

# Series: Christmas 2020

## Sermon #3: Jesus Is Your King

Various passages

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- December 20, 2020

Well, hey, good morning, Grace! Thanks for joining us today and for watching us online. It's Christmas week. Christmas Eve is Thursday. I don't know—it's like, What happened? Anyone? What happened? And what do you get a wonderful woman who has everything and thinks her husband's love for her is more than enough? What do you get that person? I don't know, actually. I'm not sure. We'll see. There's still so much time though, right? Anyway ...

It's great to be here today. Let me tell you, this is a great Sunday to be with us, because today we're going to look at how to conquer those things that conquer us; how to defeat those areas in our life that constantly defeat us; how to win in a part of your life where you're a loser. That's what we're going to do. Who's in? You guys want to play?

If you're taking notes, it's a simple outline: **Jesus Christ is your King, and what difference does that make?** Today we're going to look at the title, or the office, of Jesus Christ being the King and how that absolutely helps us become like Christ in all of life. It has the potential of radically changing the way we live our lives, just knowing who He is in that title.

First, Jesus Christ is your King. Jesus is your king. We're just sang that: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her ... King." Let earth receive her King.

What is a king? In almost every culture in every epic, a king has at least two essential attributes. One is ownership and the second is the right to rule all that he owns.

### A King Owns Everything

Ownership: a king owns everything. He owns the land, he owns the soil, he owns the people planting on that soil. He gets to choose what crop is going to go out next year. *Hey, honey, what do you think? Strawberries next year? Yes. Everybody plants strawberries.* He does that.

The people there are renters. They pay the king back with their produce. They get to live there. It's not theirs. He owns them.

### **A King Rules All That He Owns**

And then the second thing comes kind of naturally. He's the ruler—the king is the ruler. He has the right to rule all that he owns. He chooses what will be planted, where you will live, where you will build, whether you'll live or die. *You—die*. They die. He chooses whether they go to war or whether there will be peace. That's why Hamlet says that there are fewer things scarier than a bored king. Sometimes they just go to war because they can. A king owns and a king rules. And the people do what they're told.

### **Jesus Is King**

Jesus is King. Literally, from the beginning of His life to the end of His life, the writers of His experience here on earth keep telling us He's a king.

#### **Luke 1:29-33**

**Mary was greatly touched at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, <sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end.**

Even before His birth, before the announcement of His birth in the classic Christmas passage in Luke chapter 1: “Mary was greatly troubled with the words and wondered what kind of greeting she had just received from the angel. But the angel said to her, ‘Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son and you will give Him the name Jesus. And He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him a throne, the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end.’”

He owns it all and He rules it all.

All four writers of His life in the biographies write about Him being a king, but no writer more than the Matthew in his book. Matthew makes his theme of that story of Jesus the theme of Jesus as King. He owns it, He rules it. He starts his book and ends his book with this in mind.

### **Matthew 2:1-2**

**After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”**

He starts his story of Jesus in Matthew chapter 2. He says, “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah during the time of King Herod, the Magi came from the east of Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship Him.’”

That’s the beginning of Matthew. The end of Matthew—the last paragraph in Matthew—Jesus comes and says, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. Now go tell everyone how to obey all I have commanded.” That’s a king saying, *I’m going to rule. I’m a king. You just obey.*

There are too many stories in the Bible. If you look at His storyline in the four gospels you can just see Him being a king where He owns it and He rules it.

One of my favorite stories is when all the men are on a boat and they’re in the middle of the Sea of Galilee and they are caught off guard by a squall, this torrential storm. And some of these men are seasoned fishermen and they are scared for their lives. And Jesus is sleeping and they wake Him up and tell Him all that’s happening and how their death is imminent, and Jesus stands up and says, “Sit. Stay.” It’s like He’s commanding a dog. And everything just stops—not a ripple on the lake, instantly. And the boys say, “Even the winds and the waves obey Him.” Well, yeah. Because He owns the waves and He rules the winds—because He’s king. He’s King Jesus.

**Luke 19:38**

**“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

His last week of life is all about Him being a king. Like Palm Sunday—it’s His triumphal entry. He’s coming to Jerusalem as a king and while He’s coming down, here’s what they’re chanting: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”

**John 18:37**

**“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”**

When He stands before Pilate, Pilate says, *Let’s quit beating around the bush here. Is it true?* He says this: “You are the king, then?”

Jesus says, “Yeah, you’re right in saying that I am king. In fact, for this very reason I was born. For this I came into the world, to testify that it is truth, and everyone on the side of this truth listens to me.” *I’m a king, and everybody I rule listens to me.*

He’s the King of the Jews. On His crucifixion cross over His head was a sign, in three languages: King of the Jews. He’s the King. Jesus Christ is the King.

There’s part one. He owns and He rules everything, everyone.

**What Difference Does It Make?**

Part two of our outline: so, what difference does that make? How could His kingship make a difference in our lives? And I would say, Oh, it matters. It changes the things that are unchangeable in us. It gives us power over the things where we feel we’re powerless, this kingship, this ownership of us.

**The Issue Is Motivation**

Here’s why: because the issue is motivation. What motivates us to change? There are a lot of different motivations for change. We know this as parents as well. But in the Bible, there

are primarily five different motivations for change. God uses all five of them. But in the context of our storyline, we're going to see that the offices that we've studied—prophet, priest, and king—they kind of appeal to different motivations.

Again, just like parents, we use different incentives. There are carrots and there are sticks, right, to help our children to become who they were meant to become, who God wanted them to become. And there are five different ways to help us become like Christ in all of life, and here's why. Because there are few things that glorify God more than a changed life. When a person surrenders his life completely to the Lord Jesus and they start changing from the inside out, that is what makes angels gawk and stare.

So, there are different motivations for parenting and there are different motivations that God uses to help us change. That's what He does in these different offices.

### **How a Prophet Motivates**

So, in the office of the prophet—two weeks ago Kevin was teaching on the prophet. And it's the wisdom, the intelligence of God coming to us. And it's in that context where the motivation is—He'll say, *This is the reasonable way to live. This is the way you should live your life because it's good. It's good for you. It's the smart way to live.*

Sometimes even as parents we would say, *It's the smart way to live.* It's usually the lazy way to live. It's easier if you do things this way, this obedience. And your life changes because it makes sense to you.

### **How a Priest Motivates**

As a priest sometimes—a parent talks almost like a priest. When Jesus comes as our great high priest, we realize that He exchanged His life for our lives, that He was the great high priest that didn't sacrifice the blood of bulls and sheep or goats, but His own life. And how does that happen? What motivates us with that understanding? Gratitude. Joy. And so—Yeah, look at this joy overflowing, your gratitude for all that Jesus has done for you. You should obey. You should do these things. You should change your life. And many times, we do that. Untold gratitude; I want to become like Christ in all of life.

Parents sometimes—*Look, you've got free food and housing here. How about you pick up your socks, huh? How about that? How about you're a little bit grateful and maybe you mow a lawn once a month?*

See, it shows up ... I'm just saying, as a prophet and as a priest. Parents sometimes talk like prophets: *This is the wise thing to do.* They talk like priests: *How about a little gratitude.*

### **How a King Motivates: There's No Choice**

Kings? Kings just say, *Because I said so.* And parents say that too. Don't they? *Because I said so*—you haven't said that? You don't have teenagers. It'll come. It'll happen.

See, here's the thing. There's no choice with kings. There is freedom in republics and democracies, but there is no freedom in monarchies. The king declares, he has edicts, and then people obey because he owns them, because he rules them.

### **Application: Choose to Have No Choice**

And this idea of being under authority and doing what you're told can chafe on you a little bit, but it's nothing new. It's like a new motivation. You know, we appeal to that in our own lives when we want something over there and we know that the road to that destination—we're not very good on that road. When we want to get something in our lives or we want to become something in our lives and we know that we're not able to rise to that, what we do is we bring authority into our lives and we let them make our choices for us.

Let me give you a couple of examples. You want to become a better athlete, and so you hire a coach, a personal trainer. And then you make the choice to get that coach, that trainer, and then you don't make any other choices because now that coach owns you. That coach rules you. Because if you get your choice involved in getting in shape, really getting in shape, your choices will say things like, *It's too hot, it's too cold, I'm too tired, it's too late.* And what does the coach say? *Run until you throw up.* And you do. And you pay them to say that. So, if you think about working out, you won't work out. There's no thinking in working out—no thinking there.

The largest athletic apparel company—what is their tagline? Let's talk about it? Let's think about it? Let's feel about it? What? *Just do it.*

Under Armour—do you know what theirs is? *Rent's due*. The rent's due. Does that sound a little ominous to you? It's doesn't sound like there's a lot of choice in that. Rent's due—get to work.

The point is that it's the coach. You just obey.

Sometimes men and women want to become more than they could ever become and it's their choices that get them in trouble all the time. And so, they go into the military because they want to be all they can be, but getting there—they keep tripping and falling. And so, they go and they enlist and they end up in some big gymnasium where they end up with all their bags and then somebody says, "Drop your bags, raise your hand." And that's the last time they'll choose for a long time. They will be sworn in. And at the end of that swearing in they are in the military.

And they are introduced to their new drill sergeant. That drill sergeant owns them. He rules them. He's going to tell them, *I'm your mother, your father, your nation, your god* (small "g"). And if they wonder about that they can ask him and he'll tell them. He's going to tell them when to sleep, when to eat, when to go to the bathroom. He's going to tell them what to do and when to do it. And by the way, there's just not a whole of negotiating in this. There's no reason. There's no passion involved. There's just obedience.

*Hey Sarge, I'm just trying to understand ... we kind of took a vote and we're trying to wonder about the wisdom of having to run in this desert sun wearing a hazmat suit. Could you convince us why this is a good idea?* He doesn't respond to that. *You know, Sarge, I'm trying to have this untold, everlasting love for you and it's not doing what it needs to, to get me to stand out in the winter snow wearing nothing but underwear. So, I don't think I'm going to be able to do that.* That's not how it works. He tells you what to do and then you do it. *Sir, yes sir.* He's the sergeant and so you just obey. You'll be glad you did, just like you're glad you obeyed the coach.

Can I put it still a third way, for some of you geeks out there? "This is the way." If you don't know what that means, it means you don't have a choice. It also means that we can't be friends. If you don't know what "This is the way" means, then ... I don't know what you're doing with all this spare time.

Jesus is your King. And what difference does that make? He owns you and He rules over you. And if you think about the impossible things in your life, those things that keep kicking you to the curb all the time or most of the time, could you maybe not try to reason and not try to pull

in your passion for the love of God? And just appeal to duty, obligation, submission to authority. He's the King. Just obey Him.

Look, let's do this. Think of an example in your life where the bully in your life comes to you and it always ends up with you getting sand kicked in your face. Can you think of an area where you struggle, and by "struggle" I mean lose. Some kind of a passion—maybe eating too much or drinking too much or greed or envy—something. Can you think of that? A fear—fear is a big one now--compulsion towards being afraid. Do you have it? We're going to put it to this test case. Do you have it?

All right, turn to the person next to you and tell them what it is. No, we're not going to do that...I'm just kidding. We have our masks on. Otherwise we would. We can't do that.

Here's what I want to do. Now that you have that in mind, I want us to think about how maybe the reason we fail so much in this particular area is because we're trying to reason about it like He's a prophet. Or we're trying to use passion and enjoy our way into obedience. And I want to appeal now that to the idea that we just do what the King tells us to do. Because here's the thing—if it's good enough to obey a mean coach or it's good enough to obey an ugly sergeant, then how much more would you be willing to obey a good and beautiful king, King Jesus?

Let's look at a couple of areas, three areas that have shown themselves in my life anyway, and how this office of kingship changed my life. It changed me to become like Christ in a new way in a part of my life that wasn't that way.

One was generosity. I have been in slavery to greed for decades. Not like coveting stuff, because that just wasn't a thing. It was more like money is safety. We didn't have a lot growing up and we weren't safe in many ways, so money equals safety, and more money equals more safety. So, the idea of becoming generous with the very thing that's keeping me safe was contrary to what I could do. I just couldn't do it. And there are so many passages in the Bible about generosity. There are passages that are appealing to the prophet. Jesus is saying, *Look, there are a lot of really good reasons to be generous. It's a beautiful thing. It is more blessed to give than to receive. It is good to build your house in generosity. Joy comes with generosity. You can't out-give God. The more you give, the more you get. The more you hold, the more you lose.* All of those reasons—I saw them, I read them. It didn't change me.

Then there are passages in the Bible that are appealing to the priest Jesus. *Look at what He has done, this great high priest that gave His very life for us. And joy overflowing with*



*gratitude—He gave you all this. Why don't you just give a little bit of stuff? I got that. I get it. It didn't change a thing in me. I couldn't do it. I couldn't write the check because it had more power over me than my reason or my passions. I couldn't do it.*

*And then I'm just reading the Bible and Jesus is saying, *You can't have two kings. You can only have God and money, and you're going to do whatever one of those says.* And I realized, *A slave cannot have two masters. A slave cannot have two kings. I have chosen my king and I chose poorly. I'm doing what it says.**

### **Malachi 1:14**

**“Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great King,” says the Lord Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.”**

The last Old Testament prophet appeals not to reason, not to passion. When he comes and he convicts Israel—one of the reasons they go in time out for so long is because of their lack of generosity. And here's what he says. Listen to the motive that's happening here. This is Malachi chapter 1: “Cursed is the cheat that has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it to the Lord, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord.” Watch this. “‘For I am a great King,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And my name is to be feared among the nations.’”

*I read that and thought, *That's me. Every month I have the choice lamb to give to the Lord. This is my first offering. And then I wait to the end of the month, and what do I have left? Scraps. Somehow always scraps. Blind sheep, crippled goats, whatever it might be. You get what's left over.**

Can you imagine having Jesus Christ the King over to your house for Christmas? You know, family, big spread, turkey and ham and all that—let's just pretend. And then Jesus sits down and everyone gets fed, everyone gets their plates filled, but not Jesus. Then you get Jesus' plate after everyone is done and you say, *Look, a little bit of mashed potatoes left over. Here, you've got a couple of chicken bones. Here are two green beans. Good for you. There you go, Jesus. Happy Christmas meal. You get what's left over.* And you think, is that any way to treat a king? A king gets leftovers—no. That passage hurt me so bad just realizing His place in the

whole universe. *The winds and the waves obey Him, but I don't. I'm just going to do this because I need to obey. He owns me and He rules me. He owns my wallet and He rules over my wallet.*

So, I just started obeying. It wasn't out of joy, it wasn't out of logic. It was out of obedience and duty. And I just started giving. I just started doing what I was told. And it's been awesome. I have become more like Christ in the areas of generosity in my life. And it's been great. It was duty-driven, okay? But let me tell you something. Those other passages are true. It is better to give than to receive. It honestly is. There is joy overflowing when a person becomes generous within their heart. It's great. You get there any way you can. But in this way, in this part of my life, it just needed duty. I just needed a king to tell me what to do. I couldn't be trusted with choice.

Look at the passions in our lives—things like food or entertainment or some kind of substance in our lives that is winning all the time. Maybe it's winning because you're not bringing that under the lordship, the kingship, of Jesus the King.

### **1 Corinthians 6:18**

**Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.**

There are few passions stronger than sexual lust, right? And so, watch how in the Bible there's this appeal to just obey when it comes to those sorts of things. He says in 1 Corinthians, "Flee sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside the body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." This is King Jesus barking out orders. *Just obey me.*

### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

**Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.**

And why do you obey? The rest of the section says, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is inside of you, whom you've received from God? You are not your own. You are bought with a price. Therefore honor your God with your body."

Your body? You can't even say that right! His body. He paid for it, He owns it, He rules over it, you do what you're told.

In sexual immorality issues, Coach Jesus says, *Go long*. Sergeant Jesus says, *What are you doing in this battle? Run, Forrest, run! Get out of there. You're not even supposed to be here!*

King Jesus is a king. He owns us. He rules us. We do what we're told. Just obey.

This works with all of our passions. Melinda and I were on a path towards anxiety just this week. *Oh, quick, let's go worry about stuff that we can't do anything about*. And we were walking down this path ever so gleefully and it just came to me, *Hey, wait a minute. Jesus has spoken here. He told us, "Do not worry about tomorrow. Today has enough problems of its own."* And we said, *Sir, yes sir!* And we just started having fun that day. Just obey. You can't reason your way out of worry a lot of times. You can't passion/love your way out of anxiety a lot of times. But you can be duty bound and do what you're told. That will work.

You know, when it comes to practicing the Sabbath, we took some of the passages of the Bible about the Sabbath and we applied them to our parenting a lot. You know, the Sabbath is taking a day off to worship and to rest. And when we talked to our children, we would say, "You know, you should do this because it's good for you," or as the priest who would say "Look at all that God has done for us and we should be grateful and respond back to Him" and "God practiced the Sabbath. After six days He rested. He's like our great high priest. We should practice that too." Good, use that example. It's reasonable.

But most of the time we just said, "Because we said so. We're going to go to bed early on Saturday night, we're going to wake up on Sunday, the truck leaves at zero 8:50 and you're going to be in that truck. You do have a choice—you have jammies or church clothes. That's what you get to choose. But you're going to church. And when we come home Mom's not cooking. Dad's going to buy some food and you're going to like but it's probably really bad for you, and then Mom and Dad get a nap. That is the Sabbath. Now whether you enjoy it or not is entirely up to your choice, but this is how we rule this house—like kings and queens. Because we said so."

And there are some passages in the Bible that teach all three of those motivations for the Sabbath. The one we used a lot was just ruling like a king. It works. It really works.

And next week if a lot of you guys come back and all you're wearing is jammies, no worries, because it will still be 2020 and who cares anymore, right? Better to be here in your jammies than not be here at all.

## Summary

Anyway, here's the point. We're having fun, but I'm telling you, there's a lot of power in this. Jesus comes to us. We've talked about this for three weeks now. He comes to us as a prophet, He comes as a priest, and He comes as a king. He's all three of those for eternity.

When it comes to hard obedience, hard acts of obedience, **the prophet Jesus** comes up and He says, *You know what? To become like Christ in all of life it would make sense for you to do that. It is the best life you could ever live. It's the greatest joy that you could ever have. You should do this. It makes sense. If nothing else, it's the easiest way to live.*

Sometimes in our lives we have a need for sacrificial obedience. It's going to cost a lot. And **the priest Jesus** shows up and He motivates with what He has and says, *I am the great high priest. The greatest exchange in all of history has taken place where I exchanged my righteousness for your sinfulness; my honor for your shame. I have given you power over areas where you are powerless. So, when you drink from that fountain it is joy overflowing, gratitude, gratefulness, that will motivate you to sacrifice. Because there is not sacrifice that you will give to the Lord where you won't get paid back tenfold.* And that will lead you to become like Christ in all of life, or at least in one part of your life.

But if it's an act of impossible obedience in your life—in your life—maybe not the guy next to you, but in your life—maybe it's what you eat or what you drink, some kind of commitment to fear and worry, a compulsion. When it comes to obeying, it's **Jesus the King** with the crown, with all the authority in heaven and earth. He'll just tell you what to do. And you should do it. Because He's the King. He owns you, and He needs to rule you. Just obey the King. Just obey Him.

In our series it's been about this: Let Jesus be Jesus for all that He is. Jesus the prophet: listen to Him. Jesus the priest: enjoy His sacrifice and His intervention for you. And Jesus the King: let Him own you, let Him rule you. Show Him that you are going to become like Christ in all of life as an expression of obedience. That's what it's like as Christ the King. That's what we

celebrate at Christmas. That little baby: a prophet, a priest, and the Almighty King. Let's live that way.

Join me in prayer. I'll start with a prayer from Psalm 95.

For Yahweh is a great God,  
the King above all gods.  
In His hands are the depths of the earth,  
and the mountain peaks all belong to Him.  
The sea is His. He made it.  
His hands formed the very dry land.  
Come, let us bow down and worship,  
let us kneel before Yahweh our maker;  
for He is our God  
and we are the people of His pasture,  
we're the flock under His care.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King.

*Lord, I'd ask that Your Spirit that lives within us, that has indwelt us, I'd ask that He would convict us of areas of our life that we need to stop thinking, stop trying to drum up enough emotion and gratitude and thankfulness and joy to obey; that we would stop that nonsense and see You for who You are. You're the King. You own us. You rule us. Help us learn to obey—not to negotiate, not litigate—just obey, so that we might become like Christ and obey all of your commandments; that we would do that with joy. We pray this in Jesus' holy name. Amen.*