

Palmarum

"The governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Why is it so offensive that Jesus should be King? Why so impossible to accept?

The Jews whispered the smear to Pilate then said "We have no king but Ceasar."

The whole of the governor's trial centered around this question.

The soldiers mocked Him with kingly trappings.

It was the official accusation which hung above His cross.

Strangers passing by derided Him and asked Him to prove it.

Still today, Jesus' kingship is a point of contention.

Jesus' kingship means that He is in control and, therefore, we are not.

It means that He can tell me what to do and has the power to enforce it.

It means that I should fear Him and His wrath and not act contrary to Him.

And this causes resentment and defiance toward God.

On the most basic level, it takes me out of the driver's seat.

It puts another in charge and strips me of my power.

And that means faith and not sight.

Like a passenger in an airplane or on a tour bus or even in the back seat.

I go where the pilot (that's the meaning of governor) takes me with no input.

Most times, I can't even see where we are going.

I can only look out the window and see where we are.

But control over my fate is totally in the hands of another.

I submit to you that this is really at bottom of the fear of flying.

It is the fear of not being in control.

This is also at the bottom of resistance of Jesus' kingship.

And just like the back-seat driver who is trying desperately to control the vehicle.

So also we, second guess God, resent Him, complain about His path, etc...

In fact, this is the very root of all sin--to declare independance from God and to assert our own will and sovereignty against His.

Why else would you neglect to pray every moment of your life - unless you think that there are some moments that are your's alone and some that are God's?

Which are which? Do you know? Can you tell?

Why else would you disobey parents, teachers, policemen and other authorities?

Unless you think that some are from God and others are not.

St. Paul says, that all authorities are from God.

Which ones do you think He's wrong about? Can you tell? Do you know?

Why would you think that any of your decisions can be made independant of--or contrary to God's laws and commands?

It is because you would throw off His Kingship and choose your own path.

Because you better know your needs and circumstances than He does.

This can happen either in open defiance of His commands -- as unbelievers do.

Or it can happen by a simple inattention to His commands -- as the religious do.

Don't examine His laws too closely, or they might contradict what I want to do.

Either way, at the heart of all sin is a self-centered willfulness.

But then the Word of God strikes home and I am called back to account to Him.

Fear of His wrath takes hold of me and I again feel the necessity of obeying Him.

But now another reason arises to be offended at Jesus, the King.

After we have come to repent of our willfulness and to seek out His rule...

We look to Jesus and find weakness...

...Not the sort of thing that inspires confidence in His leadership.

We pray for healing and continue to be sick.

We pray for business success and continue to struggle.

We pray for help in family strife and see little forthcoming.

We look to the King Himself and see Him standing helpless before Pilate.

We look to Jesus and see Him hanging on a tree and unable to come down.

His crown is of thorns. His robe is a rag. His thrown is a cross.

Suddenly, Jesus as the King doesn't look all that great anymore.

How is He now in any position to help me?

Nor does it look that threatening to disobey Him.

After all, what could He do to me from there?

And when was the last time that He punished somebody with a bolt of lightning?

But suddenly it becomes clear that this reason to reject Jesus, King is the very same as we started out with.

Namely, I think that I can do better than He can.

So whether I reject His kingdom because of His power, or because of His weakness, I still think that I can do better than God.

Here we have met the enemy and it is us.

Your enemy is not the one who takes your money, or honor, or good name, or life.

Your enemy is your own heart. Your own mind. Your own attitude toward God.

That is the enemy that needs to be defeated in order to protect and save you.

That is the enemy that threatens to destroy you eternally.

And that is precisely the enemy that Jesus, the King, comes to defeat.

The reason for every impulse to ignore, defy or reject your King is because you don't yet see your real enemy.

But when you now recognize that your true enemy is Satan--the deceiver, and sin--your own inner guide, and death--your inevitable end...

Now you can see Jesus as King who comes to destroy these enemies.

He destroys death by dying as your substitute.

He destroys sin by becoming a sinner in your stead.

He destroys Satan by forgiving your sins and thus, giving you a new heart.

This is the King who reigns and triumphs from the tree.

And no heart is beyond His redemption.

No sin is too great a foe.

No life is too far gone to rescue.

Neither those who delivered Him over.

Nor those who denied Him in time of trial.

Nor those who nailed Him to His throne.

Nor even you, who have resented, ignored, or otherwise cast off His rule.

But today you hear His Words of forgiveness and they are spoken to you.

Today you see His blood pour out and His body lifted up for the life of the world.

Today you see the King of Glory enthroned in all of His merciful, forgiving and saving glory.

And today you rejoice that He is King like no other king you have ever known.