

Bible Month – Week 5

Mark 11:1–16:8 - Jesus is Made King: From Jesus Triumphant Entry to the Risen King of All

Welcome to worship. We come into God's presence. 'We' come, not 'I' come. We 'come' because we move our focus consciously towards God. We come 'into God's presence', even though we are never away from God's presence, whose attention never drifts from us. Take a moment to remember those you come with. Take a moment to remember who God is – you might value thinking of some of the words you use to describe God. Take a moment to acknowledge God's presence with you, in you and around you.

Hymn StF 2 'Come let us sing to the One H&P 499 'King of glory'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNp5zEmBSos>

1 Come, let us sing to the One,
to the Father of life,
whose light fills the earth like the sun ;
come, tell of the wonders he's done.
Great is the world he has made,
are the myst'ries untold,
is his measureless power of old ;
come, come let us sing to our God.

*To our God, who is able
to strengthen us in his grace
beyond all we imagine,
be all glory and praise,
be all praise.*

3 Come, let us sing to the One,
to the Spirit of life,
leading us in the way of the Son ;
come, tell of the wonders he's done.
Strong is the Spirit within,
is the boldness to speak,
is the power to run when we're weak ;
come, come let us sing to our God.

Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Kristyn Getty (b. 1980)

2 Come, let us sing to the One,
to the Saviour of life,
find the fullness of God in the Son ;
come, tell of the wonders he's done.
Wild is the mercy of Christ,
is the richness of grace,
is the unending life we embrace ;
come, come let us sing to our God.

Prayer

Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit help us in our worship. We sometimes find it difficult to focus our attention on you. Sometimes we're not in the mood with lots of other things crowding in on us. We often struggle to hang onto the glimpses of you that we have known and that have blessed us in the past. Help us.

We believe you are our King and that you reign. As those dependent on you for life and purpose we worship and adore you. We have these two pictures of your kingship which we try to hold together – a majestic ornate throne and the other a wooden cross, a crown of glory and a plaited crown of thorns. We praise you for the kingship we see in both. We praise you for the signs of your kingdom we see in every-day life

reconciliation achieved,
injustice challenged, justice victorious,
peace emerging from dark places and difficult circumstances,
when co-operation morphs from conflict,
forgiveness given and accepted.

Let us hold silence for a moment as we recall where we have seen God at work this week.

Silence

Thank you for your work within your world. Thank you for your work in our lives.

In the name of Jesus our crucified, resurrected and ascended King we pray. Amen

Testimony – where have you seen God at work this week?

If you are worshipping in a group, you might consider asking someone to speak briefly about where they have seen God at work in the last week. If you are on your own, I invite you to pause and consider where you have seen God at work this week.

This week I saw God's hand at work in the gracious way fellow train passengers accepted with grace the problems of seating when the electronic reservation signs went down. The train was at Covid capacity. Everyone was in the wrong seat when the electronic system came back on! It could have caused a big fuss when this happened, but it didn't. Grace and understanding prevailed – thanks be to God.

Reading Mark 15 v 33 – 16 v 8 please don't pause between the sections indicated in your Bible. Read the story as one story.

Hymn StF 277 H&P 173 'My song is love unknown'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fnhiQnwl_M

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.
O who am I,
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die ?</p> <p>2 He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow ;
but they made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O my Friend,
my Friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend !</p> <p>3 Sometimes they strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing ;
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then 'Crucify !'
is all their breath,
and for his death
they thirst and cry.</p> <p>4 Why, what has my Lord done ?
What makes this rage and spite ?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries !
Yet they at these
themselves displease,
and 'gainst him rise.</p> | <p>5 They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away ;
a murderer they save,
the Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful he
to suffering goes,
that he his foes
from thence might free.</p> <p>6 In life no house, no home,
my Lord on earth might have ;
in death, no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say ?
Heaven was his home ;
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.</p> <p>7 Here might I stay and sing,
no story so divine :
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine !
This is my Friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days
could gladly spend.</p> |
|---|---|

Samuel Crossman (c. 1624–1683)

Sermon – What sort of king?

A German theologian, Martin Kähler, once described Mark's gospel as 'a passion narrative with an extended introduction.' Don't worry I'd never heard of Martin Kähler either, but I had heard the quote. I want to know why there have been 4 sermons on the introduction and just one on the main act!!! Only joking, I was part of the group which put the sections together!

If you do one thing in response to this sermon set aside time and read Mark 11 v 1 – Mark 16 v 8 in one go. It'll take a while to read, but you will be rewarded. I invite you as you read this section of Mark's gospel to focus on Jesus. That's always a good thing to do! What words would you use to describe him and what he is doing.

Here's some I thought of in the stories up to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus is in control. In control of himself. In control of arrangements – donkey provision & Passover planning.

Jesus is confident. It feels as if walks the Temple Courts looking everyone whoever they are straight in the eye. The way he answers questions.

Jesus is aggressive. Perhaps that should be angry or maybe more delicately righteously indignant. This is both when he causes the fig tree to wither and when he overturns the money changers etc in the Temple.

Jesus is pointed and in their face. He seems to go out of his way to antagonise the authorities with the stories he tells.

Jesus offers praise. 3 people are commended – 2 women and one man, 2 outsiders and one definitely part of the in-crowd.

Jesus teaches. This is in response to what he observes or the questions he is asked.

Jesus is blunt as he predicts the actions of Judas, Peter and all the disciples.

Jesus is a man wrestling with God until resolution comes.

I wonder what words you will come up with. I challenge you to find either meek or mild!!

In this part of the story from Palm Sunday to Gethsemane my Bible which puts Christ's words in red is at least 50% red. Jesus speaks a lot and does a lot.

These are words we might use to describe a king. I've seen behaviour like that on The Crown! Not of a king but a queen!!

From Gethsemane onwards it is different. The words to describe him are different. He is the object of the verbs whereas before he was the subject. The doer becomes the done-to.

He's seized and arrested

He is taken to the high priest

He is bound and handed to Pilate

He is silent more than he speaks both before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate. There's hardly any red print at all.

He is condemned. He is spat at. He is blindfolded and hit. He is beaten.

He is flogged. He is crucified. He is mocked. He is abandoned.

These are not words we would use to describe a king. Nothing like this on The Crown! But some hymn writers see royalty, majesty

Isaac Watts sees the Prince of Glory

Graham Kendrick sees the King of love

Samuel Crossman & Charles Wesley see the Prince of Life.

Let's not soften what the cross is. Let's not get all gooey-eyed over it. It is none other than a brutal, cruel, instrument of execution designed to maximise the pain of the victim. Yet we claim it to be a throne. That's sick isn't it. A place where Jesus reigns? This broken, defeated, done-to man?

I wonder ... maybe it's where we see most clearly what sort of king he is in relation to those in the kingdom. Maybe this shows the nature of the king's reign.

Commitment to the principles & values of the kingdom – justice, reconciliation, forgiveness, life, shalom

Commitment to the people of the kingdom – love, sacrifice, grace & generosity of all these things.

This is Kingship, which challenges our notions and understanding of kingship.

The section doesn't end with chapter 15 v 47. It moves into chapter 16. The final word on kingship is God's word and God's word is resurrection. The resurrection is God's endorsement of who Jesus was and is. The resurrection is God's yes to the model of kingship seen in Jesus.

We are invited to be a part of this kingdom. Our king has led the way. May God grant us the courage to follow.

Hymn StF 312 H&P 209 'The head that once was crowned with thorns'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpzoSWoaSso>

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 The head that once was crowned with thorns
is crowned with glory now ;
a royal diadem adorns
the mighty Victor's brow. | 4 To them the cross, with all its shame,
with all its grace, is given,
their name an everlasting name,
their joy the joy of heaven. |
| 2 The highest place that heaven affords
is his, is his by right,
the King of kings and Lord of lords,
and heaven's eternal light. | 5 They suffer with their Lord below,
they reign with him above,
their profit and their joy to know
the mystery of his love. |
| 3 The joy of all who dwell above,
the joy of all below
to whom he manifests his love
and grants his name to know. | 6 The cross he bore is life and health,
though shame and death to him ;
his people's hope, his people's wealth,
their everlasting theme. |

Thomas Kelly (1769–1855)

Prayers for others

We pray gracious God, King of Love, Prince of Peace for your Church.

We remember the Church faithfully witnessing and serving in places under great duress. We remember those Christian sisters and brothers who are seeking to amplify the voice of those who are often not heard.

Silence - in your imagination consider these Christians

You know their needs, Lord. Our prayer is that your will be done in and through them.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray gracious God, King of Love, Prince of Peace for your world.

Silence – bring to mind the places, people and issues which have caught your attention this week from across the world.

Loving God the world is so big and matters so complex and intertwined we sometimes don't know where to start or what to say. We hold these places, these people, these apparently intractable situations before you asking, that your work in them will be furthered and that your kingdom may grow.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray gracious God, King of Love, Prince of Peace for things closer to home.

Our neighbourhoods, families, the church of which we are a part.

Silence

Loving God, you know our hearts, the cares we carry, the responsibilities we have. Help to remember we don't bear these on our own, but with you and others who you place alongside us. Lift those which don't belong to us and grant us strength to hold with others those which are ours.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Lord's Prayer – a week ago in a lunchtime event celebrating 900 years since the founding of Reading Abbey we were reminded that those 12th century monks would have said this prayer. So, we heard it prayed in Latin as well as English. It was then prayed in two Chinese languages, Spanish, French and another language the name of which I didn't catch. This prayer links us to those who have gone before us and our brothers and sisters across the world.

Hymn StF 287 & H&P 180 'When I survey'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_fvFfPqjO4

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 When I survey the wondrous cross,
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride. | 4 His dying crimson, like a robe,
spreads o'er his body on the tree ;
then am I dead to all the globe,
and all the globe is dead to me. |
| 2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ my God ;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood. | 5 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small ;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all. |
| 3 See from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down ;
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown ? | |

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Blessing – based on a prayer from the Iona Community

The love of the faithful Creator

The peace of the wounded Healer

The joy of the challenging Spirit

The hope of the Three in One

Surround and encourage you

Today, this week and forever. Amen