

Sermon for January 11, 2015 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Psalm 2 (NKJV)

Theme: Jesus is our anointed Savior-King.

- 1) *A truth the world refuses to accept.*
- 2) *A truth to which God the Father testifies.*
- 3) *A truth we would be wise to believe.*

*Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. <sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: <sup>6</sup> "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." <sup>7</sup> "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. <sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. <sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel." <sup>10</sup> Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. <sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

When God the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, he publicly declared Jesus to be both His Son and our Savior from sin.

Sadly, the sinful world does not want to accept Jesus as the Savior God declared him to be. Why not? Because it does not want to subject itself to God. People do all they can to escape Christ's rule - tragically regarding God's Word as oppressive, when it, in reality, offers the greatest freedom.

What about us: do we understand who Jesus is? Are we willing to face the world's wrath because we allow Him to rule in our hearts? Let us consider these questions under the theme: **Jesus is our anointed Savior-King.** 1) *A truth the world refuses to accept.* 2) *A truth to which God the Father testifies.* 3) *A truth we would be wise to believe.*

Part One: Jesus is our anointed Savior-King – a truth the world refuses to accept.

Our text begins with King David asking the question: *Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."*

God anointed Jesus as our Savior-King – but the world refuses to accept him as such! Many prestigious and powerful people fight against the LORD. For example, secular scientists seem to go out of their way to try to convince us that there is no God. Many atheistic professors encourage their students to question Biblical morality: claiming that God's laws are intolerant and unloving. And then there is the entertainment industry: artists who use music and movies to manipulate our emotions – almost always portraying Christians as unloving, ignorant people who are not willing to let others have the liberty of pursuing the things they want to pursue.

And so, even in America, there is a grand plot – brought together by the devil himself – against Christ and his Church.

But why? Why does the world rage against the one who created it? Why does it plot evil against him who loved the world so much, that he laid down his life to save it?

It's simple, really. The people of this world still want what the devil promised Eve in the Garden of Eden: to be their own gods and masters of their own fate. They want to have the freedom to pursue whatever selfish thing they want to pursue. The world does not want the LORD as its God and therefore rejects the idea of needing a Savior like Jesus.

Dear Christian, realize that we have the same sinful heart inside of us that the world has. The Bible says that *the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.* (Rom 8:7 NIV84) Our sinful flesh constantly rebels against God – tempting us to view his commands as restrictive instead of freeing, and intolerant instead of loving. We would have been no better off than the world; but (thanks be to God) the LORD, in His grace, reached out to us through the proclamation of the Gospel – calling us to repentance and faith for the forgiveness of sins.

Because of Christ's work for us, we are not like the world. We look to Jesus in love – freely confessing him as the Savior-King God anointed him to be. We love his forgiveness and want him to rule in our hearts, and the world hates us because of this. But even though the world may rage against Christ and his Church, we don't have to be afraid. Why?

Part Two: Jesus is our anointed Savior-King – a truth to which God the Father testifies.

Because, as David says, *He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.<sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:<sup>6</sup> "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."*

The LORD laughs at the world's feeble attempts to overthrow His Son's kingdom. Even though there are times in history when it seemed as if Christianity was all but lost, the Lord always delivered his Church and judged her enemies – thereby reaffirming his decree: "I have set my Son Jesus, to be My King over Zion my Church."

All kingdoms and nations fall, but God has preserved Christ's Church through out the centuries, thereby testifying to the fact that Jesus truly is the King God anointed Him to be – the one who will judge the nations with justice.

This is why Jesus, speaking through David's pen, says: *"I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.*

God the Father told His Old Testament people that the Savior He would send would be both God and God's Son. Jesus, according to His divine nature, is God - equal to his Father in every way. At the same time, the Bible also describes Jesus as a distinct person of the Trinity who, unlike the Father and the Holy Spirit, was begotten of God the Father before all worlds.

Jesus, therefore, is the promised Savior; but how could anyone know this unless God himself revealed it? According to his human nature, Jesus doesn't look any different from any other man. This is why, at key points in Jesus ministry, God the Father himself testified that Jesus is His Son.

Jesus Baptism was one of the key points. It was the event when God publicly anointed and installed Jesus into his special ministry as our Savior. This is why God the Father opened the heavens at his baptism, let the Holy Spirit descend on him like a dove and declared: “*You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (Mark 4:11)

In that short statement, those gathered at the Jordan got to hear the decree God the Father made in eternity. Jesus is not a mere man, He is God the Son – the almighty LORD over all creation. Through him all things were made. He is one with the Father – both in essence and in will. Because Jesus agreed to take on human flesh and blood in order to live, suffer and die to save His lost people, God the Father promised to glorify His Son, saying: *Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.*<sup>9</sup> *You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.”*

When we see Jesus coming out of the Jordan, we see a gentle Savior – one who lovingly invites all come to him in repentance and faith for the forgiveness of our sins. The world looks at this and laughs. But, what the world fails to realize is that, this humble man it rejects, has been given all authority to rule and judge the earth. Throughout the pages of Scripture, God the Father testifies to this fact. God the Father wants us to believe that He anointed Jesus to be our almighty Judge who, at the end of time, will deliver final justice on this earth. As the Scriptures promise, Jesus will deliver all who look to him in faith and love to His Father’s side in heaven. At the same time, He will also send all who refuse to believe in Him into the eternal hell fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

This is why David writes:

Part Three: Jesus is our anointed Savior-King – a truth we would be wise to believe.

<sup>10</sup> *Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.*

Knowing what we know about Jesus, the wise course is not to struggle against Him and His word like the rest of the world, but to repent of all our sins and trust in His mercy to forgive.

And having been forgiven, let us also be careful not to use his forgiveness as a license to sin. We are so used to God’s grace and love, that we are tempted to overlook his holiness. We see Jesus as so wonderfully approachable because of His gracious work for us that we become tempted to view Jesus as our buddy whom we can joke around with and disagree with when things don’t go our way. We understand forgiveness so well, that we are tempted to abuse it by thinking nothing of our sins and selfishness because, Jesus will forgive us, right?

Yes, Jesus forgives, but he also condemns! Therefore we also need to be wise. *Serve the LORD with fear*, our text says. That means respect who Jesus is. He is not our buddy, but our Savior-King and God who has mercifully extended his salvation to us, even though we don’t deserve it. *Rejoice* in God’s saving, forgiving love *with trembling* – that is, recognizing his holiness and absolute hatred for sin. This will prevent us from treating our sins as if they are no big deal. Our sins are a very big deal: they cost His suffering and death to forgive them.

*Kiss the Son* – that is, honor and love him as our Savior-God. Don’t be like the rest of the world that foolishly tries to rebel against him, *lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.*

*Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.* Yes, blessed is everyone who looks to Jesus in faith and

love. They will not face God's anger or judgment, but his love and mercy. They will see that God's law, even though it is impossible for us sinners to keep, is really good and for our benefit. At death, they will experience God's angels taking them home, and when the end of the world comes, they will be raised from the dead to live in perfect peace and harmony with God for all eternity – all because Jesus is our anointed Savior-King. Amen