

# The Cross and Kingship

by L.E. Maxwell

---

*The sermon explores the true nature of kingship, which is conditioned upon sacrificial service and springs from life sacrificed for others, and how this is achieved through the Cross of Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:26

**Topics:** "Kingship", "Sacrificial Service"

---

## Description

L.E. Maxwell emphasizes the profound connection between the Cross and true kingship, illustrating how Jesus exemplified sacrificial service as the ultimate King. He recounts the story of a Christian chief who willingly accepted the dangers of leadership among a pagan tribe, demonstrating that true authority comes from selflessness and a commitment to serve others. Maxwell argues that humanity's struggle with self-centeredness can only be overcome through the transformative power of Christ's death on the Cross, which calls us to die to ourselves and embrace a life of obedience. The sermon highlights that true kingship is not about power but about love and sacrifice, as seen in Christ's example. Ultimately, Maxwell challenges believers to allow Christ to reign in their hearts, making them kings through His sacrifice.

---

## Transcript

HIS BROTHER had just been poisoned because he was Ha Christian chief. The pagan tribe, with less than a dozen Christians, had learned by former experiences that Christian chiefs-well, there were none like them.

"Have you considered taking the position as chief of this pagan tribe?" asked the missionary.

"Yes, I have prayed about it and I believe I should accept the position."

"But do you realize all the risk it involves? Your brother was poisoned just because he was a Christian."

"Yes, I know that. I do not know what day I may be poisoned, but what a great opportunity for serving these people!"

Renouncing all that he had, even to life itself, he accepted the position as chief. Jesus said: "Whosoever 'll be chief (or first) among you, let him be your servant." Kingship is conditioned upon sacrificial service. It springs from life sacrificed for others.

Homer, the poet, said: "All kings are shepherds of the people." How good! The true Shepherd is indeed a King. And no king is true who is not first a shepherd. His authority to reign is based upon his care for the sheep. His willingness to lay down his life for the sheep is the condition of his kingship.

The first Adam was created to have dominion. He was commissioned a king. In the single prohibition not to eat of the forbidden tree, man was reminded of the limitation of that kingship as properly under the government of God. But man forfeited his regal power. When he dethroned God from his heart and enthroned self, he was "sold under sin." Himself a slave, he has lost his fitness for kingship. The thing man loves more than anything else is to have his own way. Such is the supremacy of self. Abdicate? Never! And until a Mightier shall dethrone self and reign supreme, man is an incurably selfish degenerate. Dominated by self, he is up against a dead-end street.

Myself, arch-traitor to myself;

My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,

My clog whatever road I go.

--Christina Rossetti.

How reinstate the divine rule? How free man, the prisoner, from his self-centeredness? How compel him to sever the tie and make an eternal break with the usurper? In a word, how dispose man to die to self? The more one grows in the grace of God, the more he learns that mere power and brute force are secondaries with God. "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." He speaks and worlds are flung out into space. But how achieve an unforced, uncompelled victory over man--one that will "settle sin's accounts," and lead man to an eternal forsaking of his shameful folly and pride? Man must be left free. Where would be the moral glory to the Creator that men should be forced by the sheer weight of the Almighty to believe and submit and obey?

O loving wisdom of our God

When all was sin and shame.

A second Adam to the fight

And to the rescue came!

--Newman.

This new Adam came, a new Head of a new race. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." He came to die, to reconcile the rebel, to decenter man from himself and pivot him again on God. All the way "from the throne of highest glory, to the Cross of deepest woe" He demonstrated how delightful is loving obedience to God. In a perfectly selfless manhood, and by an infinite descent 'into the deeps of a voluntary death, He brought an end to the reign of pride. When He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, He went forward to the Cross and "took it as it had been a crown." He had come to do His Father's will. That will was death. In that will He died. He died rather than sin. He died for sin. He died unto sin. And such an obedient and victorious life did He forge in Calvary's sacred fires, that now indeed "is the judgment of this world." The "self-life," whether of men, or demons, or devil, is forever condemned.

On the basis of that Cross, God now deals with man-through the persuasion of Christ's death, never that of mere coercion. But if man can still stand at the foot of the Cross without making an ash-heap of his pride--if he will still give place to the devil by refusing to die with his Lord, well, God has no recourse; hope is dead. For all such, the "rod of iron" is Heaven's only rule. Every knee to Christ must bow. His enemies will yet lick the dust.

In the meantime, Christ takes captives at the Cross. Calvary eclipses all the power of all the thrones of the world. What earthly power can dethrone self and unseat a man from the throne of every earthly ambition? Christ is King of kings--from the Cross. An earthly monarch has been known to kill his subject by a look. Christ slaughters man, not by force or terror, but by Himself being slain. He slays man to his pride and every other selfish consideration. Never could "king lay hold of the heart of a subject as the cross lays hold of the life of a saint. And this in the face of a judgment so adverse to the soul's selfish interests that it spells death" (Huegel). All other loves, whether of home, or kindred, of country, or of life itself, may prove but spells that lose their charm, persuasives that lose their power; but in the Cross is that immortal root of a love that is stronger than death.

It is said that when the physicians were probing among the shattered ribs for the fatal bullet, the loyal French soldier said: "A little deeper and you will find the Emperor." In the heart of his being, he loved his king. There are conditions, and circumstances, possibly a whole crown of thorns, that probe us deeply these days; but the design of the Cross is to make us "more than conquerors" in all these things. Calvary recreates kings--kings in Christ--kings amidst all conditions. Stephen the martyr, ringed in by wolves, reigned a king; every stone on that upturned brow fell upon the King. Saul, the killer, got his first glimpse of the Crucified mirrored in this man with the angel face. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" When the things of "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword," probe into our shattered lives a little deeper than ever before, do they find the King--self unseated, Christ enthroned? Has the Cross so conquered my inner life that Christ is King over all my circumstances?

God has made us kings through the Crucified, but there can be no kingship while we ourselves are still in chains. "He is not escaped who drags his chain," says an old French proverb. When the physician was probing into the physical weakness of "Praying Hyde" of India he found that this prayer warrior--a veritable king in the secret place of the Most High--had prayed his heart out of position. An old Calcutta friend says (in the official life of Praying Hyde): "We have heard of martyrs who were kept in prison, and in the end were put to death. But have we ever heard of one, who was so given up to the ministry of prayer that the strain of a daily burden brought him into a premature grave?" "No, friend," answers another brother in India, "not a premature grave; it was the grave of Jesus Christ. John Hyde laid down his life calmly and deliberately for the Church of God in India." Who follows in his train, a kingly crown to gain?

Make me a captive, Lord,

And then I shall be free;

Force me to render up my sword,

And I shall conqueror be.

My will is not my own

Till Thou hast made it Thine;

If it would reach the monarch's throne

It must its crown resign.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/le-maxwell/the-cross-and-kingship/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**