

"King, not Lamb"

Text: Colossians 1:13-20

As Paul greeted the Church in Colossae, recorded in the verses that immediately precede this morning's text: **"(May God the Father) fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. ¹¹ May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."**
Amen.

Dear Fellow Servants of the King of kings:

When we read or hear that our Savior Jesus never changes ("**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**" (Hebrews 13:8)) we are supposed to understand that as referring to his essential qualities. He is not therefore loving and merciful one minute, and then unloving and vindictive the next. He does not alternate between kind and cruel, wise and foolish, just and unjust, omniscient and ignorant.

What we are *not* to imagine is that there was never any sort of change of any kind for Jesus. He was not, for example, true man from all eternity. He was not born with a fully formed body and a full set of teeth. He grew and matured much like any other child – all according to his human nature.

This is an important distinction to make for several reasons. The first has to do with the incarnation and virgin birth – both of which we would have to reject if nothing at all ever changed for Jesus. We would also have to deny what happened on Good Friday, since that event was based on a change in the relationship that God the Father at one time had with his Son. That relationship was clearly altered when the Father first "**placed on him the iniquity of us all,**" and then turned away from or forsook him. We would also have to deny that another change took place in the relationship between Father and Son after his death, for the relationship between Father and Son, once broken, was again restored. As we would also have to reject the Bible teaching that Jesus left heaven, and then returned.

Another great change of which we would be robbed is our view of how Jesus is now, compared to how he was when he entered our world – the

profound change between how Jesus came the first time to our earth, and how he will come the second.

Our text for this morning speaks of these changes. It provides us, among other things, with an accurate description of how we should now regard our Savior. Summed up in three words, what we are now to see is *King, not Lamb*. Our text is found recorded in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, the First Chapter:

ESV **Colossians 1:13-20** *He (God the Father) has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ ¶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

This is God's Word. What thanksgiving ought to fill our hearts each time we are privileged to hear or read what the one true God has preserved and delivered to each one of us, for by these precious truths we are both saved and sanctified. That our God would so bless each of us today through the study of these words, so we pray: **"Sanctify us (set us apart for holy purposes) through your truth, O Lord. Your word is truth."** Amen.

Begin, if you would this morning, by filling in the blank in this simple statement: *"My life, as a Christian, is all about _____."*

You probably know instinctively what the answer should be, but if you are having trouble, our text will help. Listen again to some of the key statements that are found there that help to enlighten and direct us: **"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the**

church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

Not much doubt after rereading those inspired words, is there? *"My life, as a Christian, is all about my Savior God."* In fact if you happened to be counting, our text contains a total of 14 pronouns (he, him, himself) every single one of which directs our attention to God and away from self.

Before we discuss the ramifications of this information, it should be noted that this is far from an isolated passage. This particular truth is established and reestablished throughout the pages of Holy Writ. 1 Corinthians 10:31, ***"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."*** Again in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, ***"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."*** And from the Lord's Prayer: ***"For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever."*** Over and over, without a single contradictory word or passage, the Bible draws a big direction arrow from man to man's God. You and I are not the center of our universe. God is.

What exactly does this information do for us? How should it affect how we think, act, speak, and plan? The ramifications are truly all-encompassing. No facet or aspect of our lives is left out. Every single thing that we think, say, do, or plan is all supposed to be directed toward the glory, praise, and service of our God. Stop and think about that for a bit.

I'm not sure that self-centered human beings can actually assimilate or take in and comprehend such far-reaching truth in one sitting. Some examples might help the process. This means, for example, that career choices have little to do with me, and everything to do with my God. It puts the eraser to all of the old questions and indelibly writes new ones. No longer is it *"What makes me happy?"* or *"What will result in financial success or prestige for me?"* Recognizing that my God is all in all, the question now becomes, *"How can I best serve and glorify my God with the time, gifts and talents that he has given me?"* In short, our whole thought process is suddenly and dramatically altered.

Nor does this just mean that every Christian must enter the public teaching or preaching ministry. The Bible tells us that It was God himself ***"who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be***

evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." (Ephesians 4:11-12) Note that God gave ***"some"*** to fill these positions, not all. God also gave some to be work-at-home moms, engineers, truck drivers, nurses, doctors, store clerks, soldiers, sailors, salesmen, pilots, IT experts, farmers, printers, painters, artists, carpenters, plumbers, scientists, craftsmen, and all other manner of workers. The fact remains that every single one of these occupations is supposed to glorify God, no matter how you spend your workday. It also means that that arrow is not supposed to be reversed at retirement. The Bible lists no statute of limitations on how much of our time of grace is supposed to be dedicated to his glory and his service. In fact just the opposite is true. Extra free-time is supposed to be regarded as extra time to serve the God who has created and sustained you for a lifetime.

Clearly then God's view of things stands in stark contrast to man's self-centered ideas – which tends to make this whole exercise much more challenging for Christians than it ought to be. From little on, secular counsellors advise us not to seek the glory of God and his service in whatever we do, but to investigate the deep recesses of our own yearnings and desires and to pursue whatever makes us truly happy. The obvious problem is that God is generally left out of that picture.

Clearly then we need guidance and reinforcement here. We need not only to be reminded of God's will, but of just how and why our God is worthy and deserving of all power, glory, and honor. This is one of the invaluable services provided by God the Holy Spirit in our text for this morning, for there we are reminded of the profound change that has taken place, not only in our relationship to our God, but in Jesus himself. It makes our God that much easier to worship and adore, for there we are encouraged to see our Savior not just as he was, but as he now is. As King, not Lamb.

When Jesus left heaven to enter our world, he did so in utter humility. His state of mind was described for us in Philippians 2:5-8: ***"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*** Nor did he come to be served, as would certainly have been

his right, but as the humble servant of all: **"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** (Matt. 20:28 ESV) Simply put, he came as the sacrificial Lamb of God, and his mission was to keep the commandments perfectly, to then offer that perfect life on the cross, and thereby to take away (pay for) the sins of the world.

Keeping his mission in mind helps us to understand a few things with which we might otherwise struggle. Remember this exchange? **Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."** ¹⁴ **But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"** (Lk. 12:13-14 ESV) Jesus didn't come the first time as a judge. Or this statement from Jesus: **"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."** (Jn. 3:17 ESV) Jesus didn't come to condemn but to save. Or this: **The next day (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"** (Jn. 1:29 ESV) Jesus' mission was to die as the sacrificial Lamb of God, who would, by that death, take away the sins of the world.

You know this, but do you understand the implications if you continue to see Jesus that way, if you continue to ignore the change that has taken place? *That* Jesus is no more. That's neither how he now exists in heaven nor how all mankind will see him when he comes again. In other words, we should most accurately see him now as the risen, glorified King that he is. The Lamb was sacrificed, once for all. The Lamb completed his mission. Jesus did not ascend back into heaven as the suffering Lamb but as our victorious and glorified King. He exists now in heaven not in the utter humility of his first coming but in the power and glory that we will see at his second. Listen again to the description in our text: **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.** ¹⁶ **For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him.** ¹⁷ **And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.** ¹⁸ **And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.** ¹⁹ **For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.**

This last Sunday of the Church year is also known as Christ the King Sunday – with good reason and for a very specific purpose. It points to Jesus as he truly now is, not as he once was. All authority, in heaven and on earth, is now his. He came not as judge the first time, but he will

come as judge the second. Then there will be no more of the manger or stable. He will not sit silently as the godless abuse and condemn him. He will not come to serve. He will come on the clouds with power and great glory, and in the revelation of exactly who and what he is right now – the King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

This is the Savior God that is. This is the Savior God that we worship. This is the Savior God that all will one day see and acknowledge. King, not Lamb.

And this is the Savior God who loves you now as he always has, hears you when you talk to him, and who has promised never to leave or forsake you. **"O worship that King, all-glorious above."** Amen.

ESV **Daniel 7:13-14** "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

ESV **Jude 1:14-25** It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." ¹⁶ These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. ¹⁷ But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." ¹⁹ It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. ²² And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. ²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

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The Last Sunday of the Church Year – November 24, 2024

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 611 (Stanzas 1-6) (Red Hymnal)

"The Day Is Surely Drawing Near"

The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

The Epistle Lesson: (Daniel 7:13-14) This morning we commemorate the last Sunday of the Church Year, known also in some circles as "Christ the King Sunday." Our first reading speaks to the royal nature of our Lord Jesus, and explains the sort of rule or dominion we were to expect from him. So also we today look forward to the return of our King, whose rule has already begun in our hearts and will extend into eternity.

Psalm 72 (Projected on Screens)

The Gospel Lesson: (Jude 1:14-25) Our second reading reminds us that Jesus' return could certainly come at any moment. All prophecies have been completed and every sign is in place. We are also here told how to use our time while we wait. We are to be about our Father's business.

The Confession of Faith -

The Nicene Creed – (Projected on Screens)

The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 941 (LSB)

"We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God"

The Sermon – Text: Colossians 1:13-20 (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

"King, not Lamb"

The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

The Prayers

The Pre-Communion Hymn – 317 (Stanzas 1-3) Red Hymnal)

"Alas, My God, My Sins Are Great"

The Preparation for Holy Communion (Brown Hymnal page 17)

The Distribution

The Nunc Dimittis and Thanksgiving (Brown Hymnal page 20)

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn – 611 (Stanza 7) (Red Hymnal)

"The Day Is Surely Drawing Near"

Silent Prayer

Welcome! - We warmly welcome any visitors worshipping with us this morning and invite you to join us each Sunday at this time. We are glad you are here!
To our Visitors seeking Holy Communion – In obedience to God's Word, we practice "Close Communion." This practice stresses both our concern for others, not wanting anyone to receive the sacrament to their harm (1 Cor. 11:27-30) and the importance of unity in confession and faith (1 Cor. 10:16-17). For this reason we ask that anyone who has not established this unity through membership in a CLC congregation please meet with the pastor to discuss this Scriptural doctrine before communing. This is a practice that we follow out of love and concern for you, and out of obedience to God's Word, not in judgment of anyone's Christian faith.

Attendance – Sunday (27) Average (35)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday school and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service w/Holy Communion
	-11:15 a.m.	– Fellowship Hour
Wednesday	-6:00 p.m.	– Confirmation Class
	-7:00 p.m.	– Thanksgiving Service
Next Sunday	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday school and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship Hour

CLC News – Pastor Drew Naumann has received the call to Faith of Manchester, MO. Pastor Caleb Schaller has returned the call to St. Stephen of San Francisco.

Updated Contact Sheet – One more last chance to edit the current Member Contact Sheet. Please check the sheet on the mailbox table and make any necessary corrections or additions.

Thanksgiving and Advent Services – Our annual Thanksgiving service is scheduled for this Wednesday at 7:00 pm. Our Midweek Advent services are scheduled for the following three Wednesdays.

2025 Mission Helper Trip – Applications are now being accepted for the 2025 Mission Helper Trip to Nepal. More information is available at: <https://mht.lutheranmissions.org/>.

Annual Church Christmas Party – A sign-up sheet for the annual Christmas Party is available on Mailbox Table. Please address any questions to Cindy Ollenburger.