

## The Powerful King Over All.

Text: Psalm 97:7b-8,1

Suggested Hymns:

219, 344, 191, 440, 115

- 1) The Threefold Kingdom
- 2) Jesus is King Over Unruly Nature
- 3) Jesus is King Over Unruly Hearts
- 4) Jesus is King of His Church
- 5) Praise to the King

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 based on the Introit, Psalm 97:7b-8, 1, *Worship Him ... <sup>8</sup> Zion hears and is glad, And the daughters of Judah rejoice Because of Your judgments, O LORD. ... <sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns; Let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad!*

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Surely, power or might is something to consider. It can fill our hearts with dread and fear. But it can also reassure us and give us the feeling of security.

We fear destructive power, such as the scourge of war, nuclear weapons, an epidemic of disease, the wild forces of nature, the bitter hatred of an enemy, the ruthlessness of a merciless dictator, and the vengeance of a righteous and holy God, who can destroy soul and body in hell.

Then there is a power that inspires confidence. Such is the power of a strong government which guarantees protection, peace, and the pursuit of happiness. There is parental power which assures to children safety and security. There are the powers of the laws of nature which assure to us the supplies of life.

Then there is the power, although limited, of medical science which grants us health and strength, but above all there is the power of God, who alone sustains and keeps us and saves us from sin to life through Christ, fills our hearts with joy supreme, and grants us security beyond measure.

There is a human power and a divine power. Human power, either for good or for bad, is always limited. It can only touch the body, the physical side of

man. Scripture says in Matthew 10:28, <sup>28</sup> ***“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.”***

Divine power has no limitations. It is the power of God. While this divine power should strike down the sinner with fear and despair<sup>1</sup>, it restores confidence and security to those who trust in Him.<sup>2</sup> Behind the almighty power of God is the mercy and goodness of God.

In the Epiphany season we speak of Christ manifesting forth His glory. As indicated in the Introit for today, this fourth Sunday after Epiphany can be named the Epiphany of Power. Today we want to present Jesus as *The Powerful King over All*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. The Threefold Kingdom**

Three words of our text bring this fact to our attention, ***The LORD reigns***. The Lord reigns in a threefold kingdom — the kingdom of power, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory.

In the kingdom of power all creation, heaven and earth, are subject to Christ. Jesus stated, ***“All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth.”***<sup>3</sup> In the kingdom of grace Christ gathers all Christians through the power of His Word and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, who keeps them in the one true faith.<sup>4</sup> In the kingdom of glory Christ will rule with might and majesty the church in heaven, the saints who have come to the end of their faith, which is the salvation of their souls.<sup>5</sup> Yes, ***The LORD reigns*** everywhere.

Christ often demonstrated His power in the years of His public ministry. In the Gospel lesson for today<sup>6</sup> we see Jesus as king at the seaside. Late in the afternoon and, no doubt, at the end of a very busy day, Jesus and His disciples entered a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee.

When they were out on the sea they suddenly encountered a great storm. This was nothing unusual, that winds of great velocity should suddenly sweep down on the waters of this sea from the surrounding mountainous region. The howling wind whipped up the waves, covering the ship and tossing it to and fro, endangering the boat and the disciples.

When the rising and tossing waves continued to lash against the sides of the boat and even began to fill the boat with water, the disciples, some of whom were

experienced fishermen who had crossed the waters of this sea more than once, found that this storm was more than their power and experience could cope with.

Fearing for their lives, they turn to Jesus, who was asleep in the ship, awoke Him and said, “**Lord, save us! We are perishing!**” The destructive powers of the elements had gripped their hearts in fear. Jesus arose and first of all calmed the hearts of the disciples with the words, “**Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?**” Then He rebuked the wind and the waves, and there was a great calm. When they had reached the shore, the men marvelled, saying, “**Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?**”

Yes, “**The LORD reigns.**” Here Jesus demonstrated Himself to be the King over all — King over an unruly nature and King over unruly hearts.

## **2. Jesus Is King Over Unruly Nature**

As Jesus controlled the sea by His divine power, so He controls the events in our lives. We may find ourselves in difficulties, and we feel the sudden shock of them upon us. Jesus is there. On an car trip — pleasure or duty — unexpectedly we meet with a horrendous accident. Or we are taken down with an illness which the doctor declares to be fatal. We are rushed to the hospital, and we are told that we must undergo a serious operation. Suddenly a loved one is taken from our side through death.

Our way of life runs along very smoothly and pleasantly, when suddenly we experience a very rude awakening, by loss of work, by fire, by storms, by floods, by dispossession, by war, by loss of security in the eventide of life, by trouble in the home and family, by problems of many kinds, by disappointments and failures.

Just as the disciples in the boat were rudely shaken by the storm after the pleasant departure from the shore, so suddenly our life may be changed and we are shocked. Today the sun may be shining in all its glory. Tomorrow the skies will be threatening and the storm is on the way, and suddenly it sweeps over us.

But while our troubles may catch us off guard and terrify us and fill us with dread and fear, yet Jesus is always aware of what is happening. In the Gospel Lesson it is stated that Jesus slept. But He is never taken by surprise.

And though Jesus allows us to be caught in the whirlpool of disaster, He is there to help. His power can solve any trouble. His might can lift us out of all problems. Jesus calmed the sea. When His time is come, He can and will settle the troubling events and the stormy seas of life. He allowed the disciples to enter the storm. It was to be for their good.

Jesus allows the winds and the waves of our difficulties to come up upon us because *“all things work together for good to those who love God.”*<sup>7</sup> But then He stands by and with His power can cause all troubles to cease in His time. Yes, *“The LORD reigns.”* He is the powerful King over all.

Again and again Jesus has demonstrated this in Holy Scripture. Witness to this are all His miracles.

- to the centurion of Capernaum who had a sick servant;<sup>8</sup>
- to the woman of Syrophenicia who had a daughter grievously vexed with a demon;<sup>9</sup>
- to the man possessed by demons, who was in great agony;<sup>10</sup>
- to the man at the pool of Bethesda who had battled with his sickness for 38 years;<sup>11</sup>
- to Mary and Martha, who were thrown into deep grief at the death of their brother Lazarus;<sup>12</sup>
- to the ruler who came to Jesus with an anxious heart because of the fatal illness of his daughter, which illness brought about her death before he could return to her bedside with Jesus;<sup>13</sup>
- to the widow who lost her only son in death at Nain;<sup>14</sup>
- to the man who was paralysed and lowered down on a bed,<sup>15</sup>
- and to many others who experienced trouble of one sort or another, to all of these people Jesus came in His power and brought help in accordance with His will and plan. Here, too, Jesus is the powerful King who subdued the unruly nature. Yes, *“The LORD reigns.”*

Every problem of your life is subject to the power of Jesus. Every difficulty Jesus can conquer. For every headache and heartache Christ has a cure. Yes, *“The LORD reigns.”*

### 3. Jesus Is King Over Unruly Hearts

Jesus is the powerful King over all. As such He will also subdue the unruly human nature, the unruly heart of man.

When the big storm struck the sea and endangered the boat and the lives of the disciples, what went on in the hearts and minds of the disciples?

They were stricken with fear. They turned quickly to Jesus, who was asleep in the boat, and cried, *“Lord, save us! We are perishing!”* This they said despite of the fact that they knew Jesus to be the Son of God, and the Lord of all Power. Having His presence in the boat with them should have reassured them, calmed them, and removed all fear from their hearts.

Their trust should have been in Jesus. But in their weakness of faith they saw only disaster, only the storm, and only the trouble. This blinded the eyes of their faith in Jesus. Strong and destructive though the storm may have been, there stood by them One stronger to help.

Before Jesus stilled the sea, He calmed the hearts of these men. Let the sea rage about the boat; there was a storm about the hearts of His disciples that had to be set at rest. Jesus arose from sleep, turned to His disciples, and said, *“Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?”* Before rebuking the storm, He rebuked their unbelief.

Then by stilling the tempest He strengthened their faith in Him, causing them and others to say, *“Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”*

This very incident indicates that Christ must transform man’s elemental nature by His saving power. Every person — you and I included — is born into this world with a corrupt nature.<sup>16</sup> Therefore we are prone to sin in thought, word, and deed. We read in Isaiah 64:6 that *all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags*. Because of this there rests upon us the wrath of God.<sup>17</sup> When this wrath of God sweeps over us, it can destroy us eternally in hell as we read in Rom. 6:23, *“The wages of sin is death.”*

Therefore our hearts are given to fear. There is no peace in the heart of the unregenerate person. But Christ, the powerful Prince of Peace, came into this

world, and by His vicarious atonement has calmed the storms that arise in the heart of man because of sin.

Jesus went into the storm of suffering and death and brought out of it the peace of God which passes all understanding. He conquered sin, death, and the devil. All spiritual storms having their origin in hell must cease. By the grace of God through Christ we are now able to ride the calm seas of God's peace to man.

Jesus says, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”***<sup>18</sup> <sup>27</sup> ***“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”***<sup>19</sup> Now ***whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***<sup>20</sup> The spiritual storm is stilled. Now we need fear nothing. All cause of fear is removed. We can and should lead a happy, cheerful life here and hereafter.

However, because of our frail and sinful human nature we may weaken in our faith, and again give way to fear and despair, just as the disciples did in the Gospel Lesson. This is bad. It makes things worse. It is sinful. Lack of faith is sin.

One night Peter by faith in Christ's power walked the waters of the sea. But when he saw a big wave rushing toward him, his faith in Christ to overcome that danger gave way to fear, and he sank into the deep.<sup>21</sup> Again, only the power of Christ could rescue him and did so.

So in the days of trouble often our faith has sinking spells. We are of little faith because we forget that in the midst of every trouble, disaster, accident, sickness, operation, disappointment, failure, and tragedy there stands Christ, as He stood in the boat, as He stood before Peter on the sea.

Because we are not always aware of the helping hand of God, we seem to think that He is asleep, that He does not know, that He does not care. Nothing is further from the truth. Although Jesus slept in the boat, He was there in their midst and in the midst of the storm. He was there to help at the proper time. By His help the shaken confidence of His disciples was restored.

Christ leads us into the storms of life in order to test our faith, to strengthen our faith, to teach us always to lean on His divine power and to say, “***The LORD reigns.***”

Abraham was led by God to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son Isaac. This was to test his faith in and love for God. So Christ leads our unruly nature, which because of sin is weak, slackening in faith, through many a trial to a more glorious and a shining faith in Him as the powerful King over all. Jesus reigns in our hearts and lives through His Word. Allow Him to lead, and all will be well. Then goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life.

#### 4. Jesus Is King of His Church

Our text states, ***Zion hears and is glad, And the daughters of Judah rejoice Because of Your judgments, O LORD.*** Christ is also the powerful King of His Zion, the city of our God, His church on earth. His church, a small flock, is often buffeted from within and from without, and often greatly oppressed. The devil will let her have no rest.

Yet, as the hymnist wrote,<sup>22</sup>

The Church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is His new creation  
By water and the Word:  
From heaven He came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died.

JESUS says in Matthew 16:18, ***you are Peter, and on this rock*** (that is, Peter's confession and faith) ***I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*** As our King Christ governs and protects His church, His Zion, His children of Judah, and as the powerful Head of the church He rules the world in the interest of His church. Yes, “***The LORD reigns.***”

#### 5. Praise to the King

Since Christ is the powerful King over all, guiding us through all our difficulties, controlling our sinful nature, giving it proper direction through the Word, and reigning in His church as King Supreme, we ought to follow the

instructions given in our text, “*Let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad! ... Worship Him ...*”<sup>8</sup> *Zion hears and is glad, And the daughters of Judah rejoice Because of Your judgments, O LORD.*

When the people heard about the stilling of the storm, they worshipped Jesus, praised Him, and said, “*Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?*” When Israel was delivered from the bondage of Egypt and the hosts of Pharaoh, they worshipped God. Miriam and others danced before the Lord and praised Him.

Having found the Christ, the woman at the well sang His praises to the people of the village and brought them to Jesus, the powerful King, able to help in the day of trouble, spiritual and otherwise.

The one leper of the ten returned to give thanks for the power that came from Jesus into his life.

Putting our full trust in Christ, the almighty King, we desire to worship Him in words and hymns of praise and thanksgiving. We gather in the house of God to do this. We speak to others about His wondrous works, especially His work of redemption through His precious blood. We praise Him with our Christian life. We are His epistles. We shall proclaim *the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.*<sup>23</sup>

O Zion, city of our God, rejoice in your King, Jesus Christ, the King of Power, the King of Grace, the King of Glory! Hold to Him! Be strong in faith! Serve Him with grateful and loving hearts! He will be with you to the end of the world and carry you into the heavenly land.

Let us conclude with the words of the hymnist,<sup>24</sup>

Sing praise to God who reigns above,  
The God of all creation,  
The God of power, the God of love,  
The God of our salvation.

Yes, “*The LORD reigns*” Hallelujah! Amen

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



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- <sup>1</sup> Zephaniah 2:11
  - <sup>2</sup> John 4:8
  - <sup>3</sup> Matt. 28:18
  - <sup>4</sup> John 18:36,37
  - <sup>5</sup> 2 Tim. 4:18
  - <sup>6</sup> Matt 8:23-27
  - <sup>7</sup> Rom. 8:28
  - <sup>8</sup> Matt 8:5
  - <sup>9</sup> Mark 7.24
  - <sup>10</sup> Luke 8:27
  - <sup>11</sup> John 5:5
  - <sup>12</sup> John 11:43
  - <sup>13</sup> Matt 9:18, 23-25
  - <sup>14</sup> Luke 7:11
  - <sup>15</sup> Matt 9:2
  - <sup>16</sup> Psa. 51:5
  - <sup>17</sup> Eph. 2:3
  - <sup>18</sup> John 14:6
  - <sup>19</sup> John 14:27
  - <sup>20</sup> John 3:16
  - <sup>21</sup> Matthew 14:30
  - <sup>22</sup> Hymn 191
  - <sup>23</sup> 1 Peter 2:9
  - <sup>24</sup> Hymn 191