

Text: Revelation 1:4-8.

Christ the King Sunday.

**November 18, 2018.**

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come. Amen.

This sermon is gonna be wak! I know that's an old phrase, let me explain. When I was making notes for this sermon for Christ the King Sunday, I just kept coming back to this phrase, "What a King! What a King! What a King!" He gives grace and peace and loves us and freed us and made us a kingdom and gives us access and he rules all the kings over the whole earth and he's the first and the last and he never changes in his love for us. What a King! Well, I started abbreviating What a King to W-A-K! And when you think about it, all these things about Jesus are WAK, WAK in the sense of strange and WAK in the sense of wonderful. What a King!

When you think of a king do you think of one who loves you freely, undeservedly? That's WAK! Do you think of one who gives you peace, wholeness, well-being, fought all the battles in your place and gives you the victory? That's WAK! Jesus is WAK. What other king stands before Pontius Pilate, a relatively insignificant ruler of a tiny territory, and the King is already bloody and beaten and there's much more to come and the king is chained before the insignificant ruler of the tiny territory? That's WAK. But Christ shows his rule in love. He demonstrates his dominion and divinity by dying! That's WAK! But that's Christ. Christ is WAK. WAK is Jesus. What a King!

Look at his titles. Him who is, and who was, and who is to come. Notice this title is at the beginning and end of our text. What a king! He always was. Always is. Always will be. This title is a reflection of the name God gave himself. We usually see this name written in all capital letters as LORD in our Bibles. That name means, I am who I am. I don't change. I'm independent of everyone. I can do whatever I want.

And look at what he chose to do with this title. Be the witness. Did you know our word martyr comes from this word witness? Notice Jesus Christ is the witness. He witnessed to God's love all the way to death. He was the ultimate martyr. He wants us to witness all the way to death if necessary. Jesus is the faithful witness. He doesn't change his story. Doesn't change his mind.

And the titles get better. He is the firstborn from the dead. That's WAK! He rose from the dead? Yes. That's exactly what that means. The first one is hard. The rest are easy. Think of a Kleenex box. It's a pain to open the box, tap right along the perforated edge to get that piece of cardboard out. Then you have to fumble around with your fingers to reach inside the plastic and get out just one tissue. But once you got the first one, the rest just keep coming. Once Jesus rose from the dead, the rest just keep coming. You will rise and you will rise and you will rise and grandpa will rise and your uncle will rise and your grandchildren will rise and all who die believing in Jesus are like the rest of the tissues just waiting their turn to rise up. What a King! He rose from the dead. That's so WAK! But that's Christ.

Christ is WAK! He's the ruler of the kings of the earth. Let's stop and think about that. Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth. With Christ on your side do the election results really matter? Knowing Christ is the King of all the kings and presidents and Pilates and governors and mayors does it really make a difference which party is in control? Christ is in control. Christ rules. Christ used a godless ruler like Pilate to help carry out Christ's plan to die for the sins of the world. Pilate didn't have a clue what truth was, but Pilate was still ruled by Christ, the Way and the Truth and the Life. I know we might think plenty of rulers today don't have a clue what truth is or don't believe there is truth or there is only my truth, but

Christ still rules them all. Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth. Christ is the King. Christ is WAK! And you know, we could probably drop the mic right there and walk away and if all we had were these titles of Jesus Christ, we would have to confess, What a King! Jesus Christ is WAK! But grace upon grace and peace upon peace, Jesus Christ didn't stop with his titles that just show us his power, Jesus Christ shows us his actions that demonstrate his love. And that combination is WAK! A powerful king who loves us! The ruler of the kings of the earth loves us! He loves us! Yes! And then throw this on top of it. He doesn't change. He is and was and is to come. And he repeats that just so we don't miss it. Christ is WAK. Power, plus love, plus no change. What a King! That's WAK!

He loves us. He loves us. Ongoing, present tense. This love doesn't give what we deserved, his anger. This love gives what we needed, his undeserved, self-sacrificing, unchanging love. This love doesn't ask, "What's in it for me?" This love asks, "What can I give to the other?" And what did he give? His blood, his suffering, his perfect life, every day, his innocent death. The life of something is in its blood. And Christ gave every last drop of that blood. Just for you! He loves you! What a King! That is so WAK! He freed us from our sins. Sin is not something to mess around with. Sin is slavery. Whoever sins is a slave to sin. Christ didn't want us to be slaves. He wanted us to be free. So he freed us. He forgave us. He paid the price and took away our sins. He loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. He made us a kingdom and priests. That's your identity. That's what you are. A kingdom. Priests. Ever think about that! That's so WAK! That's what Christ the King did for you. He made us to be a kingdom. He made us priests! Well, what does that mean? We belong to a very special kingdom. In this kingdom every one is a king. In this kingdom there are no slaves. Only free. In this kingdom all the kings serve each other and put the other first. In this kingdom no king is looking out for himself, but each king lays aside his crown and looks out for the other. How cool is that? Man, that is WAK! And that is what we are. A kingdom.

Priests. We might have some baggage with this word. We probably think of a church official in certain denominations. But that's not what Christ is talking about. A priest is someone with access to God. And we have direct access to God through Christ. There is no roundabout in getting to God. It's a straightline, high speed express to God himself. The one who is and who was and who is to come hears our prayers, directly from us. The king who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, is constantly listening. Direct access. That's what priests have. Direct connection. That's the priests privilege. And you are all priests. Christ the King says so. That's so WAK. Christ is so WAK!

So we've covered the titles of the king, is, was, is to come, the witness, the faithful one, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth. We've covered the past and present actions: loves us, freed us from our sins, made us to be a kingdom and priests. Yeah, that all sounds like reason to give him power and glory forever and ever! Amen! We could drop the mic again. But Christ, our WAK, even tells us what he will do in the future. It's not just titles that make him WAK, not just past and present actions that make him WAK. It's the future actions that might make him most WAK!

He is coming with the clouds. Now, like with a lot of this Bible book of Revelation, you might have to know some of the rest of the Bible to fully understand this. Hundreds of years before Jesus Christ came to the earth, God appeared in a cloud to his people. The cloud of God's glory covered his temple. When Jesus Christ came to earth, he had a cloud envelop three of his closest followers at a moment when Christ was revealing a little bit of his glory. And when Jesus Christ left the earth bodily, a cloud hid him from their sight. Then angels came and said, "This same Jesus, who was taken into heaven, will come

back in the same way.” In a cloud. His coming with the clouds marks him as divine. His coming with the clouds means he came from heaven and will come back from heaven.

And this appearance will be universal. Not everyone saw Jesus when he was on earth. And even after the firstborn from the dead rose, Jesus did not appear to all the people, but only to special witnesses whom he had chosen. But when he comes again with the clouds, it will be different. Every eye will see him. Even those who pierced him. Can you imagine being the soldier who pierced Jesus’ side, who confirmed he was dead, and then seeing him alive and coming back with the clouds? Can you imagine being one who pounded in the nails, watched him die and now he is alive forever and ever?

All the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. This phrase troubled me at first. What does this mean? Are believers mourning that Jesus is dead? Are Jesus’ enemies mourning the death of their souls for their refusal to believe? Is it something else? And since everyone is mourning, can two different groups in this everyone be mourning for two very different reasons? Certainly there will be plenty of mourning by Jesus’ enemies when Jesus returns. There’s no more time. There’s no more denying it. Christ is the King. Jesus is WAK.

But also for believers, for us. We mourn our sins. We mourn that we caused the death of Jesus! We killed Christ our King! I wasn’t alive 2000 years ago, so I wasn’t the actual person who pounded in the nails into Jesus’ hands. But my lingering eyes on the magazine cover at the grocery store checkout drove those nails in just as deeply as that Roman soldier. Your thoughts this morning, “Do I have to get up? Do we have to drive so far? Can’t we just stay home?” Those thoughts pierced the side of Christ. He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. It was our transgressions. It was our sins! It was us!

And yet, and yet, Christ is WAK! He’s still the king who loves us, who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. He’s still the King who is unchanging in his love, unchanging in his powerful love, that made us a kingdom and made us priests. Sinner is not our identity. We are priests, covered in the blood of Jesus. Slaves is not what we are. We are kings. Our king is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. Our king uses this title for himself in the first chapter of Revelation and in the last chapter of Revelation. Coincidence? No, that’s WAK! In the first chapter of your life with Christ, he baptized you, freed you from your sins. And in the last chapter of your life he will come with the clouds to take you to see him. How WAK is that! Yeah, WAK is Jesus. Christ is WAK! Amen.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father. To him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.