

King of the Stones

Luke 29:28-40

The First Sunday in Advent, November 29, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

In the Old Testament the Lord has told you how to recognize Him. That way when you see Him you know that you have seen Him.

The Lord is the One who gives sight to the blind. The Lord is the One who gives hearing to the deaf. The Lord is the One who makes the lame walk. The Lord is the One who heals the sick. The Lord is the one who sets the prisoners free. The Lord is the One who kills and makes alive. He wounds and He heals. In fact on several different occasions in the Old Testament He proclaims that He is your healer. No one can deliver out of His hand. He heals not only your diseases, but also your land. The Lord is the One who saves your life. He either spares you from death or He rescues you from the grave.

Let us be clear about the Lord setting prisoners free. The Old Testament means the term comprehensively. The Lord sets prisoners free from any prison in which they find themselves. The Lord sets people free from the prison of sin, guilt, and shame. The Lord sets people free from their enemies.

The Lord tells you these things about Himself so that you will recognize Him when You see Him. Do not be deceived by false kings. False kings are unable to give sight or hearing. They can only make blind or make deaf. False kings can make people lame and they can kill, but they cannot restore mobility nor can they raise the dead to life. Such kings may have a place and some authority from God, but unless they do these things they are not the One true king who will reign over all. Just as Aragorn, son of Arathorn, was recognized as the true king of Gondor because He could heal so also you will recognize the true King when He does these things.

Wherever you see someone restoring sight to the blind or hearing to the deaf, whenever you see someone setting prisoners free, whenever you see someone restoring mobility to the lame and raising the dead, it is there that you have seen the true King of Jerusalem who reigns over all. It is there that you have seen the Lord.

Now think. Have you ever lost sight and had it restored? Have you ever lost hearing and it came back? Have you ever lost your mobility and received it back? Have you ever been released from prison? Have you ever been released from guilt and shame? Have you ever been dead and been brought back? Have you ever been so close to death that you thought surely the end had come for you and that you would surely die and yet you did recover and your life was restored to you? Have you ever known anyone to whom these things happened? If you have, then you have seen the Lord. You recognize Him when you see these things happening.

Now what about the dead? What about those people who believe in Jesus, but they do not recover. It would be easy to explain an unbeliever. An unbeliever does not depend or see the King for whom He is. Therefore an unbeliever is doomed to die. He does not look to the King for anything. He does not look to the King for healing or sight or hearing or release or life. He therefore does not receive these things, not now and not in the age to come.

What about your dead? What about the people that you love who did believe in the King? What about them. For it would seem that they got sick and died. Where is there healing? It would seem that now that they are dead, they no longer see. They no longer hear or converse. They no longer walk. They no longer live. They are prisoners in their graves. Not even we, the living, can release them. Only the King may do that.

Here is the answer to the question about your dead. The King distributes healing the way that the King distributes healing. It is not ours to know His wisdom. He will return on the Last Day. When He does He will raise the dead. When the dead are raised, they will be healed. The King will come with much power and glory on the Last Day. When He comes He will raise the dead. When He raises the ones who have believed in Him, they will be healed. He will restore their sight. He will restore their hearing. He will restore their mobility. He will set them free from the prison houses of their graves. (Do not put graves in a separate category from prisons. They belong in the same category. They are both a place where sinners go.) The Lord raises the dead. When you see those things happening en masse then you will see the Lord.

The King either grants you your healing now or He grants you your healing on the Last Day. The Lord either gives you your sight now or He gives it on the Last Day. The Lord either restores your hearing now, or He restores it on the Last Day. The Lord will either restore your mobility now or He will restore it on the Last Day. The Lord will either release you from prison now, or He will release you from prison on the Last Day. The Lord will either raise you from the dead now, like Lazarus and the widow's son at Nain or He will do it on the Last Day. Make no mistake whether the Lord does it now or whether He does it all the Last Day, the Lord will do it, and we will recognize Him when He does.

That is why Jesus tells the Jews to believe on Him on account of His works. When you see His works you recognize Him. This is so you know to whom You will sing Your praises. Blessed is the coming King. Blessed is the One who comes in the Name of the Lord. Glory in the high places and peace in heaven.

Such a king is a king unlike any that the earth has seen. The kings of the earth wage war. They kill and destroy. They do not heal. As powerful as any king is, they do not heal. As mighty and glorious as they are and as much as people grant them accolades, they do not heal. It would seem to me that a doctor has more in common with the Lord than does the great kings of the earth. One wonders why a healer would ever leave his vocation of healing to do anything else. A healer is in the hand of the great King who is coming and the healer heals on His behalf and with His authority.

When the kings of the earth wage war they make people blind. They make people deaf. They make people lame. When the kings of the earth wage war they put people in prison. They put people to death. When the kings of the earth wage war they devastate the creation. The Kings of the earth last for a little while and then they die. When the King who comes in the name of the Lord comes, He restores the creation. The King who comes in the name of the Lord does not merely rule over a parcel of land on the earth. He rules over the earth. And since the King who comes in the Name of the Lord rules over the creation He rules over all of the other Kings of the creation.

This is why this King is not interested in the glory of the kings of the earth. He is not interested in a palace or an army. He is not interested in collecting taxes and running an administration. He definitely does not want anyone to wage war on His behalf. This is why the King who comes in the Name of the Lord tells Pontius Pilate that His Kingdom is not of this world. This is a kingdom of healing. This is a kingdom of restoration. This is a Kingdom of resurrection. This is a Kingdom who reigns not over a portion of the earth, but over all of the creation even into heaven. This is a Kingdom that will last forever.

And because this King reigns over the creation, He is interested in what the kings of the earth consider insignificant. The eye of this King is on the sparrows. This King is interested in a colt in a village outside of Jerusalem upon which no one has ever sat. This King will have use of this colt upon which no one has ever sat. This King will make sure that He is the first person who sits upon it and that the colt has not been used by others prior to Him. This King will have use of this colt in spite of the colt's "owners."

After all, all the disciples had to do was tell the owners that the Lord of the colt had need of the colt and they were able to bring the colt to the King. The King knew where the colt was. The disciples found everything about the colt to be exactly like the King said it would be. He rode on the colt. He rode into Jerusalem, the city from which the King of the creation would reign.

You are His disciples and of course you disciples know all of this. I know you know this because you sing the praises of this King. Just like the disciples of old, you sing to the King because of who He is. And just to prove that He is the King of all of the creation He points out to His opponents that if His disciples ever once ceased to praise Him that the stones themselves would cry out in praise to Him because He is their maker.

And if you listen carefully the stones do cry out. They do sing praise to the King. You need to listen with the ears of your faith in order to hear them. What I mean is this: the stones are doing the things that God created them to do. When something does what the Creator created it to do, it is praising its creator. When something or someone does not do what the Creator created them to do, they are not praising the creator. You see people, praise is not merely singing songs to the King of the Creation. Praise is doing what the Creator created you to do. For human beings that includes singing, but it includes much more.

This is why some of you misunderstand eternal life in the age to come. Some of you have assumed that in the age to come when we stand before God in eternity that we will merely sing to Him all of the time. We will sing His praises all of the time. Some of you find that boring. Some of you do not care to sing. I have even heard people who are not members of this congregation express an interest in not going to what they call heaven because this is their view of eternal life.

The Creator is the Creator. His creations praise Him by doing what He created them to do. Therefore the rocks praise the creation by doing what He created them to do. The birds praise their Creator by doing what He created them to do. Dogs and cats praise the creator by doing what He created dogs and cats to do. And there is no jealousy. In other words dogs do not listen to the birds sing and wonder, "Why can't I sing?" Birds do not hear the dogs bark and ask, "Why can't I bark?" They are not jealous of each other. They do not long to be something that they are not. When you long to be something that you are not, you are not doing what the King created or called you to do. That is not the praise of the creator. The Creator is pleased when His creation is doing what He created them to do. When they do that then there is praise.

Therefore the stones do praise the King. They praised the King the day that He rode into Jerusalem by forming the walls of Jerusalem and by serving as part of the road upon which the colt walked. The colt praised its Lord by doing what He created the colt to do: bear burdens. And what a privilege that colt had that day to bear the burden of the King entering into His reign.

In fact if you listen with the ears of your faith you can even hear the rivers clap their hands as the psalter says. You can even hear all of the trees of the forest sing for joy. And they surely sang for joy as the King entered Jerusalem. They sang for joy for the reason that the psalter says that they sing for joy: for the King had come to judge the earth. He had come to judge the earth entirely.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.