



## “Living with Gratitude...Lead”

### Christ the King Sunday

Saturday & Sunday, November 23 & 24, 2019  
The Reverend Dr. Jack M. Horner, Jr.  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Jeremiah 23:1-6; Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

At the beginning of this year our stewardship team decided that it would be appropriate for us to actually change the name of the team. Because we recognize that in the term *stewardship* either one people didn't know what it meant, or they think it's just about getting money and some how managing our budget.

But really stewardship is more about living a life of gratitude and generosity for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. It's living a life of generosity to the mission to service the neighborhood and to developing the next generation of leaders for not only Trinity, but also for the church throughout the world.

And so, they decided to focus on those three aspects with their team name and so they named it simply Give, Serve, and Lead. They focused on what the core of stewardship is really about...**Giving**, one's generosity for the mission of God, **Serving**, using our god given gifts and talents for that mission, and **Leading**, identifying, encouraging, and developing leaders for the mission. You'll notice the word that was used throughout that description was **Mission**. Because that's what it is all about. The mission of the church to shard God's love. You might have noticed in the last three weeks of our Living with Gratitude sermon series we focused on just one word represented in that Give, Serve and Lead, and today we're focusing on that third part of stewardship, Lead. And, it is a great Sunday in which to do that, for today is the festival of Christ the King.

Now the festival of Christ the King is a little different from other festivals that you might know, of course, we're all going to be preparing for Christmas pretty soon, that's a festival the Nativity of Our Lord that has been around for thousands of years. And of course, after that, the big one will be Easter, the Celebration of the Resurrection which is really probably the first church festival ever made.

The Festival of Christ the King was developed in the 1920's in response to what the church saw as a growing secular movement of turning away from the things of God, but also turning toward totalitarianism regimes such as Communism and Nazism. And so, the church developed the Christ the King festival to help us all think and focus on the things that really matter and really ask ourselves a question, well who am I going to follow in my life? And so, they focused on Jesus on the cross and the kind of leadership that he exhibited. Leadership of self-sacrifice, of humility, of love. Christian leadership after all is very different from political leadership.

Political leadership by and large is about getting and maintaining power, personal power. Christian leadership is different. Paul says to the Colossians, “May you be made

strong with all of the strength that comes from his glorious power." We receive strength from God's strength. Our strength and our power comes from God. Our wisdom comes from God. And in this Pentecost season that we're now coming to an end to, a season that began shortly after the Easter season all the way back in late spring early summer, we ask ourselves the question, well, how am I going to live in this kingdom that Christ has initiated? How do I live my life in light of the resurrection of Jesus, our King? And as we come to the close of this church year, we hear the words of Paul that talks about us putting all of our strength in the strength of Jesus. Of focusing our lives on his life, death and resurrection, and recognizing that Jesus is our power.

Now the word that Paul uses here in the Greek is **δύναμις dunamis**, from which we get the English word **dynamite**. Jesus is our strength our power and he offers an explosion of this holy power to create and to reform and to transform. To transform the church, us as individuals indeed the whole world. And we are given God's power to make a life, to make a life to offer blessings, to make a life of mercy and offering love to neighbor and community. But if that is the case, if that is how God acts on our life with an explosive power of love and goodness, why don't we act like it all of the time?

If God has done these things in the past, if God is doing these things in our life right now, if our future is insured because of God's goodness continuing to explode in our life, why is it, what is it about our personality, about our mindset that holds us back? Why do we have a scarcity mindset for God who is so good?

Now a scarcity mindset is when we think about life as never having enough time, or never thinking that we have enough money, or possessions. We think we don't have enough energy or opportunity or maybe even love. In other words, our life is focused on all of the things that we think we lack. It's a mindset that is based on fear, the fear of not having enough.

In the church the scarcity mindset is manifested in a number of different phrases that you might hear. Well we need more volunteers there is just not enough people or there is not enough money for us to be able to do what we want to do, or if only we had better pastors or better staff. We don't have enough, we've never done it that way before, we can't do it, well we tried but we failed.

The abundance mindset, however, believes that there is always enough. There is plenty of time, there's plenty of resources, there's money and energy and opportunity and there is an abundance of love for we worship a big God, a God who offers his blessings and talents and gifts to us freely. Who gives us experiences so that we can take those experiences to make a difference in the life of another?

Sure, there is still going to be things in life that happen to us. Paul in Colossians tells us, "Be prepared to endure." But then God gives us other gifts like diligence, patience, but also joy, and gratitude and finally eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Because if we are left to ourselves, we are just dying. Paul says that we're living in darkness, but Christ who is life, death and resurrection has rescued us. He has transferred us into his kingdom, a kingdom of love, joy, peace, community, relationship, and so we can boldly believe in God's abundant life that he has in store for us. We can declare Christ is our King. He is the king of all times, in all ages, in all places and all spaces and

he needs a few good men and women to give, serve and lead so that the whole world might know the love that God has in store for them!

The church needs leaders, servant leaders like Jesus. Will you answer that call?

Paul says, *"He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything."*

First place in everything! First place in your family, first place in your worship, first place in your generosity, first place in your gratitude, first place in your gifts and talents.

And when you recognize Jesus as Lord and King, you can give, serve and lead the way Christ intended and expects those who follow him. Giving, Serving and Leading without fear in God's kingdom boldly believing in the abundance and blessing of Christ our King. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Copyright © 2019, Jack M. Horner, Jr. All rights reserved.



[www.trinitycamphill.org](http://www.trinitycamphill.org)