

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

## *You Must be Born Again!*

*“The habit of preachers today is to address their people as though they were all Christians and just need instruction...men and women are being treated as saved who never knew they were lost.” [Lloyd-Jones]*

*“In my lifetime I did not care to hear that word that cut me most, and showed me my lost estate aright. I was vexed to hear my sins mentioned, and laid to my charge. I loved him best, who deceived me most; who said, Peace, peace, when there was no such thing.” (Jer. 5:30,31).  
[Bunyan, John. A FEW SIGHS FROM HELL]*

[www.sermonaudio.com/crc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/crc)

[www.unholycharade.com](http://www.unholycharade.com) (blog)

[www.lightfordarktimes.com](http://www.lightfordarktimes.com) (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

## *The King is Ascended, and He is Coming Back*

*May 12, 2024*

**Sermon Text:** Psalm 2

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 1:1-11

I want to begin this morning by adding to what we took note of last time regarding the nature of the church, the body of Christ. And I

will begin this way with an illustration:

How many of you know who Susan Boyle is? She was a plain, unmarried, unemployed, 47 year old woman who lived in the house she grew up in, in a small village in Scotland. I say she *was*, because in 2009 she was a contestant on the program *Britain's Got Talent*. When she walked out onto the stage, no one expected anything much from her because of her

plain, unassuming nature and her somewhat eccentric personality. She even stumbled a bit in responding to a couple questions, she announced she wanted to be a famous, professional singer, and she was rather comedic in every way. There were even some laughs and jeers from the audience.

The judges said later that they were sure that her performance would be cut off in 5 seconds.

That is not what happened.

No more than 2 seconds into her performance of *I Dreamed a Dream* from *Les Miserables*, everything changed radically. Everyone – the entire audience of some 4,000 people along with the judges were stunned. Susan Boyle in just one evening became a world famous star and would go on to not only make millions of dollars, she would even sing for the Queen.

So what had happened? The book was judged by its cover at the start. And as we heard from John Bunyan last week in his sermon on the Rich Man and Lazarus, *those*

*who make judgments based upon outward appearances are destined to make wrong judgments.*

The Rich Man appeared blessed by God. He was envied. Then there was the beggar Lazarus. Covered with sores. Bones protruding. Hungry. Nearly naked. Surely this was a person abandoned by the Lord. No one wanted to be Lazarus.

And then, in 2 seconds or less, everything changed. *Everything!*

Luk 16:22-23 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, (23) and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

What do you suppose Lazarus looked like? Clothed in righteousness, sores gone, glory shining around him. Lazarus was *beautiful*. The rich man? – he lifted up his eyes, in Hell. *Outward appearances and the judgments based upon them were wrong –*

*totally wrong.*

If we are wise, if we make judgments based upon God's wisdom, if we see things as God sees them, we will make correct evaluations. But if we judge with the world's wisdom, we will make wrong conclusions and decisions every time. Let's apply this.

Look at this church. Look around and look at us. If you look through the eyes of the world's wisdom, your evaluation of this church is going to be absolutely wrong. Let me show you – back to the illustration.

When Susan Boyle stepped onto that stage she was evaluated as a nobody. That was judgment by appearances. But in seconds, a huge crowd was on its feet cheering and applauding her when it was apparent what she really was.

Listen carefully now – every time we as a church gather here on the Lord's day, we are on a stage. The world's wisdom says we are nothing, we are weak, we are powerless. But do you know what

is really happening? Here it is:

Heb 12:22-24 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, (23) and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, (24) and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

We are *the body of Christ* and as such we are joined by all the elect in heaven, all of Christ's people in heaven, by an un-countable number of angels, and they are giving Christ glory in a heavenly yet very real standing ovation, participating with us in our prayers, in our singing, and in the preaching and hearing of God's Word. *They are applauding and cheering us on, especially on the Lord's Day when we gather together.* Do you believe that? Do you see them by faith? *Why would anyone want to miss such a thing if they could help it at*

*all?* I ask each of us then, what do you think of the Church? What do you think of THIS church? I think each one of us must confess that our thinking on this has been far too worldly – wisdom of the world.

Now, you say – this is hard to believe. I want to believe it, but I don't see them. Consider this:

2Ki 6:15-17 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" (16) He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (17) Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

And again:

Psa 34:7 The angel of the LORD

encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

If we judge by the world's wisdom and judge by appearances, by what we can see and feel and touch, then we are going to go wrong. Our entire concept of the Church will be wrong, and gathering together with the saints on the Lord's day really won't be a big deal – in fact it might even be thought optional.

But what if all this is true? What if, unseen yet present and all around us, is this –

Rev 5:11-14 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, **numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,** (12) saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" (13) And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the

throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (14) And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

That is what is really happening. We are joined with the Body of Christ. So let me ask you, *if you could see these things, if you could hear that innumerable number of saints and angels in heaven singing with us, if you could see King Jesus enthroned there, would this have an effect on your thinking in regard to the Church? And to our gathering together on the Lord’s Day?* But if you don’t really believe it, then we are nothing more than another social club, not very important at all. And THAT is precisely what most professing Christians think today. *That is why they regard being a Christian as an individual, solo enterprise.* A private matter into which no one is allowed to intrude. But the Church is the BODY of Christ and we, each one, are members of Him.

Christ is Ascended

We continue then to peer into heaven with the eyes of faith as we consider this great truth of *the ascension of Christ*. We have already read the account of it from that first chapter of Acts –

Act 1:9-11 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (10) And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Listen to the Westminster Larger Catechism on this:

“How was Christ exalted in his ascension?”

“Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having after his resurrection often appeared to and conversed with his apostles,

speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, 40 days after his resurrection, he, in our nature and as our head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections there, and to prepare a place for us, where He himself is, and shall continue there until his second coming at the end of the world.

Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as the God-man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all fullness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth; and he does gather and defend his church and subdue their enemies; furnishing his ministers and people with gifts and graces and making intercession for them.”  
[Westminster Larger Catechism]

Our ascended Lord actually gives us His own account of His ascension in the second Psalm. Notice that at verse 7 the narrative

shifts to the first person, and that Person speaking is Christ Himself:

Psa 2:1-12 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

(4) He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. (5) Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, (6) “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

(7) **I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me,** “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. (8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (9) You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

(10) Now therefore, O kings, be

wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

This Psalm is the coronation Psalm. It is the account of what happened in heaven when Jesus ascended there. He was crowned King by the Father and given all authority over all nations.

### The Nations' Reaction to His Coronation

2:1-3 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."

The nations are in rebellion against the King. The rulers of this world, with very rare exception, hate the King. That is why it is so typical that kings and rulers down through

history have persecuted Christ's church. They *rage*. They dig themselves in against the Lord and they do all they can to cast off His sovereign rule over them. We are seeing that wicked spirit right now in our own country from a would-be tyrant.

### The King's Reaction to their Raging

(4) He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. (5) Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, (6) "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

Here are these little worms...these tiny bugs of men raging and plotting to conquer the King. The scene is wicked and ridiculously comedic. King Jesus laughs in derision at these fools.

All that the King needs to do, and be sure that one day He will, *is speak to them in His wrath and terrify them in His fury*. We have a picture of this at Mt. Sinai –

Exo 20:18 Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off

Isa 11:4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Rev 19:11-21 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. (12) His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

(13) He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (14) And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

(15) From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

(16) On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

(17) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, (18) to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

(19) And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. (20) And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two



were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. (21) And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Christ is risen. He is ascended. And He is coming again.

One little word shall fell them  
(Luther)

This is King Jesus who was crowned by the Father on that ascension day. And the One who has ascended will one Day *descend* to judge the greatest to the smallest who stand in rebellion against Him.

These are awesome and terrible and majestic things – things unseen now. The King and His armies are poised for battle right now-

(10) Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.