



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

December 4, 2013

Midweek Advent Worship

Sermon Text: [Genesis 49:8-12](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 2](#)

Scripture Lesson: [Revelation 11:15-18](#)

Zion at Your Shining Gates is Your King

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, we have a natural aversion to authority. We don't like someone else telling us what to do. Our sinful nature hates it. In fact, that's what created the sinful nature... Adam and Eve not wanting to listen to what God had told them to do and rebelling against authority. By nature, because of our sinful nature, we don't like rulers. We don't like authority over us. It doesn't matter which party is in the presidency in our country, there are always people who are running him down. There are always people that are belittling him. There are always people that are not honoring him, not offering him respect. That's not just out there. That's within the church as well. That's why our Lord over and over in Scripture tells us to pray for those who rule over us. "Honor them. If you owe honor, then give honor. If taxes, then taxes." But we know better, so we disregard God's command to show honor to those who are over us in the government.

It makes me wonder if that's why at times we don't pay much attention to Christ as King. Yes, we'll say he is King of kings, Lord of lords. We say we know that, but do we really think about what it means?

It means he is supposed to be everything to me. Lord of lords and King of kings. His will is what I am to follow. For a soldier, to do the will of the king was not only his duty, it was how he showed honor to the king. So when we say the coming Messiah would be our King, it means he would rule over us and we would belong to him completely. When things are the way God would plan, our will would be locked in step with his.

That's not always the case. At times we are bored with the Word of our King. We feel inconvenienced by the Word of our King. We don't like the commands he has given us, so we just flat out neglect them and don't pay any attention to them. Then at times, when we are confronted with that truth during the season of Advent, people will come up and say, "Don't you know it's almost Christmas? Why are you preaching repentance?" That just kind of shows that we don't pay any attention to what Scripture says about the coming of our King, because the forerunner that God said prepared the way for his King did nothing but preach repentance. Then again, we don't always submit to the will of our King.

You and I have an incredible advantage over the people that first heard the words of this prophecy. This is Israel blessing his sons, his 12 sons, before he dies. He gets to the fourth one, Judah, and he says, "Your brothers will praise you." It's kind of a play on words of the meaning of the word "Judah", which has at its root "praise". That just sounds odd and off because he had three older brothers. You would think the three older brothers would be the ones honored. But God said out of Judah would come the Messiah. If you've been reading the *Today's Light Bible* readings, you see how Levi and Simeon and Reuben had abdicated and lost their role as elder sons before Judah.

Can you imagine when they first heard these words how his brothers reacted? "*Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies... The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.*" Do you think they heard that part about the scepter not departing until he comes to whom it belongs (which is a really tough phrase in the Hebrew)? In the King James they translated it "until Shiloh comes." However it's translated, it's a picture of the Messiah to come, who would be a King, who would have a scepter that would never depart. Judah's descendants, David and following, would be king. The final King that would come would be the Christ child, who would end up ruling as we heard in Revelation. But can you imagine if you were the first people hearing this, the brothers of Judah, do you think you would have missed the promise of the Messiah there because you're too upset that Israel has spoken this blessing from God and in it he put Judah over you? Do you think you are pouting and holding your breath and not even hearing this precious promise of the Savior to come?

I have to believe that's what their sinful nature did. That's why I say, you and I have an incredible advantage. We can read this and see what it meant. They could read it and they would have been able to see it and understand more if they had focused on it. But I suppose, a lot like us at times, they were distracted by other things, the other preparations and other things and didn't focus on it.

In [Ezekiel 27](#), the Holy Spirit has Ezekiel quote this very verse that says that one of the descendants of David, one of the descendants of Judah who was ruling on the throne, that the scepter would be taken from him because he was an unfaithful king, and it would be given to the One to whom it belongs, which is a picture of the Messiah.

We saw how the 24 elders in Revelation praised the King because he kept God's Word. He came and he was a King unlike any others, as we just celebrated a couple of weeks ago. He came to earth, became one of us, not because he had to but because he loves us. He loves us in such a way that it led him to come to this earth to be a king that rules and established his kingdom by suffering and dying, by being the sacrifice that brings us peace. This is who he is and what he did. This is really, as a Christian, it's the heart of what we celebrate and what we prepare ourselves to celebrate.

It's all about a King who establishes his rule by something red. It's not a suit he wears. It's the blood he shed to take away your sins. He doesn't give you neat little gadgets

whose batteries will run out and it will be broken and put in a closet until finally the closet is cleaned out and it's either donated or destroyed. He came to give you the forgiveness of sins. A gift you could never earn. A gift you could never receive unless God stooped low and handed it to you. That's what your King did.

Yet we still are bored by his message and indifferent to his message. We still find many other things to do, busy-ness to fill our lives with, instead of just sitting back and marveling that our King loves us in such a way.

It's amazing to me that God loves us that much. Scripture so clearly says that God hates sin, but not just sin, it says he hates sinners. Yet at the same time he loves us and became the King who takes away our sins.

I wonder how much it pains him that we're so indifferent to this love he shows us. We get so much more excited about other things than about this gift. We get so much more focused on other things at this time of the year. I wonder if it hurts the heart of our God when we do this.

The heart of our God still loves us and has forgiven us. The heart of our God still reaches out his arms through Word and Sacrament and says, "I want you and I have commissioned you to be my voice to share this with other people. I love you and I'll never stop loving you." I can't figure that out, but that's who our God is, and that's what our God does.

So rejoice in the love of God that is never withdrawn from you. The King whose love for you remains. Even when you fall away from him, he still loves you. You just lose the benefit of what he has done for you. So don't ever stop marveling at that love so you'll never start losing what your King has won for you. Amen.