calendar, maybe this year we need to reconsider our King and the Kingdom we live in.

We need to remember that no matter what happens due to the Covid-19 pandemic. No matter what parties and gatherings get cancelled, no matter our need to adjust our schedules and our lives to keep ourselves and others safe, God still Reigns and through the life death and resurrection of his Son Jesus the Kingdom has been established and we are living in it. For this we need to continually give thanks and honor to God and Jesus with joyful hearts and voices...and...remember...

It's our calling from Jesus to take care of that Kingdom. To live the way he taught us and to always take care of the "least of these" so we will be ready for the King's return.

Advent, a time of Joy and generosity is a wonderful time to re-evaluate your life and make sure you're grazing with the sheep...not the goats. AMEN