



***This week's Revd. Morris' message: Living more fully as Christ's subjects in today's world...what would it look like for each of us?***



In today's Gospel, Jesus' and Pilate's different understandings of power are contrasted. Pilate asks 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Pilate is concerned with assessing the level of political risk Jesus poses to the Roman Empire - arguably one of the most powerful empires the world has known.

We know that the Jewish leaders were constantly concerned about Jesus' claim to be the long awaited Jewish Messiah who was to wield both Kingly and Divine power to liberate and restore the Jewish Nation. Sometimes, these leaders were concerned that Jesus' claim to the Messiahship was fraudulent and thus they feared Roman retribution when those who followed him may start a doomed Jewish revolt. Other-times, they were convinced that He was the Messiah, but were concerned at what He would do to their privileged positions and religious power.[ See John 12: 47ff].

Jesus responds to Pilate's query by frankly admitting that He is King but a King in a much different sense than as understood by Pilate or the Jewish leaders. This King serves, suffers and empowers His subjects to become what they were meant to become. His rule brings freedom, justice, dignity, abundance and most of all Shalom Peace - everything is 'put to rights' and is in a right relationship to everything else. His rule is not imposed by force or violence upon His subjects, but rather they choose Him as their God and King. We live today in a world where another King and 'Political rulers' govern us. Yet, as Christians, we strive to also live out lives under Jesus' rule of love until His Kingdom comes in full power and Glory [ as we heard last week in Mark 13:4ff].

By the way, Jesus' question in response to Pilate has been the subject of many theological discussions over the years. Verse 34: 'Are you saying this of yourself, or did someone else say it about me?' Some scholars believe that this question means that Jesus is testing Pilate to state whether he thought that Jesus was in fact claiming to be a Jewish King. Note that this was indeed the charge nailed to the cross on Pilate's orders. That Jesus was the King .. not that He merely claimed to be a King [ see John 19: 19 ff]. Other scholars read the original Greek to mean "Do you mean their [ Jewish ] King or their Messiah?". Other scholars take the meaning to be "King" as you use the term, or as the Jews use it?. Whichever meaning you think is more accurate, what is clear is that, in the end, Pilate came to the conclusion that Jesus posed no political threat in and of Himself, but that, nevertheless, it was politic to have him crucified. [see John 19 :12].

## **Well, what does this mean for us today?**

As noted above, we live in an 'in between time' where Jesus invites us to *make Him the King of our lives*, put Him first, follow Him and live and act so as to seek to bring His Kingdom values into our world, here and now. Yet, we await the time when His Kingdom will come into full effect starting on the in the day of His Second coming.

As Jesus' subjects we are called to put away all forms of violence and to simply only wield the weapon of His Agape Love. This is a dangerous challenge with many of the faithful being forced to suffer or die for their Heavenly King when His leading comes into conflict with earthly 'Kings', powers and governments.

*I wonder what living more as His faithful subject would look like for each of us? ... In our own hearts and lives, in our families, workplaces, communities, church and all those whose lives we touch? **Gospel reading: John 18:33-37***

**Some resources to dig deeper:** <https://mypastoralponderings.com/2021/11/20/thy-kingdom-come-my-sermon-on-john-1833-37/> ; <https://www.bibleref.com/John/18/John-18-34.html> ; <https://newlifennarrabri.wordpress.com/2018/11/22/reflection-on-john-1833-37-2/> ; <https://tillchrist.wordpress.com/category/john-18-33-37/>

**Upcoming Parish Activities: Midweek service** : Wednesday 10:30 a.m; **Every Sunday Guitars and Ukulele lessons** at 3 p.m; **Bible Study** Wednesday at 7 pm and Friday at 10:30 am; **Hanging of the Greens** Saturday 30th November @9am; **NB AGM Part 1 will be held after service on 1st December. Please prayerfully consider if you are being called to be a part of the leadership team at St Matt's - see Revd Morris or the Wardens for more details.**

**Readings for Next Sunday:** Jeremiah 33 :14-16; Psalm: 25:1-10; 1Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-28

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**Parish website :** <https://www.stmatthewshollandpark.com/>

**Parish Private Facebook site :** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/292308270851142> ; **Public Site:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556418523933> ; **Tipper's Treasure's Facebook site:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559040358754>

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:**

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.

## JESUS CHRIST, OUR KING

