

The Reigning Christ

Call to Worship: Isaiah 53

1st Scripture: Hebrews 1

2nd Scripture: Psalm 45

Hymn #216- *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

Hymn #206- *Low in the Grave He Lay*

Hymn #205- *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*

Introduction:

I want you to suppose for a moment that you were diagnosed with the worst and most painful form of the deadliest disease in the world. Having received the proper diagnosis from your doctor, and having verified it with second, third, and even fourth opinions, you know, beyond the shadow of any doubt that the prognosis is beyond horrid. Not only is death certain, but the path to that death is full of torment and agony beyond the comprehension of any who have not directly experienced the effects of this illness. At the present moment, you are in the incubation stage, and so, you are experiencing the calm before the storm, as far as the symptoms go. But as you trudge through each day of life, you are reminded every morning, that what you have formulating inside of you, is not a dream, and in due time, everything is going to fall apart.

So inevitably, this leads to some form of an invasion of fear and anxiety, attacking the mind, along with a depression of soul. Hope begins to dissipate, and you are trapped in what most would classify as a nightmare. But then, you receive a call from your doctor, who tells you that, as he has been researching ways to help treat your condition, he has heard about a doctor in India, who has been experimenting with a possible cure, for the very illness that you have residing in you. And so, he sends you to India, to be the guinea pig for this doctor, since you have nothing else to lose, at this point. And you go, and meet this doctor, and as he begins to work with you, there is measurable evidence, showing that you are actually improving. And then, finally, after a number of days, it is wholly confirmed that you no longer have the deadly disease. What happens to you, upon entering that moment of discovery? Do you merely walk it off, thank the doctor, and continue with life where you left off? No, of course not! You are beyond excited, beyond thankful, and hopefully, your perspective on life has changed as well. Perhaps, things you have taken for granted before, suddenly become precious to you.

Now, let's translate this illustration into a far more important and significant reality. What happens when a fallen human being, created in the image and likeness of God, truly becomes aware of his spiritual condition? What happens when the blinders of "everyday life" are taken off, and the reality of being part of a creation (of a human race) that is at enmity with God, to whom we all must give an account, sets in? What happens when one realizes that we are righteously held to a standard, by a holy God; a standard of righteous laws, which we can no longer keep because of the fall of mankind? What happens when the reality of sin (the disease of sin), which is in each and every one of us, and which has been manifest in all the ways in which we have violated God's Law, is brought home to our consciences? What happens when we realize that we are presently under the judgment of God; that we are naturally condemned because of our sinful condition, and incapable of removing ourselves from our certain final destination in hell, just beyond the grave?

Death is a reality for all of us, isn't it? But what's beyond death is hardly a consideration by most? How can that be? How can we put aside or deny what is inevitable? Our numb consciences and our hardened hearts actually do this, but what happens when we actually embrace and comprehend the reality of our certain coming, unchanging and eternal end, in the flames of eternal torment and judgment? What happens when we realize that we are contaminated, sinful, wretched sinners, immovably fixed to the all powerful and holy hands of an angry and wrathful God? Such a condition is far worse than the first example we have considered, isn't it? For, even the deadly disease, with all of its pains and torments, is yet, temporary, is it not? But, our natural condition before God, carries us into an unending eternity, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; where the gnawing worm will never die of starvation, because it will always have a living object to gnaw upon, as our unbreakable bodies and ever conscious minds, continue on, in their existing misery, forever and ever and ever.

The Law; God's Moral Law; His Ten Commandments expose our sin nature, don't they? They show us that we have loved and valued other things, more than God. That we have taken His name in vain. That we have not honored His holy Day of worship with His people. That we have dishonored and disobeyed our parents and our God ordained authorities. That we have hated, that we have lusted, that we have lied, that we have coveted... etc. And that Law presents

us with no way out, does it? It just shines the light on God's holiness, and then our guilt, and shouts aloud, "Damned! Damned! Damned!" And we are broken, empty, hopeless! We are beaten in a corner, with no way out! There is no way of salvation; no truth of hope, no life of rest, to be found within us!

But then we come to this Book, and we find another Way, *outside* of us! A certain and sure way of hope! A way of forgiveness of sins, of redemption from judgment, of reconciliation with the only true and living God, whom we have grossly offended! And that Way is found in a Savior provided by God; a Savior to be born of a woman, and yet, untouched by our sinful nature; a Savior, who is both willing and able to sacrifice Himself; to receive the judgment due us, in His own Person, so that, we might walk away, cleansed and righteous in the sight of God! And as we behold such a One with the eyes of faith; We see both, a Lamb that was slain and a resurrected Lion, who now reigns; a Son of God with divine worth, and a Son of Man with our very same nature. And as we come to Him by faith, we find, that it is indeed true! Our once irreparable condition is repaired and made whole again!

We are born again! We are given new life, here and now, and we taste of the eternal life to come, having received the down payment of His Holy Spirit, who leads us to comfortably say, "Abba, Father," to the God, whose wrath was once hanging over us! We are made children of the Living God; adopted sons and daughters of divinity, brothers and sisters of the Son of God Himself! And now, in the present, even during the process of God, turning our imperfection, more and more into perfection, we have peace with God! The Law is no longer a fiery dragon, breathing threats against our hopelessly lost condition! Now, it is but an angelic friend, allowing us to see the beautiful and glorious, holiness of God, without any threat of judgment; for, all threats were appeased, when Christ absorbed the weight of God's wrath for us!

In all of this, how do we respond? As we behold a crucified Christ, who shed His blood for you and me, brethren, and as we view a conquering, resurrected and now eternally reigning Savior, giving us every ounce of assurance we need, to know for certain, that even as the Firstfruits was raised in Him, the entire harvest must and will follow, how do we respond?

I. Beholding the Glory of the Reigning Christ

Feel the power of verses 1 and 2, of this Psalm in front of us, as we glance upon some of the rich glory, given in these 17 verses:

"My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

As we reflect upon the glory of a once dead, and now resurrected, glorified and reigning Christ, who has accomplished so much, for us, do not our hearts explode with this good theme, brethren?! And do not our tongues burst forth with words of praise, sharing the good news with all, concerning what this glorious Christ has done? You see, the point is, that upon beholding this glorious King, you cannot possibly keep quiet! You cannot possibly conceal what has happened; all He has done for you; who He is; the relationship that you now eternally share with Him! "Oh, well my Christianity; my religion is a private matter." Well, then you have never met and experienced the living Christ! It is an impossible situation, for the Christian to conceal what He has become, and now is, in Christ! Keep your hand on the burning stove and the heat will push it away! Stick a toothpick into your eye, and you must blink! Experience true redemption in Christ, and your tongue must be the pen of a ready writer; it must express the newly found composition in your heart, as the overflowing theme of God's grace in Christ, works its way through your soul.

And why does this glorious King stand out? What is it about Him that sets Him apart from all of the rest of the thousands upon thousands of rulers, who have come to reign on this earth? Verses 2-5 mention those virtuous qualities that are contained within Him.

There is no king like Him, He is "fairer than the sons of men..." Why?

1) His lips are coated with grace. He has the true good and welfare of His people, on His mind, at all times. He draws no benefit from them, but rather, He speaks tenderly and graciously to them. Some might say, "Prove it!" And He did in so many ways, but most particularly, by exhibiting that love toward His subjects, which is the greatest of all loves. He has laid down His own life for them. Though a righteous and glorious King, He took on a humble and lowly form, and subjected Himself to the shame and death of a common criminal. He wore no robes of purple and red, but rather, he was stripped of all that He did wear. He became poor, so that we

might become rich in Him. And He put Himself forth as the object of God's wrath, bearing sins that were not His own, indeed, our sins, in His own body on the cross. What He spoke, lined well up with how He lived. His grace is undeniable!

2) He rides majestically, cloaked with the garbs of truth, humility and righteousness. His concern is for all that is good and proper and true. See in Christ, that the majesty of a king or a ruler is not in direct proportion to his outward flare. To be sure, there have been many kings, who have been clothed with all kinds of luxurious pomp, only to display depravity and filth, because of their lack of any godly virtue.

But Christ's majesty is tied to His inner garbs of truth and His robes of humility and righteousness. He is gracious, but He is gracious without compromising His justice, His equity and His righteousness! And where His people have fallen short in all of these ways, He Himself has paid the price! What does it do to the stomach when we behold the evil, wicked, dishonest, unrighteous, and corrupt actions of our present government? But Ahh, Christ bears everything that the heart yearns for; a good and righteous King, within whom there is no darkness at all!

3) He is a defender of His people! Though His people are persecuted and rejected; though they be poor or despised by the world, He values them above all else in this world. They are the apple of His eye, and He fights for them. Vengeance is never ours, but indeed, it is His, and He will right every wrong, and bring true justice on behalf of His people. He is a good and righteous King, who cannot possibly be defeated by His enemies! His arrows are sharp in their hearts, and they fall under Him.

And so, the glory of this resurrected and reigning Christ is found in His grace, in His virtues, and in His ability and willingness to defend and avenge His people.

And furthermore, His glory is magnified by the essence of His nature. In verses 6&7, we find that statement, which is quoted in Hebrews, again, as a reference to the resurrected and reigning Christ. "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." The glorious King; this resurrected Christ, who has conquered death on behalf of His subjects, is eternal God, and He will reign forever, as the eternal God-Man. Because of His divine essence, and because of

the pure and perfect righteousness, which will envelop His kingdom, no other king in all of history, will ever approach the measure of His majesty or the glory that will shine upon Him. He has been anointed with the oil of gladness above all others. He is altogether pure and lovely, scented with the best of all fragrances and surrounded by the finest of all materials. What Solomon was outwardly; in all of his glory and splendor, was only a mere shadow of the glory of this King!

And as we behold this glorious king, in all of His glory; as we behold the resurrected and triumphant King, who has conquered sin on behalf of His people, and who will defeat all of His enemies and reign forever and ever, we behold then a tangible jewel, which blares forth the light of His glory, seen by all that He has accomplished. What is the jewel, which serves to highlight His glory in all of these respects? It is His purchased Bride, whom He has redeemed out of the miry pit, and decked with new robes of holiness and righteousness. At His right hand, stands His church!

Verse 9- "Kings' daughters are among your honorable women; at Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir." She is decked with the purest and most valuable form of golden ornaments. Listen again, to the rest of the language here, describing this glorious bride. [Read verses 10-17]

The bride of the King is called to forget her own people; to fix her attention on her new identity as the King's bride, and not what she was in the past. Again, we see the glory of the church here, which, although taken out of the dregs of corruption and filth, is no longer to be remembered by that identity anymore. No, Christ would not have us grovel or linger over what we once were. Rather, He encourages us to fix our attention on what we now are; on what He has made us, by means of His own death and resurrection. He absorbed the agony, the sorrow, the gloom and the eternal regret due us, so that we could properly and righteously identify with the glory, which He has now poured out on us! Child of God, do you live in your past? Are you still caught in the dark trenches of your former sins and lifestyle? See here, what you presently are in Christ! He would have you forget your former life, and revel in the glory of what you now are, all at His expense! You are part of the glorious Bride of Christ, brethren! This is not a mere illustration or an image of fantasy, anymore than the cross was a mere illustration or an image or

fantasy. It is a reality! Are you in Christ, this morning? Then behold your identity in your glorious husband! To the world, you might be decked with poverty, and you might have nothing desirable, shining out of your outward person. But to Christ, who has redeemed you, you are decked with ornaments of gold! And whenever you are poised to doubt this reality, remind yourself of what He sees, and what angels see!

What a wonderful Psalm, describing the glory of the reigning Christ, and His purchased bride! And so, as we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, again, let us step out of the worries and hardships and sorrows of this world, and once again, revel in all that Christ is, and all that He has done for us, and all that we anticipate, just beyond this veil of tears. Brethren, does your heart still overflow with a good theme? Is your tongue the pen of a ready writer, ready to publish forth the glories of your blessed King and Savior? Or have temporal things clouded your vision? Behold your God, and all that you have become and are and will be, in Him!

If you are not a Christian this morning, then you presently have no part in this glory. You receive no benefit from the resurrection of Christ, beyond eating a nice meal and being among family and friends for the holiday. Don't miss the reality, which is represented by the celebration!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: 3:14-21