

Thine Is The Kingdom And The Power And The Glory.

Text: Col 3:1-2

Suggested Hymns:

367, 436, 608, 286, 379

1) Thine Is The Kingdom

2) Thine Is The Kingdom And The Power

3) Thine Is The Kingdom And The Power
And The Glory

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Colossians 3:1-2, *¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today we are continuing our series on the Nicene Creed. Part 8 focuses on the words, *And sits at the right hand of the Father.*

Perhaps you have noticed in confessing the Nicene Creed that in the Second Article all the verbs are in the past tense: *“One Lord Jesus Christ ... begotten, not made ... who came down ... was incarnate ... was made man ... was crucified ... suffered and was buried ... rose again.”*

Then suddenly comes the present tense of the overwhelming fact that this Lord Jesus Christ *“sits at the right hand of the Father.”*

Paul uses the present tense to remind the church at Colossae of Christ’s present rule over all things. *“If then you were raised with Christ? Then aspire to the realm above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

This affirmation is both the confession of faith and the aspiration of hope expressed in the phrase added to our prayers, *“through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”* It is also found in the great doxology that is added to the prayer our Lord taught us to pray, *“For Thine Is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory.”* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. “Thine Is The Kingdom”

To be seated on anyone's right hand is a privilege of special honour. To be there is to share in authority, sometimes even to wield the same authority and power.

When the church confesses that Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Father, it speaks of the God-man exalted out of humiliation. His throne is not a dimension of geography or physics. Rather His enthronement speaks of His nearness, and His presence.

The Son of Man and Son of God exalted to the heavens and enthroned on the divine throne is immediately, actively, and effectively present, for His is the kingdom. He is not subject to the conditions and limitations of time or space, but He is involved in the conditions of our earthly life.

Better yet, the conditions of earthly life, great and small, are involved in Him, for God's right hand is everywhere. God's finger, the poets and prophets agree, reaches everywhere into the innermost nook and cranny of human existence.

Significantly the Nicene Creed does not say that Christ sits on the right hand of the heavenly King. The Son sits at the Father's right hand, for the Son, like the Father, is full of grace and truth, and it is this grace pressing through into glory which is ultimately and properly characteristic of the one true God.

Let us be unmistakably sure we know who now sits on the throne at God's own right hand. This is the Son of the Father from eternity who, as the Nicene Creed keeps on saying, "*was made man*" and never stopped being one, and yet with a difference. This was and is and will always only be the very Christ of God.

Little wonder that at the dawn of the Christian era on Pentecost Day, Peter speaking for the whole church, announced to the representatives of the world gathered at Jerusalem, as it is written in Acts 2:36, ³⁶ "***Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.***"

Jesus Christ is not a king in exile or an absentee landlord. The Nicene Creed here confesses the kingly Christ who is King indeed, the conquering Christ who is Himself the victorious Victim who has moved from heaven to the manger, from the manger to the cross, and by way of the open tomb to His heavenly

crown, where now universal righteousness, divine purposeful love, and almighty power meet.

The victory is won, but Jesus is not merely resting on His laurels. The work finished for all men for all time on the cross becomes now His continuing activity of dominion. He is not a figurehead. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He is the runner who has won eternity's race. He is the Captain of our salvation, whose strife is over, whose battle is won.

2. "Thine Is ... The Power"

Since Jesus Christ is the Victor, the Conqueror, unlike some great conquerors, He is henceforth and forever the ruling King.

First of all, Jesus is the Ruler of His people, His militant people, the army of God, the church. This one great Leader unites the entire community of Christians of all the ages. He rules His church, and He rules it now.

Secondly, Jesus is also ruler of the universe, of the entire cosmos. Beyond the reach not merely of the moon-landing or the attempts at Mars, but beyond the outer reaches of the physical universe and closer than personal conscience is the universal reign of His dominion. Jesus Himself can say, "*All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth.*"¹ Everything is subject to Christ, for "*He must reign.*"²

Thirdly, Jesus the Head of the church and King of the universe is also the Lord of history. He rules in time and space. It is not merely a convenience to say "in the year of our Lord" 2017 or 1717. He controls the ultimate destiny of man and mankind.

That Jesus is Lord of history is a reminder that, although He has taken the throne and the reign has begun, the realm is not yet completed. Other nations and tongues and kindreds and peoples are yet to be conquered - conquered by His love, for God's battle with all the forces of Satan takes place in the realm of human history.

Since Jesus is the Lord of history, He gives to all things meaning and purpose. Now faith can affirm that all things work together for good to those who love God. Before there was time, and before men sought to measure space, He was. He was the actual creating Word. Of Jesus it is still possible to say that

He creates, He gives, He sustains, He delivers, He re-creates, and He brings to the goal of God all that belongs there.

As mankind has painfully learned, most royal authority degrades into totalitarian government or dictatorships. Most continuing power corrupts. Not so with the exalted Son of God, the Christ of God.

He exercises His royal authority for the sake of redeeming love. He proclaims the Gospel, His own Gospel. He teaches the truth - the truth that He is. He holds for each day in the history of mankind God's great day of salvation. He wants His royal power to be used. What He teaches is its finest hour and its greatest expression.

Jesus always lives to intercede. He is in the best possible location for that, for He sits on the right hand of the Father. When we pray, He prays. When we plead, He pleads. When we praise, He leads the heavenly doxology.

When we wrestle for our life, He gives life. When we pray for each other or for another, He has already done so, and our prayers gain their credentials by being able to say and to mean *“through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”*

As Jesus exercises His royal authority, He does so directly and in person. He does it on the grand scale and on the most intimate scale, for only of Him can He Himself say, in Matthew 18:20, ²⁰ *“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”*

He requires no deputy. He sends no vicar. He hides behind no surrogate. The present tense is critical. He is present in His Word wherever and whenever it is used. He is present in each and every baptism. He is present wherever believers gather together in response to the invitation to His Holy Communion, His Supper, His Eucharist.

3. “Thine Is ... The Glory”

Here, as by His grace and power you already know, is the only Lord and Saviour for mankind for all time. To a world in danger of using newfound power to extinguish all or most of life on the earth, the church can confess, believe, and teach that Jesus Christ is the living God, the true God and Eternal Life.

Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory reminds us of the Lord's Prayer but this was already known in the Old Testament. We read in

1 Chronicles 29:10-13, ¹⁰ *Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. ¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all.*

¹² *Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. ¹³ "Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name.*

David offered praise to God as the true possessor of all things. There is no greatness except that which comes from God. There is no power but what is given by God. For everything in heaven and earth is God's. God called the universe into being. It belongs to Him. More than simply being the Creator of all things, God also is at work in all things for His saving, redemptive purposes. *"Thine, O Lord, is the kingdom."*

David knew that all that he had been able to accomplish, he had been enabled to accomplish by the Saviour-God who rules in love. In this phrase great King David cast his crown before the Lord. It is not my kingdom, my throne, my glory, my people, my goals, my plans, but Thine is the kingdom. Thine alone!

How the human heart longs for fulfilment, to be lifted up above the dreary dust of life! Yet how perversely it seeks that lifting up in some empty self-exaltation or in pursuit of creature comforts instead of resting in the consolation of its Creator.

Only when the human heart is won over to the kingdom of Christ can it know the joy of being caught up into God's world-rule, a righteous, saving purpose at work in history and in our daily lives. When the kingdom of Christ our Lord comes to our hearts, we know the joy of being part of something bigger than our puny selves.

That is the joy expressed in David's song. His throne was not his own but God's. What God did for him He did not do for him alone, but for a world of hungry, hurting souls.

The Son of the Father gave Himself and through Word and sacraments still gives Himself. Where they are, there is forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

This King is of eternal significance. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He has and exercises almighty power over all earthly forms and degrees and structures of power. He has and exercises universal dominion as the determiner of destiny, as the creative force in human history. Amidst all the changes of life and death Jesus alone is the Unchangeable.

Jesus is the Light of Life of man, the Possessor of radiant majesty blinding in His holiness. He not only possesses, but is Glory unapproachable, yet Glory that approached and still approaches us and all mankind.

He is independent of us, yet we are never successfully independent of Him. He approaches and confronts us and does so on His terms. In His kingdom, power, and glory He is stronger than everyone who denies Him.

Jesus does not hide behind a curtained throne. He is on the move. He does not wait. He takes the initiative. He is not some sort of far-off baby-sitter for puny man. He is the Lord God Omnipotent.

Aspire to the realm above, set your affection on things above, says Paul. ² *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*” Even in the most settled age the church is really the pilgrim people of God marching upward and toward the heavenly kingdom.

This eager expectation that Jesus who is seated on the throne “*will come again in glory*” is the timeless hope of the church. The Nicene Creed confesses that *He will come again with glory*, and God’s everlasting Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Future of the world, the Hope of all mankind.

For Jesus who once came as the suffering Servant is still the servant King, and ultimately, be it soon or later as men count time, the total victory must be God’s victory for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Matthew 28:18

² 1 Corinthians 15:25