

The Queen and the King she served

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Sermon Audio file

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For most of us the Queen has been a constant in a very changing world.

Her coronation in 1952 was the most watched programme to that date. We heard of her passing to glory by TV, text message and news apps.

The monarch to 15 prime ministers, starting with Winston Churchill and ending with Liz Truss – she was a link to the past and a signpost to eternity.

Hers was a life of service. On her 21st birthday radio address in 1947 she said:

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong. But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join it with me, as I now invite you to do: I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow, and God bless all of you who are willing to share it.

She worked hard – 50 hrs a week until recently and still 40hrs a week. Even at the weekend – the vicar who visited her on Sunday said “It was a fantastic visit. Her memory was absolutely amazing and she was really full of fun.

“She was the life and soul of things.”

As I looked on Facebook these last few days – many friends had posted old photos of visits she made to workplaces, schools and hospitals and shared memories of things she had said.

She was a marvellous Queen, but she served the King full of faith.

At her coronation she was presented an object which was described as “the most valuable thing that this world affords.” It was the Bible.

In her Christmas message in 2000 she said "To many of us our beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example."

Here's some things to know about the King she served.

Jesus is unique

The Queen said 'Jesus Christ lived obscurely for most of his life, and never travelled far. He was

maligned and rejected by many, though he had done no wrong. And yet, billions of people now follow his teaching and find in him the guiding light for their lives. I am one of them...'

For me the life and teaching of Christ are my inspiration

The Queen said "Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed. God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general (important though they are) – but a Saviour, with the power to forgive."

The Bible tells us in John 3:16 "God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Christ the inspiration

For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role-model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none.'

Christ the reconciler

'The gift I would most value next year is that reconciliation should be found wherever it is needed. A reconciliation which would bring peace and security to families and neighbours at present suffering and torn apart. Remember that good spreads outwards and every little does help. Mighty things from small beginnings grow as indeed they grew from the small child of Bethlehem.' (1976)

No one is beyond God's love

'For Christians, as for all people of faith, reflection, meditation and prayer help us to renew ourselves in God's love, as we strive daily to become better people. The Christmas message shows us that this love is for everyone. There is no one beyond its reach.'

Appeal if you don't follow Jesus, let the Queen's faith be that signpost to eternity.

Admit you need Jesus's forgiveness

Believe that Jesus is God and died and rose again

Confess him as your Lord and Saviour

Not just becoming a Christian. The King serves empowers us for life.

At her coronation ceremony a royal sceptre was handed to her. It had 5600 jewels and pearls and the world's largest diamond estimated at £400 Million! The symbols and words are to remind here she serves in power as a servant of Jesus, needing his wisdom and showing his mercy.

But there was one moment that wasn't televised.

As Handel's Zadok the Priest is sung, the symbols of her status – the robe, the diadem and necklace are removed and she sat there in a simple white dress. The archbishop anointed her head with oil – set apart to serve.

We live the Christian life in his strength and anointing

1981 speech Christ not only revealed to us the truth in his teachings. He lived by what he believed and gave us the strength to try to do the same - and, finally, on the cross, he showed the supreme example of physical and moral courage.

An example in the tough times

In 1980 she said "In difficult times we may be tempted to find excuses for self-indulgence and to wash our hands of responsibility. Christmas stands for the opposite... we need to go out and look for opportunities to help those less fortunate than ourselves, even if that service demands sacrifice."

And she did know difficult times. There were instances in her family life when her duties as a monarch must surely have conflicted with her most human instincts. She made a state visit to Ireland in 2011 and reflected on the tragedies of the Troubles that cast such a long shadow; the IRA had killed her cousin, Lord Louis Mountbatten, in 1979.

But that Christmas, she used her address to speak of forgiveness, saying it lay: "at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love." The following year, she met and shook hands with former IRA commander Martin McGuinness.

'I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God!' (2002)

Just in those words you can see the biblical roots that fuel her life: seeking wisdom from above (James 1:5), not leaning on her own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6), depending on God in the good times (Deuteronomy 6:10-12) as well as the bad (Psalm 10:14), recognising each day as a new beginning (Lamentations 3:23), seeking to do the right thing (Matthew 6:33), avoiding short-termism (Philippians 1:6), giving her best in 'all' (Ephesians 5:15-17). And all of that then summed up in that elemental, worshipful confession of her trust in God, that she draws strength 'from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.'

Billy Graham Graham came to the U.K. for his crusades, the Queen would always invite him to visit her, preach to her, and stay for lunch to discuss the Scripture passage. In his autobiography, [Just as I Am](#), Graham recounted one such lunch, at which he told her he'd not been sure which passage to choose and had toyed with—but then decided against—preaching from the healing of the man by the pool at Bethesda in [John 5](#). "Her eyes," he wrote, "sparkled and she bubbled over with enthusiasm... 'I wish you had!' she exclaimed. 'That is my favourite story.'" Again, it's hard to imagine two more different people—a cripple for 38 years with no one to help him and a queen for decades with scores of servants. But he needed to hear Jesus's words of healing and salvation, and so did she.

In these last months of her earthly life, the Queen had suffered with her own "mobility problems." But not today. Not now. For my monarch was also my sister, and we'll see her again, standing on steady legs before the throne of the King she knew, loved, and served.

Thank you, Your Majesty, for your years of service. Thank you, Your Majesty, for reminding us that there is a greater Ruler. Thank you, Your Majesty, for the ways you showed us Jesus.