

From the Pastor's Desk

Crown Him with Many Crowns 3: Crown Him the Lord of Love

Rev. Dr. Simon Lee

Dear brothers and sisters of RCAC,

At the beginning of a new year (2021) and also as we celebrate our Chinese New Year, it is most appropriate that we celebrate the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is King. This is indeed our hope and prayer after a devastating year of 2020 filled with chaos, and gloom and doom from the pandemic. Biden, the new President of the United States in his Inauguration Speech on January 20, quoted from Psalms 30:5 – “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Indeed, we share this hope and look forward to the dawn when we can all rejoice in the Lord.

We had looked at the first stanza of *Crown him with many crowns*, which focused on “**The Lamb upon his throne**.” In this article, I would like to share with you the themes of the second stanzas of the hymn (HL #9), which is “Crown Him **the Lord of Love**.”

The lyrics is as follows:

Crown him the Lord of love!
Behold his hands and side,--
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified:
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye
At mysteries so bright!

Jesus is the Lord of Love

Jesus Christ is King because he is the Lord of love. We are brought to the cross where Jesus Christ the sinless Son of God was crucified for our sins. If we have any question about how much Jesus loves us, we only have to go back at the cross and “behold his hands and side, rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.” The scene was “beauty glorified” because it symbolized the fulfilment of God’s plan of redemption of all mankind, but at the same time it was so painful that the hymn writer tells us that even the heavenly angels cannot “fully bear that sight.” In contrast Jesus with His head bend down and with “burning eye” (eyes of the King , the Judge) was gazing at this divine mystery, the mystery of the incarnation, the atonement of sin and the defeat of Satan.

This demonstration of true love is described well in the words of John: “For God so love the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) Paul puts it this way, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8)

One of my favourite hymns is “Love Was When” and the lyrics of the first verse is:

Love was when God became a man,
locked in time and space, without rank or place.
Love was God born of Jewish kin;
Just a carpenter with some fishermen.
Love was when Jesus walked in history.
Lovingly He brought a new life that's free.
Love was God nailed to bleed and die,
to reach and love one such as I.

Imagine God the creator of the whole universe, “became a man, **locked in time and space**, without rank or place.” Incredible! Unthinkable! This is LOVE! The hymn writer urges us to ponder on the fact that the sinless Son of God came and “Lovingly He brought a new life that's free. Love was God nailed to bleed and die, **to reach and love one such as I.**” Herein is LOVE! We praise God that we are a follower of Jesus who is the “Lord of Love.” We are to worship Him by crowning Him the Lord of Love. What does this mean?

Crown Him the Lord of Love

Apart from quoting from Psalm 30:5, it is interesting that Biden also invokes Augustine in call for American unity based on their common values. As a cradle Catholic, he quoted a teaching of St. Augustine whom he referred to as “a saint of my church” – that “a people are a multitude defined by the common object of their love.” The Church father Augustine in *City of God* presented love, not law, as the thing that binds a society together. He also wrote, “the soul takes on the character of what it loves.” Biden is appealing to Americans to love and put into practice their common values and therefore be united as a nation.

Applying it further to the Church, Jesus taught “By this all people will know that you are my *disciples*, if you have *love for one another*.” (Jn 13:35) Jesus also underscored the relationship of loving God and following His commandments: “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by *my* Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” (Jn 14:21) These two dimensions of love described by John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, in these two references is summed up in Jesus’ own summary of the Great commandments, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

Jesus is the Lord of love, the very personification of the virtue of love. He urges us his disciples to love God vertically by following His commandments and horizontally by loving one another. Jesus has set an example for us as the Lord of love. His sacrificial love for us should motivate us to respond by loving Him and loving another in Christ. This is what is implied when we sing “crown Him the Lord of Love” as it reminds us to worship God for who He is, “the Lord of Love,” and do so by practising love, for God and for one another.

May we in RCAC all learn to “Crown Him the Lord of Love” in 2021 and beyond!

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Simon Lee

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“擁戴我主為王”(3)：擁戴我主為愛之王

親愛的列宣家弟兄姊妹：

2020年由於病毒大流行而帶來充滿紛亂、愁雲慘霧、厄困和毀滅的一年。於2021年新年之始，也是正當我們在慶祝農曆新年之際，讓我們同來慶祝主耶穌基督是君王的事實，這是最適合不過的了。這確實是我們的盼望和禱告。美國新總統拜登在1月20日的就職禮演說中引用了詩篇30:5的話：“夜間雖然不斷有哭泣，早晨卻必歡呼”。事實上，我們共同擁有這盼望，並期待著黎明時，我們都可以在主裡歡欣喜樂。

我們於上文曾集中去思想生命聖詩第九首：“擁戴我主為王”詩歌的第一節，重點是“在寶座上的羔羊”。在本文中，我想與各位分享詩歌的第二節，重點在於：“擁戴仁愛之王”。詩詞如下：

擁戴我主為王，祂是仁愛之王，
祂手祂足肋旁受傷，今仍顯明天上，
何等奇妙奧祕，發出榮美光芒，
天使驚奇不敢仰視，一同俯首頌揚。

耶穌基督是愛之主

耶穌基督是君王，祂是愛之主！讓我們來到十字架前，瞻仰神無罪之子耶穌基督，因著我們的罪被釘在十字架上。若我們尚未能明白耶穌有多愛我們，我們只要“回到十字架前，去看“祂的雙手和雙足、看祂的肋旁，祂受傷深刻的釘痕仍然清晰可見，仍在發出榮美光芒”。這情景“在發出榮美光芒”，是因為它象徵著神救贖全人類計劃的應驗，但同時我們可以體驗到詩歌作者描述給我們明白的，是主所忍受極大的苦痛，即使是天上的使者也不忍“全然正視這一景象”。在此，耶穌那“低垂的頭”，相比於祂那“好像火燄的眼睛”（君王、審判者銳利的眼目），在凝視著這神聖的奧秘，道成肉身的奧妙，罪的代贖和撒但的被擊敗。

引用約翰所說的話，可充份透切地將神這真實的愛顯明、示範出來：“神愛世人，甚至把他的獨生子賜給他們，叫一切信他的，不至滅亡，反得永生。”（約3:16）。保羅更如此形容：“唯有基督在我們還作罪人的時候為我們死，神對我們的愛就在此顯明了。”（羅5:8）

我最喜愛的詩歌之一是“愛就是”。第一節的歌詞如下：

愛就是，神屈尊為人，
受時空限制，無地位權勢；
愛就是，主生在猶太，
為木匠兒子，跟漁夫一起。
愛就是，主降世成就大事，
因愛賜世人新生命福氣；

愛就是，主流血捨身，
妙愛臨到我這罪人。

試想像一下，神是整個宇宙的創造者，“神屈尊成為人，受時間空間限制，無地位權勢”。這實在是不可思議！不可想像的！這就是愛！詩歌作者敦促我們去思考一個事實，就是無罪的神兒子來世：“因著愛神釘死流血捨身，帶來了使人自由的新生命，祂竟然愛一個像我這樣的人”。由此可看到何謂愛！我們稱頌讚美神，因我們能跟隨這位“愛之主”，我們要尊崇祂！“擁戴祂為愛之王”。是甚麼意思？

擁戴祂為愛之主

有趣的是，拜登除了引用詩篇 30: 5，他還沿用奧古斯丁的教導呼籲美國人民在共同價值觀的基礎上團結一致。自幼身為天主教徒，他引用了聖奧古斯丁的教導，並稱之為“我的教會聖人”，他指出，一個民族是以愛的共同基礎元素所定義的。古教父奧古斯丁在其著作“上帝之城”中提到：能將一個社會聯繫在一起的元素是愛，而不是法律。他還寫道：“靈魂以愛作為品格的厘定”。拜登呼籲美國人要實踐愛，以愛的共同價值觀，達成團結一致。

若以此教導應用於教會，耶穌教導我們：“如果你們彼此相愛，眾人就會認出你們是我的門徒了。”（約 13: 35）耶穌也強調愛神和遵守神的誡命兩者之間的關係：“那領受我的命令，並且遵守的，就是愛我的；愛我的，我父必定愛他，我也要愛他，並且要親自向他顯現。”（約 14: 21）。主所愛的門徒約翰描述了耶穌自己總結了愛的兩方面相連關係，祂說最大誡命的總意就是：“你要全心、全性、全力、全意愛主你的神，並且要愛鄰舍如同自己。”（路 10: 27）

耶穌是愛之主，愛的美善品德的化身。祂敦促我們作為祂門徒的，於上向方面要敬愛神，遵照祂的誡命，於橫向方面要彼此相愛。耶穌為我們樹立了“愛之主”的榜樣。祂為我們捨身的愛是為著要激勵我們要以愛來回應祂，並在基督的愛裡彼此相愛。當我們唱頌“擁戴愛之主為王”時，就是表示，藉此詩歌來提醒我們尊崇敬拜神，因為祂是那“愛之主”，並為愛神而彼此去實踐愛。

願我們列宣家眾肢體能在 2021 年及日後學會怎樣去“擁戴愛之主為王”！

主僕，

李耀全牧師