

Some of you here today have had an opportunity to see the movie 2016: Obama's America. The movie argues that President Obama wants to reduce significantly the U.S.'s influence within the world while increasing the influence of nations that he believes have suffered or been held back economically or militarily due to U.S. and Western domination. The movie alludes to the idea that President Obama is attempting to create a socialist government, where the government will control all aspects of your life, and the freedoms we enjoyed under a capitalistic society will be stifled. It seems like our future now is firmly in the hands of President Obama as he has 4 more years to implement his agenda. Some of us may think, we are now doomed as a nation as entitlement programs and higher taxes will be the rule of the day. It may appear that President Obama is in charge of our future. But today, I'm going to tell you who is really in charge right now, who has always been in charge, and who will always be in charge, no matter who is president. This person that I am talking about is Jesus Christ. Presidents come and go, but Jesus has been the King of the United States ever since this country existed. He is the King of North America, He is the King of Earth, the King of Heaven, the King of the Universe. He is everyone's King, whether you believe in him or not, whether you would vote for him or not. He has been and always will be our King. Today we're going to highlight the greatness of Jesus Christ, why we worship him, why trust him, why we place him on the throne of our lives. He is our King, and today we honor him as we look at this section of the Bible.

In our text for today, we meet a man that represents most of our world today. His name is Pontius Pilate. By the world's standards, he was pretty great – he was a governor. He had power. He had wealth. He could tell people what to do and they would do it. He had financial security. He looked very kingly. And there before him was standing Jesus Christ, on Good Friday. And Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Why do I say that Pilate represents most of our world today? Because Pilate didn't believe that Jesus was anything more than a humble Jewish teacher. Jesus didn't look like a king, that's for sure. Look at him standing there, in front of Pontius Pilate, just like all the other criminals who get into trouble and are brought before the governor. Pontius Pilate looked like a king. But Jesus - not at all.

In my former congregation, on the altar is a statue of Jesus Christ. One Thanksgiving, our altar was decorated with a horn of plenty, to display our Thanksgiving to God. The statue of Jesus was placed in the back room. It was on the floor. It was right before the service, and I was getting ready, and there was this statue of Jesus looking at me as I was putting my robe on. And the thing that struck me was that this statue was so short. Normally I'm far away from this statue and it's up on the platform. But here, it was down on the floor, only about 4 feet tall, and I was looking down at the Jesus statue. And it made me think - would I have looked down on Jesus if I had lived in the first century? Would I have worshiped him, as my king, or would I have looked down on him like Pontius Pilate and thought to myself, "He is too lowly looking for me, too ordinary looking for me." Nobody knows the average height of Jewish men in the first century - was Jesus 5' 6"? Isaiah 53 says that "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

But he is a king, the greatest king ever to walk the face of this earth. We get a glimpse of his greatness in his words to Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." His kingdom is not about palaces made out of decorative brick, or motorcades with security guards. His palace is not about money and military. He has no address where you will find his throne on this earth. "If it were," Jesus said, "my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews." He's the King of the Angels, his servants. There are millions of them, incredibly powerful beings. Just think, one angel has enough power to destroy the entire military of our country in an instant. Imagine millions of those angels. Jesus is their King. "My kingdom, he says, is from another place.," That other place is Heaven, a place that is more beautiful, more safe, more enjoyable, better, any place on this earth. Jesus is the King of that place.

Is he your king? When Pontius Pilate looked down at Jesus, and questioned this average, ordinary looking Jewish man, Jesus said, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Every election year, there is a big debate about which candidate is telling the truth - who can you trust? Who has your best interests in mind? Who will help you? Jesus is the King of Truth. You can trust him. You can rely on him. He never makes a promise he cannot keep. He never changes his mind. Is he your king?

Or, are you starting to believe the lie? You know what the lie is? Jesus is not that great, look at all the problems in the world today, he doesn't exist - that's the lie. Social problems, economic problems, natural disasters, problems in your life, problems in the Christian church - look at all of them - Jesus isn't in charge right now, he's not King - do you believe the lie?

He hides his majesty before Pontius Pilate. Today he hides his majesty in a book we call the Bible. He hides his greatness in the waters of baptism. He hides his power behind the bread and wine of Holy Communion. People with faults that are so easy to see - people that preach and teach his Word - Jesus hides behind them. We don't see anything all that great. We see lowliness. Everything so average, so plain. We get bored. We start looking for the next great thing. Have you started to believe the lie, even just a little bit, the lie that Jesus isn't your King? Maybe you should look elsewhere?

Someday you will stand before the holy throne of Jesus Christ, the day is coming soon when Jesus won't hide his majesty and power and holiness. Instead, he will come, and he will find you, the Bible says, and the King of Light will shine his eyes into your soul, and what will he see? "I am not worthy," you might think to yourself. "I have nothing to offer, nothing to bring. I'm a sinful human being - I am too lowly to be a part of all this royalty and splendor and confusion." Picture a homeless man on Thanksgiving this Thursday, knocking on the door of a mansion, and the door opens, and the homeless man says, "Can you spare a little food for me - I have nothing." And the owner of the house - a generous man - says, "Why don't you come in and join us?" And the homeless man looks into the house, and he sees the beautiful chandeliers. He sees that everyone there is dressed so nicely. He sees that everything is so clean and dignified and beautiful, and he says, "Oh, I can't come in. Look at me - I don't belong - I'm dirty. I've been living on the streets. I'm filthy. I have nothing to offer. I would ruin everything - just let me

have a little food, and I'll be on my way." Is that how you feel, as you consider the fact that someday, you are going to be ushered into the presence of Christ the King? "I don't belong there," you might say. "I've been living in this sinful world. I'm spiritually filthy. I don't belong. I have nothing to offer. I would ruin everything in heaven with my sin. I don't belong there. How can I even dream of walking into the presence of Christ the King? But with Christ, you come, just as you are. Come with your sin. And Jesus will give you his holiness." Come with your sin, and Jesus will take it away. He has freed you from your sins by shedding his blood for you, on the cross. He loves you with the kind of love that you can't earn – an undeserved love called "grace." That's how you approach the Master and Commander. Come as you are. Come with your sadness, and Jesus will give you joy. Come with your weakness, and Jesus will give you strength. Come with your worries and doubts, and Jesus will give you confidence. Come with nothing. Nothing but faith. Let the angel lead you into the great palace of the King of Kings. And when all the saints and angels look at you, don't worry if you have nothing to offer. Don't worry if you are a sinful man or a sinful woman. Come as you are – come just with your faith in Christ – and Jesus will give you everything

When you stand before the throne of Jesus Christ someday, he will recognize you. "You are _____ he will say" – he will know your name. "I died for you," he will say. "I took your sins away. I talked to you through the Bible - did you hear me? I touched your mouth at communion - do you remember when I told you that I forgave you? Come and see the place that I have prepared for you." And then, the King of grace will welcome you. The King of mercy will hold your hand, and bring you into his Kingdom. Are you ready to meet that King?

There once were two paintings. One was a picture of Pontius Pilate, sitting on the governor's throne, well dressed and well fed, surrounded by his soldiers - and the caption below it read, "The Failure that looked like a Success." The other painting was that of Jesus Christ, bowed down low before Pontius Pilate, the crown of thorns on his head, barely surviving the scourging he took to pay for our sins. And the caption on that painting read, "The Success that looked like a Failure."

Who is your king? Don't believe the lie that Jesus isn't great. Believe the truth, that Jesus is your King. Worship him here, in church. Worship him at home. Worship him wherever you go and in whatever you do. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Our kingdom is not of this world either. And our king is not of this world. Our King is Jesus Christ. Let us worship him. Amen

Lord we know that you are King of all. There is no doubt in our minds and this is fact. We acknowledge that you reign supreme. In a darkened world where there are still so many wanting answers, empower them to find truth in your Word. Lord you are the only Truth we need. Send your Holy Spirit so that every knee will bow and every tongue confess and everyone will know in their heart that you are indeed King of all. And we will praise you and always tell of your goodness everywhere. Amen.