

The Earthly Enthronement of the King of Glory: When God was made the Laughingstock of the World

Ps. 2, Mk. 4:21-23, Passion accounts from the Gospels

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Introduction: Too often our ideas and beliefs even within the Christian community are established more by blind faith in expert opinions, group-think and parroting, rather than by deep personal conviction based on the Word of God and the Holy Spirit's work in us. Rudolf Clausius wrote this about a problem in physics: *"Once an error is set like a foundation stone in the ground, and everything is built thereupon, nevermore does it return to light."* Sometimes the same thing can happen in the way we think about certain Christian doctrines. We get an erroneous way of thinking embedded in our minds, we build our thought structure on it, and we get stuck there, no longer open to the Spirit's teaching us deeper truth. I pray we may see the truth of Good Friday today with fresh eyes as we seek to interpret it as the fulfillment of Ps. 2 and Mk. 4:21-23: *the earthly enthronement of the King and the Light of the world being set on its "lampstand."* However, we must also keep in mind that from the creatures' vantage point, it was the disgraceful moment when God was made the laughingstock of the world!

1) In Ps. 2 we have a coronation psalm, celebrating the enthronement of the King of Israel, God's Son, the Messiah. The psalmist questions why the nations would resist sovereign authority, both that of God and His Anointed One, who is installed in Zion as God's representative and is promised the nations as His inheritance. The psalm ends with a strong invitation to the kings of the earth to serve the Lord, to kiss the Son and take refuge in Him, lest they suffer the consequences of His righteous wrath.

In Mk. 4:21-23, Jesus tells the parable of the lamp whose obvious destination is a lampstand where it can give the most light to the house. But the translation of the first line needs tweaking: instead of a lamp that is "brought in," the text actually personifies the lamp as *coming*, as it were, on its own, but not to be placed under a basket or a bed, but on its lampstand. For nothing is hidden that will not be brought out into the open. What are those **hidden things** that need to be disclosed? **1)** How broken and idolatrous is the human heart (though we constantly try to cover over the brokenness); also how totally opposed to God's rule humanity is and enslaved to our own self-destructive path. **2)** How immense is our Creator's love: compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and faithfulness. These deeply hidden realities would be revealed only as the *Light of the world* was set upon *His Lampstand*, which is *the King's earthly throne: the cross of Calvary*.

2) Good Friday, according to Jewish reckoning of time, actually began at sundown on Thursday. So the Passover meal shared by Jesus and His disciples was actually a part of Good Friday, followed by Jesus' intense time of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then came His announcement that the hour had come for the Son of Man to be *delivered into the hands of sinners* (Mt. 26:45). So with His arrest there in the garden late that night, the *candidate for King of the Jews* was taken and **presented** before the Jewish council, where He **confessed** His true identity and was received with humiliation, disbelief, scoffing, blindfolding, pokes and jabs, striking, beating, and spit in the face. Later the

humiliation would continue as Jesus was [delivered into the hands of Pilate](#) (Mt. 27:2), the Roman governor, where there would be more interrogation, false accusations, a failed attempt to release Him in exchange for Barrabas, and then a great uproar from the crowd demanding His blood (followed by Pilate's attempt to free himself of responsibility by washing his hands). So after a good flogging, Jesus was [handed over again](#) (Mt. 27:26), this time to the Roman soldiers (the flogging was carried out by them); and afterward, He would be **dressed** in a purple robe for mocking, **crowned** with a specially woven crown of thorns, complete with blows to the head, a scepter in His hand, spit in His face, and countless other injustices: all part of this pretense of homage to the King! The creatures were playing with their Creator, sinners making sport of the Holy One, all in jest and ridicule!

Later for the culmination of this royal act, He would be undressed down to His royal skin for the **enthronement** itself, then impaled on two perpendicular wooden beams for a throne, also serving as "lampstand" for the Light of the world! He hadn't come to be hidden under a basket or bed: the lamp needed to be placed where it could give the most light to the whole house. (Who would have ever imagined that place to be a Roman cross?!). This would be followed by His grand **acceptance speech** (as He was being provided with nails in His hands and feet to help Him stay on His throne). It was a simple speech of eight words in the Greek text, and it was all about [full pardon](#) for the criminals (the Greek verb for "said" is in the imperfect tense, indicating repetition of this prayer probably all through *those* excruciating moments plus the rest of the ordeal). [That moment of our maximum rebellion](#), the culmination of all our rejection of God's authority over us, should have been the nail in our collective coffin – our absolute condemnation! Satan was so sure that Jesus' Kingdom would not endure such great opposition as he was plotting: it would fail under the intense pressure of persecution, crumble under the white heat of violence, wither and dissipate under the fire of torture and cruelty coming from the very creatures God loved and was so intent on redeeming. So Satan stirred up the mob, agitated their rulers with jealousy, provoked their bloodthirsty instincts, and the bomb was set to explode – in God's own face! There would be [no glory left in this Son of Man](#) when Satan finished dragging Him through the dirt! It was just what the Levitical sacrificial system had prophesied – a parable of the ultimate showdown between the God of the universe and the usurper of earth's lordship – a parable written with the blood of every animal slaughtered on the Jerusalem altar by the hands of the priests! God knew perfectly well what was coming when He sent His Innocent One among the ravenous wolves! No glory indeed would remain to be detected by unbelieving eyes – no glory but the throbbing beauty of God's compassionate and gracious heart still pounding in Jesus' breast, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and faithfulness. No glory but that of Jesus representing His Father's heart as, in the power of the Spirit, He turned our wretched fate around 180° by forgiving everything done to Him (even this our worst crime in history!).

So Jesus persisted all through that exhausting trial by torture, exercising His role of **defeating sin and defeating the enemy of our souls** (both at once, which was His mission). In 2 ways He defeated sin: by never giving in to the temptation to love anything more than He loved God (being without sin meant His authority was unequalled on earth); and by forgiving every sin ever committed against Him (not virtual sins poured out from some celestial storehouse, but real ones, hurtful and deadly!). He was exercising the prerogative that God had put in His hands as the [only One on earth who could forgive sins](#) (Mk. 2:10), i.e., as the Judge of the living and the dead (1 Tim. 4:1, Jn. 5:22, 27). Thereby He ripped the very ground out from under the Strong Man's feet (leaving him nothing with which to accuse us!), tying Him in knots, plundering his stolen household and rescuing the hostages. Of course, this speech had no impact on those who **accompanied** Him – a retinue of politicians, thieves, buffoons, and scoundrels, who were eager to **cheer Him on** with jeering, insults, ridicule, enjoying His downfall and ruin (but Jesus remained confident of His Father's faithful presence, as He had said to His disciples in Jn. 16:32). And finally it was Jesus Himself who handed over His Spirit as He declared, **"it is finished"** (Jn. 19:30). His fierce trial had concluded, because He had fully glorified His Father, incarnated the Father's mercies and our forgiveness in the face of our greatest crime. In His moment of greatest weakness, He was so powerful to save, to establish His

kingdom in human flesh, to dethrone the enemy. Yet He was **buried** without honors or recognition. So reads the account of the enthronement of our King.

3) And what was **the Father's reaction** to all of this? In 2 Cor. 5:19, Paul summarizes it well: **“God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting men's trespasses against them.”** Perfect harmony characterized the Father and Son all through that excruciating ordeal. And according to Matthew and Mark's accounts, the curtain of the temple was torn in two at the time of Jesus' death, the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple, so that the most sacred enclosure was now exposed to the public! It's been compared to the Old Testament custom of a father who tears his robe in mourning over the death of a son. So **our heavenly Father tore His robe**, thereby symbolizing both His grief over humanity's rejection of His Son as their King, and the full access to His heart that was now available in the Name of Jesus. Under all our cursing, Jesus was so generous to bless. Under the weight of our multiple injustices and indignities, He kept on overflowing with forgiveness and mercy. In all that humiliation and shame, He remained so incredibly kind and glorious. In the midst of such misery, He reigned with such brilliance: grace and truth personified! This is our Savior and the gifts He bestowed on us at the cross:

a) The **perfect portrait and representation of His Father**: so we are called to be sons and daughters of this Father, bearing the family likeness more and more as we grow in Christ.

b) The **incarnation of God's rule on earth**, meaning that the Kingdom of heaven was fully established in human flesh: so by confessing His name we are called to be agents of this Kingdom, ambassadors of this King, so that we represent Him to each other and to the world. Let Jesus reign in your brain!

c) The **embodiment of all God's mercies**, His forgiveness *in person* – the true amnesty and full pardon that cleanses us of all sin and sinful patterns, connects us to constant repentance from our old ways, and focuses our hearts on the One who is love, the One who is worthy: He calls us to be ministers of His reconciliation, servants of His message!

d) The **Conqueror of our greatest enemy**, the one who defeats Satan and destroys his stronghold on my life and the power of his dominion (death); so we are called to be **“more than conquerors”** through Christ, who daily enables us to win the battle against sin and temptation, and against the evil powers of darkness!

May we keep growing in our appreciation of our Savior's triumphant reign on that cross over every evil and suffering, and how His victory sheds so much light on our struggles! It's the Lampstand that has continued to illuminate human history down to this day! And may we treasure the symbols He left for us to celebrate together ... in His memory ... as reminders to us of whom we belong to and what our calling is.