As I mentioned earlier, today marks the final week in our liturgical calendar. Next Sunday, we will begin a new liturgical season with Advent – a season of preparation of our hearts, as we anticipate the coming of Christ. So today we find ourselves chronologically standing in an in-between or a liminal time.

But as we take a step back, from an eschatological point of view, we are also living in an in-between time, as we recount the 1st reign of Christ and looking forward to the coming reign of Christ, as he promised. But we are not there just yet. Each season of Advent, we are reminded that God’s timing and purpose are not the same as ours. We do not define Christmas according to our wishes, but instead we invite Christ to reestablish his reign once again in our midst. It is my prayer that during this coming season of Advent, we find ourselves searching for our true belonging in Christ, through Christ, and with Christ.

Our text this morning invites us to not only look back but also look forward to Christ as our once and future king. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the early church in Colossae, where modern day central Turkey is. He reminded the early church there never forget to honor Christ for what he has done in the past, as well as what he has promised to do in the future.

It’s an important text for us also as we conclude this liturgical calendar season by proclaiming who Christ is, as the supreme sovereignty of our lives…and not anything else here on earth, nor the pursuit of any personal goals or ambitions. This gets lost very easily evermore in the secular world that we live in today. But that’s also part of our challenges as well. **What do we really mean when we proclaim Christ as our LORD or as our KING?**

If Jesus were a king, then what kind of King would Jesus be? **Would he be a military-style King who would conquer the world by force and establishes order politically? Of course not.** Even many of his disciples thought that would be the case, that Jesus the King and the Messiah would come in and overthrow the Roman Emperor and his sovereign regime. He was going to take over and establish his kingdom here on earth. Everything would be restored. If Jesus were a King, just what kind of a king would he be? Would he be a good king or a bad king?

During my most recent trip, I had a chance to visit the famous Terra-Cotta Warriors in Xian. How many of you have been there before? Even if you have not, I’m sure you’ve heard of these famous Terra-Cotta statues of warriors, horses, and chariots. This massive project was ALL part of the grand master-plan as orchestrated by one of the most famous (and also notorious) Emperor throughout the Chinese history - Qin Shi Huang. Emperor Qin Shi Huang came into power when he was only 13. His name literally meant the “First Emperor of the Qin nation”…and when he conquered the other neighboring states, he declared himself as the most supreme Emperor who unified ALL of China. That’s quite a bit of accomplishment.

Qin Shi Huang was considered one of the most notorious, ambitious and power-driven emperors of all time. Nothing would get in his way and no one dared to challenge his order and his ego also. Those who did, probably didn’t live for too long thereafter. Whatever he ordered, must become. That’s a very dangerous combination. Some may say that he gets the job done…in order to make himself and his name great, while at the expense of the hundreds of thousands of his fellow citizens. He was more concerned about building his legacy rather than the welfare of his people. He was determined that nothing would get in his way.

Other famous master-building project that Qin Shi Huang created included the Great Wall…I’m sure some of you have heard of that. The goal of creating the Great Wall was so that no one from the outside can invade and conquer his kingdom. Some may call him as a great pioneer, a master-builder with a strong ambition, but some may call him as a totalitarian who paid little or no regards to the common people’s lives. Is that what people want from a king? Even in the Old Testament days, the prophets Eli had warned the Israelites about their desire of a king, just like the neighboring nations.

Qin Shi Huang wanted to be the GREATest Emperor of all time by making a name for himself while setting his legacy for many generations to come. At the end, it was all about HIM and his ambitious goal to conquer and to reign forever. Despite his effort in seeking everlasting life and longevity, Qin Shi Huang only lived until the age of 48, after 35 years of reign as the Emperor. But soon he realized that eventually his reign would be over, as his health was failing him. He must face the inevitable – death! Even with his failing health, he was determined to make sure that his burial ground would be so secrete that no one would be able to find it. That’s how this massive entourage of underground terra-cotta warriors was built in order to protect him even AFTER his death. It was all about preserving his legacy and making his name great as the Emperor.

So let’s fast forward this about 250 years later, when another King was about to establish his reign and to build his legacy. But the circumstances and the settings were very much different. Contrary to Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the reign of God through Christ came not by military means of conquering neighboring states or with grandiose infrastructure projects that others will remember him for. The reign of God would have no warriors, no chariots or horses accompanying him as he came into town, but instead Christ established his reign through an execution device by being nailed to a cross. He would die an excruciating slow death next to a couple of criminals. There’s nothing glamorous about that at all. Ironically the only reference of Jesus of being a king was the inscription on top of his cross that labeled him as the “King of the Jews”, a crown made of thorns and thickets, and a robe stained with his own blood. This was all part of God’s plan for humanity as Christ the King redeemed us all in place of us. His death redeemed our deaths so that we may have the eternal life and hope in him.

On this Christ the King Sunday, we pause to reflect upon what this all means as we declare Christ as the King of all kings, Lord of all lords. He is the Redeemer of a people who are enslaved by their own sins, and deserve the punishment of eternal death. Unlike other earthly kings, **Christ was willing to go to the frontline to fight the battle for us. He was willing to surrender his own life in order to preserve the lives of others.** **He set the legacy of faith for others through his teachings and compassion for others and not upon his own personal goals, ambitions, and accomplishments.** Christ laid himself down through his humility and offered himself as the living sacrifice for others, instead of risking the lives of his fellow citizens while preserving his own.

Friends, indeed we are living in an “in-between” time between the former reign of Christ and the one that is to come. We are all taking part of Christ the King’s legacy right now while preparing for the next reign of Christ to come. We pray earnestly that Christ would come once again to establish God’s reign and to conquer the forces of evil in this world. It certainly doesn’t get any easier each year, nevertheless this is our calling, the very least that we can do as citizens of God’s kingdom here on earth, as we strive to honor and to serve our King.

This is what the season of Advent all about, as we look forward to the reign of Jesus the King by looking back…looking back at what Christ has done and what he has promised that he would do. Christ has also invited us to look around…look around those who have yet seen the light of Christ or are still living in the darkness.

May this season of Advent be not about what WE want or what WE make of it ourselves, but what Christ challenges us to act compassionately through His love for humanity. This is a time for us to prepare the sanctuary of our hearts, and ultimately finding peace through the reign of Christ at the stable in Bethlehem. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.