

Christ and...

by Bernard Gabbott

Memory verse:

Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,
I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God;
this is your spiritual worship.

² Do not be conformed to this age,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing,
and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

One of my favourite verses in the Bible is Romans 12:1-2. It introduces the 'so what?' of Romans 1-11 (which is the description of the 'mercies of God'). If this is the good news of Jesus, what does it look like in everyday life?

Behind this question lies this truth: in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God has enthroned the King of the universe (cf. Matt.28:16-20). In being saved by this man, Jesus' mob have changed postcode (Col.1:13-14), been granted new citizenship (Phil.3:20), been given a new manifesto for life (Matt.5:17-20), been made a new people (Eph.2:11-22), and have now had their lives 'hidden' above (Col.3:1-10).

In these three studies (which we will hand out each Sunday in the week before they are preached on), we will look at three areas where this impacts: Christ and crown, Christ and cash, Christ and conscience. We will look at what it means to be Christians, with Jesus as our King, in the areas of politics, money and ethics, respectively.

As studies of 'doctrine' (rather than a systematic working through a set text), we will jump around a bit in the Bible.

Christ and crown: Jesus and politics

This will be a tour of a number of passages... but not exhaustive!

1. Read Psalm 2
Who is God's King for the world?

What will he be like?

Read Matthew 3:13-17; 17:1-6; 28:16-20
Who is God's King for the world?

What is he like?

2. Read Matthew 22:15-22
What question is asked of God's King? Why?

What does Jesus ask for? Why?

What does Jesus say?

What do you think this means? (cf. Genesis 1:26-27)

3. Read Acts 4:13-22
How do Peter and John respond to the command to stop proclaiming the Gospel? What else do Peter and John say about political obedience?

4. Read Romans 13:1-7
What is the context for this? (cf. 12:1-2)

What does God command?

What does God install?

What does God reassure?

What does God expect?

5. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-7
What is striking about verse 1?

What does God command?

What is God's desire?

How do these two tie together?

6. Read 1 Peter 2:9-17
Who is Peter talking to?

What does he 'urge'?

What does he command? (look at vs.12)

And how do these three things converge in 'political' action?

What type of language does Peter use here? What is striking about it?

7. Looking back on everything we have covered, what can we conclude about:
- who is in charge of the world?
 - the 'temporary' arrangement for order in this world?
 - what Christians owe Jesus, and political authorities?

- the impact of the way Christians talk/behave in politics?
- the key way we can be politically active?
- the type of society we are to build/advocate for on earth?