

Pastor Roy's sermon from November 25, 2018

Children's sermon: What is a King or Queen? What kind of king or queen would you like to have? What is the difference between a King and Queen and a president? Can a president do whatever he or she wants? In the past, Kings and Queens could. So was it more important back in those days to have a good, kind, just king and Queen? How would it feel to live in the land of a King who took advantage of his power?

Today is the day we celebrate Jesus as our King. What kind of King do you think Jesus is? Since Jesus is King, does that mean everything will always turn out the way we want? Do you think there have been kings who haven't loved their people? I believe Jesus is the King of Love. Jesus teaches us how to love. We love because God first loved us.

Sermon: This is not a Gospel passage that answers all our questions, but challenges us to listen afresh to Jesus. So today I am asking more questions than suggesting answers. That was usually the way Jesus taught.

Jesus answers the Roman governor's questions with "My Kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asks, "So you are a king?" Jesus answers, "You say I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

John is inviting us to listen. Listen to Jesus' voice. Listen to Jesus' truth. This conversation between Jesus and Pontius Pilate reminds us that Jesus is not about being in charge and getting his way. Pilate steers the conversation in the direction of kings and ruling, and Jesus repoints it toward listening to the truth and allowing that truth to transform us. It's no wonder Pilate is seriously unnerved by the conversation and sends him back to Herod. This is no criminal. Maybe there is even a message for him. For some the message of Jesus is hope. For others, like Pilate, it is a message of judgment. He has worked hard, ruthlessly, to be in charge of this puny, despised, rebellious territory. What is this talk of truth? Pilate's truth is power and control and pleasing Caesar. Caesar is truth. Caesar is right. Caesar is peace. Caesar is joy if you play by his rules and execute his judgments. As Jesus

is led away, Pilate is pretty sure Jesus' truth is not the efficient, violent power and peace of Rome. Pilate has something to think about.

What is Jesus' Kingdom? What is Jesus' truth? I'm pretty sure John is not looking for a quick answer here. Not something that we can claim for our own and then efficiently move on to the next challenge. Listening to the truth of Jesus will take us apart. This "not Roman," "not Caesar" life points us in a new direction. Is Jesus calling to us today "Spend a bit more time listening for my truth, my freedom, my humility?" I hear Jesus inviting us to a deepening faith, to reconsider our allegiances, our expectations, our assumptions.

There is always room for us to recommit ourselves to the Kingdom of God, the reign of Jesus. I hear Jesus inviting and reminding us to pray, to listen, to continue to grow in faith—trusting in the reign of Christ.

Thanks be to God.