

Fourth Sunday in End Time – Christ the King
November 20, 2016
Jeremiah 23:2-6
What is Jesus Our King Doing Right This Minute?
Rev. George Ferch

Dear friends in Christ, the King:

We know what Jesus did in the past. The eternal Son of God became a true man to live and die as the full payment for our sins. We begin preparing for this humble birth next Sunday as Advent begins. We know what Jesus will do in the future. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. We saints triumphant will live with him in timeless eternity. We just learned about that again these past weeks during End Time.

My question is about something maybe we do not think about as much. As we go about our regular tasks of living, including our presence in worship, what is Jesus doing? We rise up in the morning, we work, we play, we eat, we sleep, and we go to bed at night. We do all these things under the perfect rule of Jesus, the Christ. He is the King of the universe and King of our hearts.

We know and confess Jesus our King “is sitting at the right hand of God the Father almighty.” But what is he doing while seated there? What is Jesus Our King Doing Right This Minute? He is reigning wisely. He is being the Lord our Righteousness.

God the Father returned Jesus and elevated Jesus to this position of authority and rule because Jesus fulfilled his work of redeeming us from sin, death and hell. Paul wrote to the Ephesians in the second chapter, “God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” What is Jesus our King doing at this very minute? He is reigning wisely.

It was this way in Jeremiah’s day when he prophesied right before Judah’s conquest by the Babylonians. God told the false prophets and evil kings he would bestow punishment on them. God said he would do this “because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them.”

In Israel’s theocratic life where there essentially was no difference between the church and the state, these evil shepherds failed in their call to feed and care for God’s people. As a result, God put them out. The nations suffered judgment. God in his grace preserved a remnant of the flock in Babylon. There he raised up good leaders like Ezra and Nehemiah, and Esther. They not only fed the people, but led them back to their pasture in Israel.

In prophecy, Jeremiah also saw our day in the New Testament era when Christ our King rules and governs the world for the sake of the church. No longer one, church and state continue under Christ’s authority. Jesus is ruling wisely. He is King of kings and Lord of lords who oversees and controls events in what Luther called God’s left hand, the government. Paul reminded the Romans and us in chapter 13, “There is no authority except that which God has established?”

What is Jesus our king doing right this minute? He is overseeing and controlling world events for the best interest of his church. This is not a political sermon, of course, yet we do remember that governments and societies do not exist and function in a vacuum. They function under the divine rule of the crucified, resurrected, and exalted Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

Jesus also is ruling wisely in the church. Through the Word of God, our King exposes the false shepherds who are not feeding his people. We think back to the time of the Reformation we recently celebrated. Throughout church history, Christ our King has exposed false teachers and false teachings.

Jeremiah describes Jesus' work as our King this way, "He will do what is right and just in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety." Judah and Israel are the church. We are saved and life in safety because our King rules. He who rules is special, unique. We call Jesus, "the Lord our Righteousness."

Jeremiah saw the day of the fulfillment of God's promise to send the Savior into the world. That Savior would be "a righteous Branch." He would be holy because he is God. A branch is not like a branch on a tree. It is a new growth, a new tree that sprouts from the root of another. Jesus is God, a man from the house of David.

Jesus would live a holy life and die an innocent death. God the Father declares his righteousness under the law ours by his resurrection from the dead. In faith, the church, believers, call Jesus, "the Lord our Righteousness." We know we have no righteousness of our own under the law.

What is Jesus our King doing right this minute? He is being the Lord our righteousness. He is at the right hand of God as our Savior and Mediator. We take our confessions and prayers to the Father through him. God grants our forgiveness and requests through Christ. Paul wrote to Timothy in his first letter, the second chapter, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all men-the testimony given in its proper time."

The proper time Timothy wrote about are the "The days are coming," Jeremiah wrote about. They are the days we live in following Jesus birth, death, resurrection, ascension in which he rules wisely and as the Lord our righteousness.

Jesus as God and man fills everything in every way. 24/7 is at times an overused expression for all the time. It is surely and absolutely appropriate when we think of Jesus Christ, the King especially on Christ the King Sunday. On this last Sunday of the church year, we pause as we prepare to begin again a new church year. In that new church year we begin again to have the gospel reveal to us everything God planned and did for us from eternity to eternity.

Those things are not mere historical events. They are not mere futuristic visions. The things Jesus did for us and will do for us are at each end of the perfectly just and righteous rule Jesus carries out 24/7 from his position of authority and glory with his Father. From there he rules the world wisely. He rules our hearts with his righteousness.

May the Lord God's prophet words through Jeremiah lead us to a constant awareness and appreciation for the rule of Christ our King. It is a great benefit to us right this minute and every minute. Amen. <SDG>