

**Saint Peter's  
Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May  
Sixth Sunday of Easter  
Anglicanism; it's the real deal, isn't it?  
Acts 17:22-31, 1 Pet 3.8-22, John 14.15-21**

Anglicanism; it's the real deal, isn't it?

Last Saturday's coronation service liturgy opened with these words:

'The kingdom of God is not a place but a way of being – a reign of justice, mercy and love which Jesus came to bring. King of Kings is a title that is given to Jesus in the Bible. Christians profess the belief that He reigns for ever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Behind the pageantry of the coronation service, our King commits himself to follow the Lord he serves in a life of loving service in his role as Monarch.'

Like the funeral of Queen Elizabeth, the coronation of King Charles was a clarion call to the world. That the kingdom of God is in fact something that actually concerns us, and our contemporary world. The Lordship of God is the actual relation of God's own reality, to us and to the world.

The coronation service began with a child welcoming the king, 'Your Majesty, as children of the Kingdom of God, we welcome you in the name of the King of Kings.'

The king then brings himself and the whole congregation before God in silent prayer, followed by the kyrie, to remind the world before whom it stands, the God who made the world and everything in it, 'In him we live and move and have our being.' Who, in Jesus Christ, revealed himself, once for all, as merciful and kind.

There followed the presentation of the bible, the heart of Christian worship, and of our social and cultural heritage:

Sir: to keep you mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, receive this Bible, the most valuable thing that this world affords.

Here is Wisdom;

This is the Royal Law;

These are the lively oracles of God.’

The Christian ethic, the love of God, and the love of neighbour, is a universal ethic. It is God’s ethic. It stands above so called human ethics, whether secular liberal, or atheist socialism, as high as the heavens stand above the earth. The replacement of the Christian ethic, by secular liberalism, and atheist socialism, within society, is the reason for decline in western society, in our day. Everything belongs to God. Everything matters. Everything is subject to the Christian ethic, to love God, and to love neighbour. Everything, is in the eyes of God.

‘Who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made of human hands, from one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being.’

The Archbishop of Canterbury then led the king in taking the oath:

‘Your Majesty, will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel?..Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the Church, its doctrine, worship, discipline, and government? Will you to the utmost of your power cause God’s Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgments?’

To which the King replied, ‘I will. I solemnly promise to do so.’

Your average political theorist of the modern era have reduced the question of the political order to the question of power. Anglicanism is not your average political theorist. To quote Shakespeare, it is 'above that spectred sway.'

As Anglicans we understand more deeply than do our contemporaries, the truth of St Augustine's dictum, that there can be no social peace, where there is not the proper worship of God. That there can be no unity of society, where there is not the true religion. That there can be no successful society, without the presence of God.

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you'.

As Anglicans we understand that when society keeps faith with God, God keeps faith with it. 'Those who love me will keep my word', Jesus says, 'and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'

To the open societies of the Christian West, not just Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, has come to them, and made their home with them, and has kept them safe, and blessed them, and made them to prosper, so that the whole world may know the reality of God: the kingdom of God, the monarchy of God, the Father, the Son the Holy Spirit.

To which the Christian human monarchy is there to witness, as the order of service, and the life of Elizabeth made clear.

And yet God's gift to the world, of the English people, is the English Reformation. The principle of liberty, became the basis of western society. God's gift to the world. The fullest realisation of Christian freedom, and of human freedom, the world has ever known.

The monarchy of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the power that has shaped our western history and culture. That is the source of our freedom. The principle of liberty, stands against tyranny everywhere. 'For freedom Christ has set us free,' the Apostle said. 'Do not submit yourselves again to a yoke of slavery.'

Yet the ambiguity of the liberal secular conception of freedom, means that God's judgment is here, too. With the rise of atheist socialism in our day. As a judgment, however, it is aimed, not at our destruction, but our salvation. At a return of western society, to the God from whence it came. Through Jesus Christ, by the Spirit.

This is still the hour of liberty. For the full realisation of the principle of liberty, within the common life of western society.

But if western culture does not rediscover its roots in Christianity, then people, especially the young, will cry out for socialism. As they will be unable to bear the meaninglessness of a modern secular liberal society.

'Jesus Christ has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers made subject to him', we read in our epistle this morning.

From there, he pours out His Holy Spirit, on all who acknowledge him, to be Lord of Lords, and King of Kings.

And 'where the Spirit is, there is freedom', according to the Apostolic testimony. The Kingdom, the Monarchy of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, means freedom for the world. Christianity, means the liberation of the world.

So that, in the Coronation Gospel, we hear, the voice of Jesus, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me, to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to open the prison door, to them that are bound.' To give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,

a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. The day of judgement of our God.'

The kingdom of God is not a place but a way of being – a reign of justice, mercy and love which Jesus came to bring. King of Kings is a title that is given to Jesus in the Bible. Christians profess the belief that He reigns for ever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Politicians everywhere are called by God to commit themselves to follow the Lord in a life of loving service, to God, and people, in the exercise of their public office.'

Like the funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II, the coronation of King Charles III was a clarion call to the world. That the kingdom of God is something that concerns us, our contemporary world. As the relation of God's own reality, to his world.

Rev'd Jonathan Chamberlain

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