

If I asked you to draw or sketch out a king some of you would struggle. Like me you might just put stick figures down on the paper. Others could draw a more realistic looking figure. Still others could draw a human likeness closely resembling a photograph. But all would include the same couple of items. The stick figure would wear a robe. The drawing would have a crown and scepter. Kings just have to have those objects.

The picture the gospel draws of a king isn't so nice. It's not even clear he's a king. Some guess he might be, some mock him to be, others are sure he is. But given his situation it's questionable. He wears the robe, crown, and has the scepter but they don't scream royalty. They scream fake, foolish, and fraud instead. It was a scene set up to mock the man who appeared weak and pathetic. Many throughout the centuries have had the same response. A king? No way.

Every week now for a whole church year we've heard that the one wearing the dirty scarlet robe, the twisted crown of thorns, and carrying the scepter of reeds is actually a king. He declared it. His miracles backed it up. And even this moment, the moments before his horrible crucifixion once again prove his claims true...

**The King of Kings wears a crown
Mocking at first
Victorious at last**

About four years ago, I think it was, I received tickets for an OSU basketball game in Stillwater. It was a generous offer and a first for me. My first major college basketball game. OSU played Kansas. While many expected a good game, no one expected that night. OSU won and upset the best team in the country. From our seats in the upper deck we watched after the final buzzer fans storming the court. I wished our seats were closer. I told Jennifer we would've rushed the floor too. Shouting, dancing, celebrating. But watching I started to rethink that. Those stuck in the center of that mob scene weren't moving. Quarters were so close I bet anyone claustrophobic couldn't breathe, couldn't give themselves enough space to move. Anyone falling accidentally would've been in trouble. Maybe at the center of the mob wasn't where I'd want to be.

Jesus was at the center of a mob. The soldiers, whose lives were normally boring in Jerusalem, suddenly had an opportunity to flex their muscles. They had a prisoner to have a little fun with. **"Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him."** Fun meant mocking him. This particular prisoner claimed to be a king. They decided to show him just how un-kingly he was. They took a scarlet robe and put him in it. Twisting together thorns into a crown they jammed it on his head. A reed served as a scepter. Ridiculed and dressed like a foolish looking king they mocked him for what he wasn't. Utterly humiliated they went further and bowed down before him in fake worship to a fake king.

It was all too clear to them. Jesus was no king. Dress him like a king but reality said differently. There was no reasonable expectation he could be a king. To the soldiers he was their prisoner. They could force him to whatever they wanted. The Jews gathered around who brought Jesus to the Romans in the first place supported whatever happened to Jesus so long as he also died. He was nothing but trouble to them. Even Pontius Pilate from a distance thought Jesus was weak, humiliated, and nothing like a king. Kings don't get flogged, stripped, or spit on. Kings don't get tortured or beat on the head. Jesus was weak and unimportant, no big deal, certainly not a king.

The soldiers, Jewish leaders, and Pilate were all self-serving. Jesus was a pawn they could use to accomplish what they wanted. He was no king. He was weak and humiliated. He would succumb to death just like everyone else. Today people still mock Jesus. They laugh at his claims of being a king. Such people are usually self-serving too. Life is about them. They can't be bothered by a 2000 year old prisoner who died a painful death after being mocked. The bigger question is, are you self-serving? Do you give the impression Jesus is just a man, teacher, or good guy? Do your interests block out any interest in this so called king of the Jews? Can your money needs or Sunday morning interests push out Jesus as any kind of king? We want to be most important with our agenda most important. Our problems, pains, and solutions all more important.

Whether they knew or not, bowing before Jesus was entirely appropriate. **"They...knelt in front of him and mocked him. Hail, king of the Jews! they said."** Jesus was not only a real king, he was the King of Kings. That's an upset no one saw coming. That's a scrappy team taking on the number one team and winning. Thanks to the soldiers Jesus wore the crown of kings. They meant it to mock. But that's exactly why God sent Jesus. God's own Son was here to experience it all. Suffering was what he came to do. Being mocked by the soldiers was all part of Jesus carrying my sins and yours. Jesus looked weak because he was at that moment. Carrying the sins of the whole world makes anyone weak. Being rejected by your own heavenly Father makes anyone look pathetic. He couldn't strike back. Love wouldn't allow him to. God's love, Christ's love for you and me wouldn't let Jesus level the whole lot of soldiers. Our sins would still condemn us if he did. He could've avoided the mockery, but then you and I would be going to hell. Jesus could've avoided the cross, loss of life, and all the spiritual pain and crushing separation from God. But this King of Kings in his love took the worst, being mocked because of your sin and mine.

When the person you make fun of becomes your boss, or the person you used to tower over in school suddenly can dunk a basketball over you, when the person you used to smoke in timed tests is handing their work in long before you a big swing takes place. The one soon to be hanging on the cross, the one who called himself a king but certainly didn't seem very kingly, the one being mocked would soon show himself to be the one over them for eternity. A big swing would take place. Jesus was always over them from eternity, always the King of Kings. Soon he would be the King of Kings wearing a crown, victorious at last.

Soon not just the soldiers' mocking, but the pain of the cross would be over. This so-called king's future was already known. **"Then they led him away to crucify him."** He would soon be dead. But then soon he would rise. Soon he would leave his tomb very much alive and very much the King of Kings. He would have his victory at last. Then this King of Kings would be known as Christ, King over us right now. He holds this position by virtue of his tremendous sacrifice before these soldiers and on the cross. Not conditional victory, not temporary, a victory for Christ forever.

He wears more than a crown and robe holding a scepter. Jesus has every trapping of a king, power, control, glory. Every one of them he puts to use for us. His power allows him to fight off enemies that never had power over him. No way for an enemy to get the upper hand, no way Satan can beat Jesus. Once Jesus was mocked. Even then he was making use of his power to save us. Now Jesus has control, everything under his control. He always controls the world for the benefit of believers. Things happening right now are happening right in line with Christ the King's desires. And Jesus has the glory. His victory assured his place in heaven. His victory gives us a place in heaven. His mission complete, he took his place upon the throne worthy of all glory.

In the moments of defeat, cancer pressing down, job stress threatening to push you under, financial worries never stronger, it doesn't seem like Jesus has the power, control, or glory. We feel like losing it and then Jesus doesn't hop to it immediately. We figure he doesn't have power to help. When good things like spouses or career get taken away sadness and hurt result. Jesus seems to have lost control. He knows I deserve better. Jesus must not have control. When loneliness creeps in or we find success alone we figure we can hog the glory we deserve.

The crown of thorns was planned and predicted. It was necessary for the King of Kings to wear that first crown to be mocked. But patiently, meekly, and willingly Jesus wore the crown because we needed to be saved. The outcome of Jesus standing before the soldiers isn't surprising. No upset here. Jesus predicted he would be victorious at last. God's grace gave him victory and his victory is all grace. Christ wearing the robe, crown, and reed is all grace. Unconditionally he paid what we couldn't. What we couldn't work for, ask for, or do anything about, Christ in love gave to you and me.

Rejoice in Christ as King of Kings. He wears a crown victorious at last. For the willingness to come to this place and be mocked by the soldiers and Pilate he's worthy of our praise and honor. For giving himself as a sacrifice for our sins he's worthy of all glory. For all the trappings of a king he once wore to be mocked but now wears in victory we claim him King of Kings. Be joyful until that day comes when he puts everything under his control. Joyful his love still shines through us towards others. Joyful this King of Kings wears a crown of victory.