

## “Giving Glory and Thanks to Jesus the True King”

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Since 1863, the American calendar has observed Thanksgiving on the final Thursday of November. And for Christians who observe the church calendar (such as Anglicans), last Sunday was Christ the King Sunday, which ends the church calendar year by observing the reign of the King of Kings. 2024 is in fact the one hundredth year observing Christ the King Sunday. A new church year is initiated this upcoming Sunday with the season of Advent (waiting for the true King).

One of this past Sunday’s lectionary texts included Revelation 1 verses 5 and 6, which give us a beautiful reminder of Christ’s nature: “... Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

First, because we are loved by Jesus the Messiah, our response to God should be simply to take him at his word and live in the light of his love. This brings God glory! We can trust God absolutely. Wherever we go, in this world or the next, in life or in death, we are never beyond the range of God’s love, and for this we must give him thanks and love and trust him. What we know is that God commanded his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8)

Second, ponder that Christ shed his blood for us. This was no mere demonstration. It was an effective act. It achieved something. It loosed us from our sins. In his own body, Christ bore our sins on the tree; and because he bore them, we are no longer in their grip; the least we can do is let them go! I know; that is easier said than done. There are so many of them that are so natural and easy, and seem so slight and insignificant, the common sins of everyday life, which for the most part the world does not count as sin at all. But we know them.

If our ancestry means anything at all, it means a sensitivity and sincerity of conscience. But this edge is in danger of being dulled, and if it is, we shall in large measure lose our right to a separate and distinctive existence. How do we retain it? The answer is that we remember how it was that we were freed from our sins. It was not by corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ. Remember this and we will let go of our sins one step at a time through the power of the Holy Spirit and through our cooperation with God’s grace and thereby give glory to God.

Finally, remember that Christ has made his followers “kings and priests.” I remember my high school football days when I played wide receiver. My job was to make as many blocks and catch as many passes as I could. My uniform might be spotless, and my conversation to my teammates enthusiastic, but if I could not make blocks and

catch passes, I was not bringing glory to my team. Well, friends, God has made his followers kings and priests, and we cannot glorify him if we do not act as a royal priesthood. As a kingdom of priests, all Christ's followers must play a full part in the life of our churches, not leaving it solely to the ordained clergy and staff members. It is for all followers of Jesus to pray and live such holy lives that through our lives the glory and grace of the living God is communicated to our fellow human beings.

So, let us with grateful hearts celebrate on Thanksgiving, giving thanks for all our many blessings, especially for God's amazing love for us, and may we live in such a way that brings glory to him. May God richly bless you and cause you to flourish in your God-given destiny.