

21 Nov 2021

Worship Sheet for Sunday 21 November Reign of love

Are you a king? asks Pilate. Jesus refuses to be drawn. You say so! he replies. He was and is a king but not one whose authority is based on might or force of arms. Rather his reign is based on self-giving love. It is tempting for us to assert what “clout” we have left but actually we would do far better to adopt Jesus’ approach and rest on the love and grace of God and allow that to shine through and point people to Jesus.

Call: Who is your king? Jesus is our heart, our soul. Jesus shows the Way. Who is the master? Jesus shows us a Way of life; Jesus gives us hope. Who is the king? Jesus reigns in life here on earth, and there in the heavenly realm. Jesus, King of our hearts. Jesus, hope for our world.

Pray God of all, you who reign in heaven and on earth, we come to worship bringing all that we are. You reign in our hearts, sovereign in our lives, leading us to discover your kingdom. God of love and compassion, when we fill our lives with things that feed our greed, forgive us; when we offer worship to earthly things, forgive us; when we put you high on a pedestal beyond our reach, forgive us; when we take your kingdom and turn it into something unlovely, forgive us. When we let material things reign supreme, forgive us and make us new; remind us that your kingdom is not of our imagining; but that it is through Jesus that we know you and are made new: forgiven, restored and free. We pray in him saying Our Father...

Reading John 18:33-38.

Thought Power is vital to all our lives. Drivers will have noticed that the cost of filling up is higher than ever – around £1.50 per litre in Montrose (£6.75 per gallon in old money!). The cost of gas and electricity has risen significantly recently and we’re warned that it will rise more in the spring. Sadly, more people will have to make the unenviable choice between heat and food – we’ve a lot of work to do on poverty and justice. But our passage concerns aspect of power. Jesus is before the governor Pilate. Pilate seemingly holds all the cards, to him Jesus is just a powerless insignificant prisoner who is causing him hassle. “Are you a king?” he demands, but Jesus won’t be drawn. “So you say!” To Pilate (and to many people today) power is linked to the clout you have, military might and force of arms, the authority of the state, the influence you hold. And Jesus had none, not in human terms. Though of course, his heavenly authority was unlimited. His power couldn’t be measured by normal human standards, it was, the power of love. His reign was, and is, characterised by love. And that sends a clear signal to us, Jesus’ followers. We aren’t to try to manipulate things and use what is left of our diminishing human power to force things and angle for a better deal for Christians. Nor should we expect a tyrannical God to impose retribution in heaven. Yes, there will be justice but everything we see of Jesus suggests that his heavenly Father will also display love in fulness along with mercy and forgiveness. God reigns – and we express that in numerous popular hymns – the Lord is King, Praise to the Lord, the Almighty and many more but his kingship, his reign is one that is based on love, not force. And if that is how God is, if that is what Jesus his Son lived out as well as taught then we who are his followers need to be open to live out our lives open to that love too.

Praise CH4 374 From heaven you came (Servant King) v1,3 & 4)

Pray Lord, sometimes we attempt to shut out the unrelenting torrent of news, information and demands that can sap not our emotions, even our faith. Lord, remind us that you involved in this your world and among its people, including us. Open us to see more clearly the extent and depth of your love and care towards us and to be more open to receive your blessing, more able to see and sense your involvement in our lives and in the world. Lord, as we look out on the huge issues facing the world – in people terms as well as in political, social or economic – help us to appreciate that you are with us – working out your purposes for good, drawing out the best from us, seeking to change hearts, minds and wills. We remember the big issues of the world – climate, poverty, hunger, oppression, injustice and commit all those affected to you but we also pray that we may be some small part of effecting change. But remind us too that you can be with us in the more personal matters - remind us of your presence – in tragedy, illness, events that worry us, that knock our lives which impact greatly on us and those we love. Help us to know your presence in our midst, especially in difficult circumstances and to receive the healing balm of your touch – to change circumstances, to change US so that our outlook, attitudes and actions help rather than hinder the deep peace you wish to give us. Lord we pray for all in such a place, particular those we know, those who live locally, including the folks in our prayer walk streets this week: Blackfriars Street and St Margaret’s School. SILENCE You, Lord, are here, not far away – we ask that you would answer our prayers changing people as well as circumstances - those for whom we have prayed and ourselves – for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Blessing May the Lord bless you. Amen.

Notices

To assist those unable to access material via the internet we have established a phone line where people can phone in to hear the mini service or sermon.

01674 902624.

To hear the mini service people just need to dial in and wait. To hear the sermon, after dialling you need to press 1 then #. In either case there is a few seconds delay while the message loads so tell folk not to hang up! If folk press 1 for the sermon before the intro finishes the system doesn't pick up on it and it defaults to the mini service. The message now says wait until after the tone before pressing 1 but give it a few seconds after that and do press # after pressing 1.

Sermon, prayers and news (or links to them) will be uploaded to our website www.OLDandSTandrews.com and the Old and St Andrew's Facebook page. Feel free to copy this and pass it on to Church members or friends who might not use the web or social media

With the guidance easing there is plenty of room now to come to Church but please do still phone so that taking details for government requirements doesn't cause a delay on entry. We are now allowed to sing (subject to Angus being in level 1) though face coverings are still required.

If you are thinking of coming please phone Thelma Robb 672263 or Willie Sinclair during the week prior to a particular Sunday on 675671 so that we have contact details for trace and protect.

Please continue to pray for one another and support where you can and remember that the congregation is united in love wherever we are and however we are worshipping.

Stay safe! May the Lord bless you!

Ian

Rev Dr Ian A McLean