

# NO ORDINARY KING

(Luke 23: 33-43)

Intro: Living in the United States.

- As we do.
- In a democracy.

We probably have a romanticized view of royalty.

- Kings.
- Queens.
  - #Crowns.
  - #Puffy robes.
  - #Gaudy rings.
  - #Horse-drawn carriages.
  - #Lots and lots of servants to take care of:
    - \*Crowns.
    - \*Puffy robes.
    - \*Gaudy rings.
    - \*Horse-drawn carriages.

As we come to the end of the church year.

- We celebrate the festival of Christ the King.
  - #Our Lord who rules in our hearts.
  - #Our Lord whose kingdom will have no end.
- But as our Gospel lesson for today reminds us.
  - #Jesus is no romantic.
  - #Jesus is no ordinary king.

I. Our King Attends Executions.

A. That Is Not Ordinary.

1. When I was a jail chaplain.
  - a. Out of the dozens of execution vigils I attended.
  - b. Out of all of the prayer services that I led.
    - Whenever Missouri had an execution scheduled.
  - c. Not once did the governor attend.
2. The governor spent those evenings in his:
  - a. Palace.
  - b. Office.
  - c. Governor's Mansion.
    - Reviewing.
    - Almost always declining.
      - #Last-minute appeals for executive clemency.

B. Jesus Is No Ordinary King.

1. He was not safely ensconced in a palace.
2. He was at the place of execution.
  - a. He was not there as a spectator.
    - When we held our prayer vigils.
      - #Outside of the walls.
      - #Outside of the fences.
        - \*Of the penitentiaries where executions were carried out.
    - First time or two Missouri held an execution.
      - #There were spectators.
      - #Lots and lots of spectators.
    - But as the novelty wore off.
      - #As executions became almost routine.
      - #There were rarely any spectators.
        - \*People had better things to do in the middle of the night.
    - Jesus was at this execution.
      - #But he was no spectator.
  - b. He was not the executioner.
    - Some might prefer that role for Jesus.
      - #One who zaps the bad guys.
      - #One who punishes evil doers.
    - But Jesus was not the executioner.
      - #Jesus is no ordinary king.
  - c. He was the one to be executed.
    - Hung on a cross.
    - Framed between two criminals.
      - #Two evil doers.
    - But in one of the most ironic twists of all time.
      - #It is the one who is executed who grants pardon.
        - \*"Father, forgive them;"
          - +Jesus said.
          - \*"For they do not know what they are doing."
            - +Luke 23: 34.
        - #How can the executed one grant pardon to the executioners?
          - \*Because the "fullness of God" dwelt in him.
            - Colossians 1: 19.
      - Jesus is no ordinary king.

## II. Our King Saves Others.

### A. That Is Not Ordinary.

1. There was an expectation that the king should save himself.
  - a. "If he the Messiah of God,"
    - "Let him save himself."
    - #Luke 23:35.
  - b. "If you are the King of the Jews,"
    - "Save yourself."
    - #Luke 23:37.
  - c. "Are you not the Messiah?"
    - "Save yourself and us!"
    - #Luke 23:39.
  - d. As our Daytime 5x5x5 Group was reminded.
    - When we were studying the baptism and temptation of Jesus.
      - # "If" is the language of:
        - \* Satan.
        - \* Temptation.
        - + Matthew 4:3,6,9.
      - When Jesus was baptized.
        - # He came up out of the Jordan River.
        - # Heaven opened.
        - # Spirit of God descended on him in the form of a dove.
        - # Divine voice from the heavenly cloud said:
          - \* "This is my beloved Son."
          - = Matthew 3:16-17.
      - In the very next story.
        - # Jesus' divine identity was challenged by the devil.
          - \* If you are the Son of God.
            - + Turn these stones into bread.
          - \* If you are the Son of God.
            - + Throw yourself off the Temple.
          - \* If you are the son of God.
            - + All the kingdoms of the world can be yours,
            - = If you bow down and worship me.
            - Matthew 4:1-11.
    - e. Here Jesus' Messiahship/kingship is being challenged.
      - "If you are the Messiah,"
        - # "Save yourself."
      - "If you are the king,"
        - # "Save yourself."

B. Jesus Is No Ordinary King.

1. He saves others.

a. He could have saved himself.

-Books and movies have suggested that possibility.

#"The Last Temptation of Christ."

\*Novel by Nikos Kazantzakis (1951).

\*Movie directed by Martin Scorsese (1988).

#While on the cross Jesus was tempted.

\*Come down.

\*Marry Mary Magdalene.

\*Have a family.

\*Live happily ever after.

-The Da Vinci Code (2006).

#Not really new stuff.

b. But Jesus could not have done both.

-Save himself.

-Save others.

#But Jesus is no ordinary king.

#He chose to save others.

2. That's not an easy choice.

a. When we were in Branson a couple of weeks ago.

-I spent several hours at the Titanic exhibit.

#Displays over 400 artifacts.

\*From people who were on the Titanic.

#Tells the story of the sinking of that infamous ocean liner.

\*April 14-15, 1912.

-Titanic.

#2224 passengers.

#But only 16 hard-bottomed life boats.

\*All that the law required at that time.

#But the Titanic went above and beyond the law.

\*There were also 4 inflatable life rafts.

#But even with those.

\*Capacity of all of the life boats.

+Was barely half of the total number of passengers.

=1178.

b. When the Titanic hit that iceberg.

-Ship that had been called "unsinkable."

#Began to sink.

-Choices had to be made.

#Save yourself.

#Save others.

- Some chose to save themselves.
    - #Even with the policy of:
      - \*"Women and children first."
    - #J. Bruce Ismay.
      - \*President of the White Star Line.
        - +Designer.
        - +Builder.
        - +Owner.
      - =Of the Titanic.
      - \*Managed to get himself into one of the life boats.
        - +He saved himself.
  - Some tried to save others.
    - #Margaret Tildon Brown.
      - \*Aka Unsinkable Molly Brown.
    - #Put in Life Boat #6.
      - \*Commanded by one of the junior officers of the Titanic.
      - \*Life Boat #6 was not full.
        - +There was room for more people.
    - #Molly Brown wanted to go back.
      - \*To pick up more people.
      - \*To save others.
    - #Junior officer in charge of that life boat refused.
      - \*Fearing that their little boat might get sucked under.
        - +When the Titanic finally went down.
      - \*Fearing that his passengers' lives might be at risk.
      - \*Fearing that his life might be at risk.
3. Jesus is no ordinary king.
- a. He not only risks his own life.
  - b. He gives his own life.
    - To save others.

### III. Our King Remembers.

#### A. That Is Not Ordinary.

1. In Missouri.
  - a. Condemned person is removed from general population.
    - Couple of weeks prior to execution.
    - #Severing ties with other inmates.
  - b. Night of the execution.
    - Prison shows pornographic movies.
    - #Trying to get the general population to forget.
    - \*What is happening in another part of the prison.
  - c. Morning after.
    - Execution is maybe not even news.

2. When Jesus was executed.
  - a. Some threw dice for his clothes.
  - b. Some made fun of him.
    - Forgetting that Jesus was:
      - #Somebody's friend.
      - #Somebody's brother.
      - #Somebody's son.

B. Jesus Is No Ordinary King.

1. He remembers.
  - a. He remembers to ask one of his disciples.
    - To look after his mother.
    - #John 19:26-27.
  - b. He remembers a condemned but repentant criminal.
    - When that man begs for mercy from his own cross:
      - #"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."
      - \*Luke 23:42.
    - Jesus says to him:
      - #"Today."
      - \*"Today" is one of Luke's favorite words.
        - +17x in Luke-Acts.
        - +6x in Matthew.
        - +0x in Mark and John.
      - \*There is no limbo.
      - \*There is an immediacy to God's gift of salvation.
        - + "Now is the acceptable time."
        - + "Now is the day of salvation."
        - =2 Corinthians 6:2.
    - #"Today you will be with me in paradise."
    - \*Wherever heaven is.
    - \*Whatever heaven might be like.
      - +We will be with Jesus.
        - =Reconciled.
        - =Restored.
        - =No more separation.
        - =Re-membered.
    - \*It is interesting to me.
      - +Only in Luke's Gospel.
      - =Jesus promises:
        - To remember.
          - #"Today."
          - #"With me."

- +Unlike Matthew and Mark.
- =In Luke.
  - No cry of dereliction.
  - No cry of God-forsakenness.
  - No cry of:
    - #"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
    - \*"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
    - \*Matthew 27:46.
    - \*Mark 15:34.
- =Instead, Jesus simply says:
  - “Today.”
  - “With me.”

- c. Jesus is no ordinary king.
  - He remembers his faithful people.
  - He re-members us.

2. We remember.

- a. Here at this altar.
  - Every week.
  - Every service.

- b. Why do we celebrate the Lord’s Supper over and over again?
  - We do it “in remembrance” of him.
  - #Of Jesus.
  - #Of Christ the King.

- c. I may have told you this story before.
  - I don’t remember.
  - #Maybe you’ll remember it.
  - Even if I’ve told it before.
  - #I’m going to tell it again.
  - It’s a story about Marti.
    - #Martha was her name.
    - \*But everyone called her Marti.
    - #Both Marti and her husband Leroy suffered from diabetes.
    - \*They had been in and out of the hospital.
    - +On one occasion.
      - =They had both been:
        - In the same hospital.
        - In the same room.
        - At the same time.
    - +That’s how I had come to know.
      - =Marti.
      - =Leroy.
      - When I was a hospital chaplain.

#As chaplain.

\*I had a Sunday morning worship service in the hospital.

\*I had volunteers who came in.

#On Sunday mornings.

#From different congregations.

\*I would send them up on the floors.

#To invite patients.

#To push wheelchairs.

#To drag IV poles.

#To help patients come to the chapel.

#One Sunday a group came from Marti and Leroy's church.

\*Leroy was a little shaky on his feet.

#But he could still walk.

#I sent him up on the floors with the others.

\*But Marti:

#Totally blind.

#Had had both legs amputated at the knees.

\*She was in a wheelchair.

\*I would have her sit at the door of the chapel.

+Hand out:

=Bulletins.

=Hymn books.

+She was my official greeter.

\*While we were waiting for the others.

#To come down for worship.

#Marti told me:

\*She and her husband.

+Liked to dress up as clowns.

+They would go to:

-Parades.

-Birthday parties.

=To entertain the kids.

+Despite their physical problems.

-They were not the kinds of folks who would:

=Sit around.

=Feel sorry for themselves.

\*At one birthday party.

+Boy had been given a flashlight.

-As a party favor.

=I don't know what kind of party favor that  
is for a kid.

-But this kid had a flashlight.

+Boy brought the flashlight to Marti.  
 -He wanted to give it to her.  
 #Flashlight!  
 #For a blind lady!  
 \*Interesting!

+Marti said:  
 -"You keep it."  
 -"It's yours."

+Little boy said:  
 -"No, I want you to have it."

+Marti said:  
 -"I can't take that."  
 -"I came here to give, not to take."

+Little boy said:  
 -"No, no, no, no, no!"  
 -"You don't understand."  
 -"You have to take this flashlight,"  
 # "Because I want to give you something."  
 # "To remember me by."

- d. Our Lord gives us something to remember him by.  
 -But it's not a flashlight.  
 -It's his own body and blood.  
 #To forgive us.  
 #To restore us to a right relationship with him.  
 #To re-member us.  
 \*For faithful living under the rule of Christ the King.  
 +That the "fullness of God" might dwell in us.  
 =Pardoning others.  
 =Bringing salvation to others.

Concl: So, come!

-Let's eat.  
 -Let's drink.  
 #It is a banquet.  
 #It is the feast of Christ the King.  
 \*No ordinary king.  
 +Our king attends executions.  
 +Our king saves others.  
 +Our king remembers us.

