

*'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.*

The readings for today are Ephesians 1: 15-23 and Matthew 25: 31-46

### **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY – REIGN OF CHRIST THE KING**

The Bible teaches us that all things are subject to Christ. Christ is the King and today we consider and reflect upon what Christ the King means for us today. Christ is a king who wants thoughtful subjects who are concerned for doing His will here on earth, that is why we find Paul praising the Christians in Ephesus. <sup>15</sup> *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people,* <sup>16</sup> *I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.* Paul is giving thanks to God in his prayers for the people of the Ephesian church, specifically he is thanking God for what He is doing in the church in Ephesus but he also is praying for spiritual understanding for them and for us today the modern day reader. The Bible teaches us that Christ does not want or require blind obedience but through His Holy Spirit he gives the believer, that is you and I “a spirit of wisdom and revelation.” Jesus does this because he is a king who cares about how others are treated and we see Paul affirming this in his letter to the Ephesians. <sup>17</sup> *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit<sup>[a]</sup> of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.* <sup>18</sup> *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,* <sup>19</sup> *and his incomparably great power for us who believe.* Today and especially when we look around us at society we must be able to show God's love and care to those in need in our society and this means recognising Jesus as our King, as our Lord and Saviour, for only He can save and heal and bring peace to those who are struggling with life.

Recognising Christ's place at God's right hand is not a question of accepting things the way they are because when we accept Christ into our hearts we are changed from the inside out. It is then we start a spiritual walk where we receive wisdom and revelation through the Holy Spirits indwelling and it is then that we will see this world differently, not only this world but also the world to come. Paul reminds us of the power of Christ:

*That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.* Paul's letter to the Ephesians challenges us to consider how our faith fills our lives and our actions, does it allow us to speak to those around us of God's love for the world, does it allow us to show His love and care?

We find that this same message of care is what Jesus is addressing in the reading from Matthew's gospel. Jesus is emphasising that the greater good is not only about our love for the people of God, the believers, but our faith is also about how we treat the other people we encounter in our lives. Jesus teaches us a valuable lesson on what it means to be a Christian, a true follower of Christ: <sup>31</sup> *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.* Suddenly, we realise that at this moment of judgment, how we have treated others does matter.

<sup>34</sup> *"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. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you*

*looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’* What we do matters, but those who followed Christ and His teachings are puzzled for we see here that they didn’t understand why they were being blessed or how they helped Him, so Jesus tells us clearly <sup>40</sup> *“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’* Compared to those who did not follow or apply Christ’s teachings to their lives: <sup>41</sup> *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’*

<sup>45</sup> *“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’*

<sup>46</sup> *“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”* Jesus is teaching us about how we carry out His work, these works are of neighbourly love done – or not done – not with the intention of putting oneself right with God, or earning God’s favour, but done – or not done – because of the person’s fundamental attitude towards the world – is it a Christ centred attitude that we display or a human centred view?

Judgement is coming, so are we showing the fruits of justification, the outpouring of the believer’s love of God towards our fellow man and woman, or are we going left instead of, right?

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father helps us to care. Teach us your ways and fill us with your love. Open our eyes Lord and let us see Jesus, let us feel the power and the peace of Christ within us today. Bring healing to body, mind and soul and grant us your peace, for we are troubled with what is happening around us, only you Lord can help.

Come Lord Jesus come we pray. Thy will be done always, just guide us with the Holy Spirit. Guard our hearts and minds so that we can stand strong in this dark world and shine brightly for others to see. Help us to guide people to Christ and help us to show your love to those around us, always. Guide our words and our actions Lord so that we can be a blessing in your name. Help us through our prayers and our actions to make a difference, albeit small.

We know Lord how much you have changed us, how much you have helped us, too many times we have taken what you have done for us for granted and for that we are sorry. We know that we are prone to sin and making mistakes but only a truly loving and caring God will forgive us and help us stand on our feet every time we have fallen down, it is at the low points that you have carried us until we are strong enough to walk with you once more by our sides. We realise that you are always there for us and for all those who come to you with a truly penitent heart, all we ask and pray for today is your blessing, your healing and your peace. Amen.