

Christ the King - Year B
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- SERMON -

Who knows what day this is in the Church? Today is Christ the King Sunday. The day we celebrate the full authority of Christ as King and Lord of the universe. Officially called "The Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King,"

So, it's no surprise our readings this morning are so special...

Our first reading is taken from the book of Daniel in the O.T. Daniel is probably best known from the story of Daniel and the lions' den.

To give a little background, Daniel was a noble Jewish youth of Jerusalem who was taken into captivity by the king of Babylon. He served that king and his successors with loyalty and ability, all the while remaining true to the God of Israel.

He is not a prophet in Judaism, but the rabbis reckoned him to be the most distinguished member of the Babylonian captivity, unsurpassed in piety and good deeds, and firm in his devotion to the Law despite being surrounded by enemies who did what they could to ruin him. The various branches of the Christian church do recognize him as a prophet, and although he is not mentioned in the Quran, Muslim sources describe him as a prophet.

Daniel lived through some pretty uncertain times as an exile in Babylon. Death threats, temperamental kings, backbiting officials, puzzling dreams, were just a few of the things that Daniel had to face during his 70-year exile. Under King Belshazzar's reign Daniel endured probably the greatest amount of uncertainty that he had ever faced. During this difficult time, God gave Daniel a dream.

From this reading this morning, I'm especially drawn to the words:

“As I was watching,
 thrones were raised up.
 The ancient one took his seat.

“... I suddenly saw
 one like a human being
 coming with the heavenly clouds.
He came to the ancient one

and was presented before him.
“Rule, glory, and kingship were given to him;
his kingship is indestructible.”

His kingship – Christ the King...

Daniel’s vision was a hopeful one, giving Daniel a confident hope in the future. Our God is a God of hope, not one of doom and despair.

Isn’t that what we all need when we’re going through a time of uncertainty in our life? A fresh vision of Jesus. And Daniel saw Him 500 years before he came. What a powerful image.

(Pause)...

And then we had our second reading this morning from the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John.

Oooh, Revelations –

It reminds me of a story about a little 5-year old girl who was "helping" her mother fix dinner one evening when the mother asked her to go into the pantry and get her a can of tomatoes. The little girl said she was afraid to go in there because it was dark.

The mother told her it was okay, as nothing was going to hurt her because Jesus was in there to protect her. The little girl then went to the pantry, opened the door, and said, "Jesus, if you are in there, hand me a can of tomatoes, okay?"

Concerning the book of Revelation, we are like that little girl sometimes. We are afraid and intimidated by this book, so we don’t want to get into it and study it, feeling that we won’t understand it. So, we want somebody else to give us all the information from it, but we opt to stay out. But it’s really a great book!

For instance, the scene that’s described for us in our reading this morning is one of a king arriving, and there is no mistake regarding who he is or why he has come. The author declares, “Look, he is coming with the clouds! Every eye will see him, including those who pierced him.”

In this foretelling of Christ’s second coming, the Messiah is returning to the earth in an unmistakable fashion, befitting a king. This is so unlike his first coming, when he arrived without the expected pomp and circumstance and instead came into the world as an infant, totally dependent upon those who would raise him up.

Jesus Christ is certainly the faithful witness of all things. He is the first risen from death and He is the absolute ruler of all kingdoms. He deserves all glory. Because of his great love for us, we have been freed from the slavery of sin through his shed blood on the cross.

This Jesus is the Messiah King, the “ruler of the kings of the earth,” who comes into the world in surprising ways, not only to change the course of history, but also to invite the whole world, each and every one of us, to participate and become his Kingdom on earth.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is and was and is coming, the Almighty.”

You may know the Alpha and the Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. By using these words, God is saying He was evermore and will be evermore, including all times in between ... terms we humans can't fully comprehend because we need a beginning point and an ending point for our clarity of understanding.

It's interesting that in the original manuscript, John writes out the word “Alpha” but only used the letter symbol for “Omega”. I wonder if that's because God is the end that has no ending...

(Pause)...

In our Gospel reading Jesus said, “My kingdom doesn't originate from this world.”

No, it does not. The more we hear about God's Kingdom, the more we understand that it is very different or in reverse in comparison to the world as we know it.

Christ the King – King of Kings! The Almighty!

A God of love, of patience, of healing. What always amazes me is, this same God lives in us...

2 Timothy 1:14

...”through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us...”.

Ephesians 3:17

...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; ...

Colossians 1:27

... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Hebrews 3:6

but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house--whose house we are, ...

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Isn't that amazing?

And when this God of love, of patience and of healing fills us, it can fill us to overflowing. Have you ever experienced that? If you had a glass and poured water in it, the glass can only take so much water before it starts to overflow. That overflow of water has to go somewhere, doesn't it? When God's love starts to overflow, where does it go? We can't help but overflow onto others who need love, patience and healing. Who need to be accepted. It overflowed on Thanksgiving

into our parish hall with meals served to many, and donations of up to \$500 to be contributed to our Dunedin Cares Food Pantry.

It overflows to prison ministries, to our local Homeless Empowerment Program (HEP) here in Clearwater, to our local Clothes to Kids program, RCS, cold weather shelters, to people needing a ride to church, through our thrift stores, to our shut-ins who can't get out, to those in hospitals or nursing homes who need someone to care. To our neighbors and friends who are struggling. Maybe to the person sitting next to you.

I would be amiss if I did not acknowledge that you may be the one who has a need for some overflow. Maybe the concept of a God who loves you and cares about you is foreign right now because of all you are dealing with.

In a few moments we will have the privilege of experiencing the Sacrament of Eucharist, where Jesus, Christ the King, will be present. As you come forward, bring that which is burdening you and share it with Jesus. Then as you put your hands together, give it to Him and in return receive the nourishment you will need to sustain you on the next leg of your journey.

As we celebrate this Feast of our Lord Jesus Christ the King, may we know that he is working his purpose, and be filled to overflowing with the glory of God.

Happy Christ the King Sunday!