

Christ the King

Ezekiel 34:11-16; Psalm 100; Ephesians 15-23; Matthew 25:31-46

What Fantastic readings we have today. I will highlight a few things from them and I encourage us to keep reflecting on them during the week.

So first of all: Let's look at the Psalm.

I see a little window view into heaven, and specifically the place where God rules and reigns.

The first thing that stands out is the joyous atmosphere.

Look at the words used:

- Shout for joy!
- Worship the Lord with gladness.
- Come before Him with joyful songs.

The Lord is not only approachable but is also The One to come before and it is a great joy to be near Him.

v 4, one of my favourite verses, reveals how to approach our Maker and our God. ie by entering His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.

Wonderful thing happens when we Praise and Thank God we actually quickly we come into His presence.

So the Psalm presents us with an approachable God in whose company there is exceeding joy.

The Ezekiel reading reveals the heart of our God. In a sense a window into what makes Him tick.

God describes Himself as a shepherd - And a good and caring one at that. A Shepherd whose heart is not to lose any from His flock, which is a key aspect of the nature of God.

Starting with v 11 let's Look at the active words that describe our Shepherd's heart for His flock:

- Searching for
- Looking after
- Rescuing them
- Bringing them,
- Gathering them,
- Pasturing them,
- Tending them,

- Have them lie down - so safe and provided for,
- Searching for and bringing back the strays,
- Binding up the wounds,
And
- Strengthening the weak.

This is our God's heart for you and me – for all. A truly beautiful heart!

A just & fair heart - for as we read on He is also revealed as a just judge who will not tolerate those who spoil things for others. The verses not read out in 17-19 of this Chapter of Ezekiel say that God is most unhappy when we have what we need and don't think of others. It tells us that if we have clear drinking water God is not pleased if we make it muddy for the rest who follow us. And if we feed on good pasture we must not trample it for those who will come after. This is a sure message to steward the bountiful blessings we have, including the creation, and preserve them for whoever comes after us.

So we have a picture of a good and caring God who looks after those He has created like a shepherd but who will not tolerate us not looking after each other and the bountiful earth and it's resources. It is a picture of a king who is like a shepherd rather than one who lords it over his subjects.

Then V 22 states quite bluntly another key role of our King: "*I will judge between one sheep and another*". That means you and me, my friends.

And if we ever forget that Christ the King's role involves judgement - judgement of each of us - then we only have to look at the Gospel reading. Let's look at it now.

It begins with more than a hint of the glory of God that we glimpsed in the Psalm.

Look at the description in v 31.

"When" - not if - "when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory".

We are told that all the nations will be gathered before Him at this time. You and I and everyone who has ever lived will be there. There will be none who miss out.

And judgement will take place.

Now in this life we can make decisions that affect the outcome of this judgement for each of us.

We choose who is our King in this life.

We chose whether Jesus is our Lord or not.

And we choose whether we will live by His standards and His heart's desires in this life.

It is too late after we die. Our choice is now! And it is good to be clear on that.

In the description of the judgement in the Gospel where the sheep are sorted from the goats there is again revelation about the heart of our King.

His particular concern revealed here is whether we have looked after others in this life. Whether we have freely given to those in need and cared for them in practical ways.

It would be good to do an audit on our lives and see how we measure up in the areas mentioned here by Jesus. For we have time to address how we will be judged

The thing that really stands out to me is the inheritance awaiting us.

V 34 Look at it with me:

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'".

How fantastic is that!

Not only is our God a King but He also has prepared an inheritance for us since the very beginning. And we know from other readings in the Bible that it is a heavenly kingdom, a place of joy, light, & love. It is a place where our Shepherd King will have our every need taken care of and where all are loved. There will be none who are lesser than. None, who have chosen to live with the King, will be left out.

And we get to choose if we want to live in our King's Kingdom - how good is that?

Everyone there will be there because they love being with the King and being in His family.

This passage in Ephesians also has one of the best prayers in it too - a prayer that I encourage each of us to pray daily and see its power as a prayer. Pray it specifically for members of our families who don't yet know Jesus and hence haven't yet embraced their inheritance.

I will finish using it as a prayer for all gathered here today and it may be helpful for you to follow in the pew sheet as I pray.

When we pray a prayer from the Bible it is good to speak the verses first & then to use the words in it for the prayer.

So let us pray:

Ephesians 1:17-19

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people and His incomparably great power for us who believe."

Glorious Father I pray that you would give each one here the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we may know you better. I pray that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened so that we may all experience the hope of God's call on our lives and know what is our destiny as Jesus' inheritance, and what is the exceeding greatness of our power for each who believe. In Jesus' name. Amen.