

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

John 18:36

We read today from John 18:36. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What can we learn today from the light of God's word to us?

Sometimes, when we come into a devotional space, we're calm, rested, and prepared to listen to the Spirit. Other times, we are harried, stressed, over-scheduled, and ill-equipped to hear God's voice. In either case, allow the next few minutes to be time where you focus on breathing, posture, and clearing your mind of the things of the world. Allow the rhythm of your breath to tune you into the Spirit's voice as you prepare to engage with the Word.

We do not really understand the idea of having a king in our present cultural reality. It's striking that we even use the phrase "NO KINGS" as a statement against perceived abuses of power. Even in places where royalty is still present as a part of rule, those monarchies bear little resemblance to the monarchies of old. King Charles of today's England would not understand the world of the Bible's King David and vice versa. A king with absolute power is no longer acceptable to our democratic proclivities which makes our understanding of "Christ as King" a little more challenging.

Even during Christ's ministry, that discussion would have had its own difficulties. The Jews of the 1st century knew Herod with all his greed and lust for power. Even Pilate, not himself a royal, but familiar with the role because of his position as governor engages with Jesus tainted by a view of kings that skews his idea of who Jesus is.

"Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate."

Pilate immediately grabs onto Christ's words. If Jesus is a 'king' then there are implications to that identity. Pilate can *USE* Christ's claim against his prisoner and for his own purpose.

But that's exactly why Christ cautions Pilate. "Don't do it. Do not understand me as king with a mind rooted in what you know and have seen. I'm a king the likes of which has never been seen. You cannot see my kingdom. At least not yet..."

Pilate hears this and the rest of this interaction as a rebuke. We can hear this as a call to faith.

We, like Pilate, cannot see Christ's kingdom. Like Pilate, any royal understanding we may have based on human kingdoms will not work. Christ's kingdom is truly not of this world. It never will be. Christ's kingdom will only come to the NEW heavens and the NEW earth.

But we can get a little peek into what's coming. We can see a vapor of his kingdom in the heart-felt worship brought by God's people as they gather. Its shadow can be seen when kindness is offered in the name of our king. A reflection shows itself to us when relationships in the church are renewed through forgiveness, empathy, and support for those walking through difficult seasons.

We catch the scent of the kingdom in all the places where God's people live in obedience bearing the fruit of the Spirit. As we show others what Christ teaches us his kingdom is, we get the sense of it despite its full view being something we must anticipate upon his return.

This mindset primes our anticipation for the return of Christ. What kingdom glimpses we have been privileged to see whet our appetite for more. We want more of what is offered when Christ's rule fully comes and the fulness of his kingdom comes.

Until that day comes, may our anticipation move us to live in obedience trusting that in what we do, more and more of his kingdom is seen.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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