

Christ the King Sunday
The Rev. John H. Brock

November 25/26, 2006
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; Psalm 93
Revelation 14b-8; John 18:33-37

Grace to you and peace from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

Friday morning I was driving over to Hershey Medical Center because I had gotten word that one of our members had just gotten flown by Life Flight. As I was driving along thinking that I don't really need this right now, I was also thinking about Christ the King Sunday, and what did it mean when we say Christ the King. I was thinking of our member, Ed Shuey, who just had to get cut out of his son's car because some "human being" ran a red light and broadsided the car. For those of you who know Ed, he looks like he is going to be just fine. He has just been banged up, but I didn't know that Friday morning as I was driving over to Hershey Medical Center.

What does it mean when I say Christ is King? I could only imagine Ed lying there in the Emergency Room. I didn't even know if he was conscious, or not. Would he be willing to say, whatever his injuries were, that Christ was King because some yo-yo just broadsided his car? Christ the King is one of those Sundays, one of those festival Sundays, and we have a lot of them at this time of the year. Within the past five weeks we had St. Luke the Physician, we've had Reformation, All Saints, and now we are celebrating Christ the King. What does it mean when we say Christ the King? I mean first off, we are Americans, and we don't do monarch. We booted the last one out about 200 and some years ago. We can look at the historical aspect of Christ the King Sunday. It was started at the beginning of the last century and according to one book we celebrate the all embracing authority of Christ which shall lead mankind to seek the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ. Another book said, Christ the King Sunday honors Jesus Christ in all of his power and authority affirming in particular his messianic kingship.

Okay. What does any of that mean, really? When we think of the people of Israel and how they were enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years, and finally were able to make their way over to the Promised Land, there they were ruled by a series of judges. These judges were a series of men and women who would rise up in time of crisis, lead the people against their foe or help them with whatever natural disaster was facing them, and then when the problem was solved they would go back to whatever they were doing before the crisis. For the people of Israel, after while, that wasn't good enough. They wanted to be just like the other countries around them. They have kings, why can't we have a king?

They go up to Samuel, the Prophet, and they complain to Samuel, and Samuel talks to God. God says to Samuel, "Don't worry. It is not you the people are rejecting, it is me they are rejecting. If they want a King, they can have a King, but tell them exactly what it is that a King will do for them." As we read in 1 Samuel, Chapter 8, Samuel reported the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a King. Samuel said, "These are the ways of the King who will reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them to his chariot and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariot. He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands, and commanders of fifty, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariot. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks, and bakers. He will take the best of your fields, vineyards, and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. He will take one tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. He will take your male and your female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys and put them to his work. He will take one tenth of your flock and you shall be his slaves, and that day you shall cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourself. But the Lord will not answer you in that day."

All of those are reasons I think that we, as Americans, as our forebearers did, kick out the king. We don't want to be ruled by a king, or a monarchy. The people of Israel did, but it got for them, after awhile, that they really didn't like the idea of a king. At the least not the kind of

king that they were having. So they started to believe in the great King. The one who is going to come and not only unite all of the tribes of Israel, but lead the people in battle against all of their enemies and get all of the known world to either worship the Lord God Almighty, or be subject to God's power. They called that time the Day of the Lord.

But what does it mean when we say that Christ is King? As I was driving to Hershey Medical Center, thinking about Ed Shuey, thinking about what might be going through my mind, what does it mean to a 21st Century Christian who worships in the Lutheran tradition, I think maybe when we say Christ is King, Christ the King, it means that I stop doing. I stop planning, I stop controlling, I stop manipulating, I stop designing my own life and strive to listen more to what God wants me to do.

Now even as I say this, you need to realize that this is coming from a guy who put off going to seminary for eleven years because, "I don't want to do that Lord." Study Greek, learn Hebrew, are you out of your mind? "I am not going to do that Lord. You have someone else in mind. You don't mean me." Because I didn't want to let go. I didn't want someone else to tell me what it was that I was suppose to be doing. Isn't that part of what being an American is about? Isn't that part of the reason that we don't do King? We don't want to be told. I don't want to be told.

So if I go back to those opening definitions, the all embracing authority of Christ which affirms in particular Jesus' messianic kingship. Okay, if we say Christ is in charge, what can I tell Ed as he is lying there in his neck brace and the mask over his mouth so that I can barely understand him when he speaks. I think it means that Christ is King of our life. But when I say that, it does not mean that I am never again going to have problems. When I say that Christ is King of my life, it does not mean that I will never be in an automobile accident. When I say that Christ is King, it does not mean that I am always going to have enough money to pay my bills, or that I am always going to have enough fuel oil in my tank, or that I can afford cable, a cell phone and the internet.

It doesn't mean that. What it does mean, in those spiritual battles,

where I struggle with what is the right thing to do, Christ is there.

In those times of depression when I might wonder if life is worth living, Christ is there, saying yes, life is worth living. In all of my struggle, personal and professional, financial or relationships, regardless of what those outcomes might be, Christ is there and King in my life. I can try to shut him out, I can drive him away, or try to drive him away, but he is there with me as I am driving to Hershey Medical Center. He is there with Ed Shuey lying on a hospital gurney. He was with Becky Enney as she was serving a meal at Zion Lutheran in Harrisburg. He is with every one of us wherever we go, whatever we do. That is what it means when we say Christ the King.

Amen.