

## Small Group Notes – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**Theme:** Christ the King

**Icebreaker:** What is your reaction to monarchy and to having a (worldly) king (or queen)?

**Readings:** John 18:33-37

### Sermon Outline

- The final Sunday in the church year – could be seen as a “holding Sunday” while waiting for Advent & Christmas. “Christ the King” celebration was “invented” by Pope Pius XI in 1925, as a reaction to the rise of fascism & communism in Europe, to remind people that Christ is King, and he must reign in our minds, wills, hearts and bodies. World War had ended 7 years before, and the world was in an economic depression. Mussolini and Hitler were gaining popularity & power. He felt it was time to call Christians to declare their allegiance to Jesus above all else. Many German Christians supported Hitler. A “two worlds approach” – religion not seen as related to everyday life. Pius’s point was that God has to rule over the whole of our lives.
- 2,000 years earlier, Pilate had the difficult job of keeping everyone in line. A contemporary historian described him as a ruthless overlord.
- In John’s account, Pilate starts believing he is in control, but the real power lies with Jesus. In the following verses, Pilate says he cannot find a basis for the charge and offers release, but the next chapter shows how little power he really has. Jesus is not like anyone Pilate has ever met.
- John shows two different types of king. One with power from terror and military might; one who relies on speaking the truth.

- Pilate, Stalin and Mao had institutional power. Jesus had charismatic power. In Matthew 7:29 we hear “Jesus talked as one with authority” – recognised by the truth and validity of what he said.
- “My kingdom is not of this world” – a different way of thinking, with different values (see Mark 10:42). Jesus *did* come to cause a revolution.
- Remembrance Sunday brings an immense sadness, not just for the sacrifice of so many, but because we don’t seem to have learned our lessons. The “War to end all wars” led to Hitler and WW II. Today, politics is becoming more polarised, Britain is torn apart by Brexit, extremist “populist” leaders and parties are on the rise throughout Europe.
- Is Christ our king? If he is, we will not be seduced by promises of worldly power. We need to choose the right king. Imagine how different the world would be if everyone accepted Christ as king.
- The gospel story doesn’t end well for Jesus, but in his losing his life for us and rising again, we are given the ultimate proof that he is the one real king. His kingdom and rule are what we need more than ever in this broken world.

### Questions of Application

- 1) Is Christ your king? Do you want him to be?
- 2) What is the hardest part of giving Him rule over your life?
- 3) How can we bring Christ’s rule into our everyday situations?
- 4) Should we as Christians be more involved in influencing local and national politics?
- 5) Do you face conflicts between earthly and spiritual power?