

An Insufficient Title

October 25th 2026

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Today's lectionary reading takes us into the world of titles. Jesus is called "The Son of David" and Jesus points out to his hearers that this is insufficient.

While the Pharisees were gathered around. Jesus asked them "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" they replied. The son of David.

To which Jesus argues not really, NOT ENOUGH! And he continues

"How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls the Christ "Lord"

And straightaway quotes Psalm 110

'The Lord says to my Lord "Sit at my right hand'

which really means

God says to my Lord, Christ "Sit at my right hand"

And Jesus continues "If then David calls the Christ, Lord, how can he be his son?

So Jesus is saying this title of Son of David is not good enough

Not wrong! Just not good enough.

So this lectionary reading turns out to be a little bit obscure – but important enough to be in the lectionary and to be also included in the gospels of Mark and Luke as well as Matthew!

Important because it deals with how we call and view our Lord Jesus Christ and what **he** thought about the matter.

It is interesting to note how well Jesus knew the scriptures! He is always quoting from them – even when he was dying on the cross. "My God my God why have you forsaken me?" This Psalm 110 was not one of the great Psalms – it didn't really stand out – like the twenty third Psalm, but Jesus knew it well enough to be able to quote from it verbatim. The Old Testament was The Bible for Jesus, and he knew it so well and revered it. Many think we can discard the Old Testament and simply concentrate on the New – but this would mean we would miss so much, so much that was important to Jesus himself.

A title tells us about the person we are addressing

."Mr, Mrs or Ms", "Darling", "Esquire" if you are a landowner, "Darling" for a loved one", "Your Honour" for a judge, "Your Grace" to a bishop. Simply Ma'am if you were addressing the late Queen and I think Donald Trump would like to be addressed by "Greatest President who has ever lived" but that's certainly a moot point!

And so now we come to the two titles -"Messiah" and "Christ" and it turns out that these are equivalent, meaning "Anointed One" in Hebrew and Greek respectively.

As we know, the gospel of Matthew was written from a Hebrew perspective for Matthew was Jewish. So in the very first chapter we have the complete genealogy of Jesus, starting way back with Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob up to Mighty King David and Solomon and coming right down to Joseph and Mary and finally Jesus who is called Christ – Messiah.

So Jesus was certainly from the line of King David – something very important for Jewish people. And Matthew has devoted his whole book to Jesus, the Messiah.

Behind all this lies the Jewish expectation of Messiah that there would one day come a great prince of the line of David who would shatter Israel's enemies, and lead the people to the conquest of all nations. The Messiah was most commonly thought of in nationalistic, political and military terms of power and glory – essentially a secular vision! And in this encounter with the pharisees, Jesus is saying "Sure, I am from the line of David but this is not me!!

And if this was not Jesus, who was he?? What title should we use for our Lord?

Unfortunately and so sadly, these days Christ is used simply as a swear word, an expletive quickly demoting the King of kings into the gutter and below.

If one scrolls through the whole Bible one gets the strong impression that Christ is not just a good man. Not just a teacher or a mystic or just one of the many holy men who would wander the countryside in those times. However, from his claims, and his authority and deep seated wisdom his miracles and his Lordship over nature itself, he was more – much more. If we go to Matthew's account, Peter is reported as saying "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!"

Can we say Amen to that? And if so what does it mean for us here today in the 21st century. I guess it is a very personal question for each and every one of us – and equally well we will probably reply in many different ways. But reply we must for this strange Galilean will not go away.

And so, after our searching, maybe we have arrived at Jesus' preferred title "Son of God". In the gospels he is called or he calls himself "Son of God" 23 times

So Jesus was and is God's son, close – very close, so close to his Father that we cannot distinguish them; the same DNA, the same essence. We look to him and we see the God the Father!

The American poet, Day Williams has written a poem entitled "Son of God"

*Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
Has come to live within my heart:
He made the world and he made me,
And his works are higher than man's art*

*I pray that Jesus' light and love
Will shine and magnify in me,
For it is by his love and grace
That I can touch infinity.*

I rather like that final phrase "touch infinity" Through our Christ we can touch infinity – not a mindless frightening dark infinity, but a loving infinity full of light – full of God's creation!

The Son of God, Jesus, can be a conduit to the God of creation with all its awe inspiring vastness and its unfathomable detail. A God who has created all the laws which tell the lightning where to strike, how the stars are to shine and how the flowers come into bloom. And yet amazingly, a God who listens to our every prayer and knows our every need.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has many titles, Master, Teacher, “Son of David”, “Son of Man” “Lord”, “Redeemer” “Messiah” “Christ” but all will be insufficient unless we also add “Son of God”!

I would like to close with a small poem/hymn of my own, which covers all these things we have been pondering this morning.

Christ – Our King

O Father God we come to praise
We come to worship and to sing’
We sing of one who does amaze
Of Christ, your Son, and Christ, our
King

He taught us life, he was so wise,
Along the shores of Galilee,
And as we hear, we realise
He was God’s face for all to see.

Although he lived so long ago
In ancient ages long since gone
Yet even now we come to know
That through his life God’s glory
shone

He had a stature and a grace
A life so full of dignity;
And as we look into his face
God’s love is there for all to see.

And he is here with us today
He’s with us as we worship here
He’s with us as we kneel to pray,
He is God’s Son and he is near.

He shows us God, he can impart
The clearest vision one could bring.
So, let’s enthrone him in our heart
He is our Lord, he is our King.

Amen