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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
November 26, 2017  
Christ the King Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 23-24, Matthew 27:27-31  
Hymns: 361; 367; 604; 50 (244:1-3)

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

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. <sup>24</sup> Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy *that* will be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is* evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. <sup>28</sup> Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God my Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Christ's Kingdom on Earth

This last Sunday of the church year has come to be called Christ the King Sunday. When we consider the power of Christ to reign, we confess that He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. We understand that to mean that Jesus has been given, also according to His **human** nature, the position of power and glory alongside of God the Father. God has given all power and might and dominion to the Son, and Jesus the Son of Man is that Son of God. And so Christ's kingdom is established and we, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, are citizens in that kingdom. We believe and confess that Jesus rules all things for the good of His kingdom on earth.

This is where we start to have trouble with our reason, and with our senses. People struggle with questions like: "If there is a God in heaven why does He allow the wicked to flourish?" or "Why did He allow my loved one to die?" or "Why does He allow persecution to assault His Church?" Why? Why? Why? And the answer remains that we are not God, and we cannot comprehend the ways or the mind of God and why He directs things as He does. Of course as we study the Scriptures we do learn more about the mind of God, that it is guided by grace for all mankind. The Lord doesn't strike people down with lightning bolts when we think it is so obvious that they deserve to be struck down, because of His grace. He doesn't want people to perish. "*God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved.*" (John 3:17) The world will oppose the gospel. The Lord doesn't need the world to preserve His gospel. He can do that and has done that, and promises that His Word will endure forever. What the Lord has in His plan is the end game, even your eternal salvation. To that end --

**THEME: Christ Reigns with Resurrection Power.**

That is what our text teaches us.

### **I. Jesus Made Resurrection Real.**

The Corinthians had a doctrinal disagreement within their congregation on this important teaching regarding the reality of bodily, physical resurrection. There were some who would grant that Jesus rose from the dead, but that Jesus was the exception and not establishing the rule or norm for all mankind. The idea of all men rising from the dead just went against reason and it went

against human experience. What's dead is dead, they contended. So Paul made the adamant point that "*if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.*" (1 Corinthians 15:13) Jesus is true man and true God. He died on the cross and was buried, and He rose again. By His resurrection Jesus made resurrection real not just for Himself but for *all* mankind.

Before Christ death reigned. Death's reign began in the Garden of Eden. Our text states plainly, "by man came death." (v.21) and then again it says, "in Adam all die." (v.22) "*Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*" (Romans 5:12) It was all man's doing that sin entered into the world; that death came into God's perfect creation. Adam fell and Adam's fall condemns us all. All have sinned. The result of our sin is both clear and tragic, **death reigned**. "*By the one man's offense death reigned.*" (Romans 5:17) "*Through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation.*" (Romans 5:18) Death reigned over men who through the fear of death were subject to bondage, the bondage of the devil. Jesus, the eternal Son of God came into the flesh so that He could die, "*that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,<sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Apart from Jesus, death is the power in this world, a power wielded by the devil to enslave men's souls for time and eternity. It is not the Lord's will that any should perish. "*God so loved the world, (the entire world,) that He gave His only begotten Son.*" (John 3:16). Now we come to understand why it is so important for us to understand that Jesus' reigns with resurrection power.

**1 Corinthians 15:20-23** "But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming."

Jesus came to die. As our King He engaged the devil in mortal combat. Jesus came to die in our place on account of our sin. He redeemed us to God, paying the debt, the blood debt owed to God

because of our sin. In doing this He stripped the devil of the power of accusing us of guilt, and condemning us because of our sin. But our salvation didn't end with Jesus' suffering and death. He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. That is as the prophets had foretold. God would not let His Holy One see corruption. (Psalm 16:10) Beginning with Jesus' resurrection, resurrection became the reality for all men. Jesus is the power of resurrection. He calls forth from the grave. The King commands and all shall obey. For some it will be resurrection to eternal death in hell. But for those who are called as children of God, it will be the resurrection to eternal life.

Jesus is the firstfruits of this number. He was the first to rise to everlasting life. By the power of His resurrection, at His coming, those who are Christ's will rise and be glorified together with the Lord. Jesus is the first of many brethren. (Romans 8:29) Jesus established the reality of resurrection that we might know and believe in the hope of the resurrection to eternal life. That is the truth that rules in our hearts. That is the gospel truth that defies the world and all that it might strive to do to us or against the Lord's Church. This truth stands now and forever. Christ rules with resurrection power!

And so it shall be until --

## **II. All Enemies shall be under His Feet, Including Death.**

Jesus has crushed the serpent's head. The devil's power has been vanquished. The powers of this world go on only as the Lord permits for He sets both their appointed times and their appointed boundaries. (Acts 17:26) He allows the kingdoms of this world to continue as long as they serve His purpose for the advancement of the gospel into the hearts of men. No one should fail to understand, the powers and the principalities of this world are under His feet. God the Father has given all authority to Jesus both in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18) Death is still present with us while we await the Lord's appearing. He shall appear and then the final enemy which is death shall also be placed under His feet. And that will be the end of death forevermore. Later in this chapter Paul cited the scriptures in declaring this victory over the final enemy:

**1 Corinthians 15:54-57** “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

<sup>55</sup> “O Death, where *is* your sting?

O Hades, where *is* your victory?”

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Then the kingdom will be complete and Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God the Father in its fullness. Our text describes this glorious moment which we shall see with our own eyes.

**1Corinthians 15:24- 28** “Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death. <sup>27</sup> For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under *Him*,” *it is* evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. <sup>28</sup> Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

This pictures includes a mystery that involves the relation of God the Father and God the Son who are equal in majesty and divine power and glory, and yet here we learn that Jesus who is also true man had been given all power, except over God the Father. In the eternal kingdom Jesus according to His human nature will be subject to God who had put all things under Him, so that God may be supreme over all things. We will live forever in that glory of God with Jesus both as our Lord, and as our brother. “*We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.*” (1 John 3:2) This is the wonder of our salvation. This is the glory and the majesty of Christ our King. We look for His appearing when the goal of His reign shall find its completion, and death shall be vanquished forevermore.

And so our Lord Jesus Himself prophesied: “*The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice<sup>29</sup> and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*” (John 5:28-29)

We look for that day knowing that **Christ Reigns with Resurrection Power!**

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans 15:13)