

Christ the King Sunday

“The Universal Power of Unconditional Love”

Revelation 1:4b-8 John 18:33-37

November 24, 2019

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Before the Readings:

Rev. 1:4b-9

The reading in Revelation may easily hook you on old meanings and taught theology from long ago. Don't take the bait! It is God who was and is and is to come, in whose name “John” addresses the then 7 new communities part of this Christian movement.

And in the name of Jesus Christ...Jesus who witnesses by the pattern of his life who becomes the Christ, is the firstborn of the dead...meaning Jesus died alone but rose as Christ in a corporate act of resurrection bringing us all into integrity and hope. Christ is the ruler of the kings. And, we are made into a new kingdom...not of the earth...thought world, priests...us! Serving God.

John 18:33-38

Jesus tells it: I am not of your thought world. I come to bring truth...our courageous-compassionate-integrous heart. If he were an earthly King...he'd be worried. All those who know, know the truth.

Whoa some dark passages.

Well, they do point us to the unknowns of our Advent season when we admit to ourselves we can't go it alone, can't figure it out on our own.

When we know we need to lean into the presence and guidance of the Holiness.

A time when we admit to ourselves we are dependent upon something new being born in us that we could not conceive on our own...a response to life we could not figure out in our own heads.

And the ability to really enter Advent is dependent upon the assurance that God is with us, Jesus has patterned a new response to life dilemmas for us, we are not alone!

And so our Christ the King Sunday assures us as we re-enter the mystery and allow ourselves to become vulnerable to the workings of Holiness...

Because I see Jesus ahead of me, feel the assurance the living of his life and a holy unconditional love...and not only for me!

Because wisdom awaits me...this is why I can sing...I'm singing in the reign (sign with word “Reign”)

Sing...

I'm singing in the rain
Just singing in the rain
What a glorious feelin'
I'm happy again
I'm laughing at clouds
So dark up above

The sun's in my heart
And I'm ready for love
Let the stormy clouds chase
Everyone from the place
Come on with the rain
I've a smile on my face
I walk down the lane
With a happy refrain
Just singin',
Singin' in the rain

Dancin' in the rain
Dee-ah dee-ah dee-ah
Dee-ah dee-ah dee-ah

I am not making light of the things in your life that trouble you or are real and serious...

no covering up, shutting up, shutting out of the way things really are....or life will cave in on you at some point.

But within the reality of the life you live, can you find an authentic, true way to still be able to sing? Maybe we call that gratitude.

Singing may depend on what it is that you allow to reign over you.

The blues from the clouds of your life or the blue in the sky above?

Do you stay stuck in the muck of life?

Or, do you put energy where there is an inner knowing and a beginning clarity?

God is ruler of the universe...our Creator uses it all-all that is part of life...nothing wasted, all connected.

Uses it for new possibility...scriptures calls it uses it for "good".

Do you connect the dots of your life?

Use all parts of it for "good"? OR...

Do you leave things floating, hanging out there?

Do you fragment yourself off into parts and then get lost in the clutter...

or do you use all the truths of your life, align them...
to point yourself in a new direction?

Do you see what it is you're allowing to rule in your life?

Is that the rule you want?

The King you're willing to worship with your life?

Can you see the reign of Christ?

Pilate is asking you: Who is King/Queen? What is truth?

Jesus is telling you that those wise enough to know of the kingdom from which he comes, hear his voice and know truth.

Each of us has a piece of the truth.

Forming the bigger Truth is about joining our truth to the truth of others and Wisdom's teachings, seeing and choosing.

Something you can't do in isolation
with only your perspective on what is happening.

You know, like the argument you had yesterday.

What are the truths in that argument?

What parts of that were about you...about the others?

Do you see the difference?

Are you willing to connect those dots to make meaning?

You need the perspective of the person you argued with to see the Reign of Christ...for they have a piece of truth, too!

Something they said to you was truth! Can you handle it?

In everything we do and say our real faith is revealed, our understanding of whom Jesus is, who God is...is revealed.

Many of us are still stuck in the old notion of kingdom,

~of eye for an eye,

~of it being someone else's responsibility to change things,

~of thinking there is only one right way or only one truth...and it's
your way or your truth...

~or we think of ourselves victimized, powerlessness.

Actually, that The Kingdom of Christ, Heaven on earth...it is here and many choose to see it and live into it...as best they can!

Is this the kingdom in which you often find yourself?

So often, instead of seeing and living in the kingdom...claiming our power, we complain or turn on people (like the Pharisees turned on Jesus).

When we act powerless, shirking our role in the way things are,

we reveal we don't understand the teachings of Jesus....

or maybe that's we don't want to understand them!

We don't see the pattern of His life and how it calls to us...
so we don't experience the peace it can bring.

We each have the power to build up the reign of God, or tear it down.

But before you can build up or tear down, you have to be able to see it...to see that everything we do affects the reign of God...the kin-dom...

how we handle arguments, disappointments, anger and fear,
stress, play, money.

Yeah, sometimes it does sorta' feel like we asked to make lemonade out of lemons.

Sometimes it feels we're stuck wanting roses while we're holding
a beautiful bouquet of long stemmed...thorns.

But if you pause and take a deep breath...you can still smell the roses. A fragrance of
gratitude and trust in the more,
of the power of connecting the dots for good in your life.

If you can't begin to do this, you can't begin...to fully, freely live in peace.

I know you have done exactly this, made lemonade, smelled the roses in your thorn
bouquet!

You've seen your small letter truth alongside the truth of others and placed all within
the bigger Truth.

In some part of your life, you've done this.

And at that moment you felt really alive.

Alive to possibility...not part of the progression of the living dread.

In that moment, that part of your life had moved through Lent entering Easter...maybe
now in Pentecost (Spirit with you, held in community to sustain your energy) and
Greening.

But is there a part, an aspect of your life that is still left out of the reign of Christ?

In the dark?

In the tense place of not knowing how to move forward...
not sure what truth is and not knowing what to do or how to be?

Ah, then...that part be in Advent...and what great timing!

I think in our deepest, purest self each of us knows of the big T Truth. It's just so hard to face and even harder to do anything about. Thank God we are not alone in feeling this...that none of us is all alone in Advent.

As we enter, we are given this day to be assured that we are not alone and God's got us...it is uneasy but safe to enter Advent again.

You see, we may be so sophisticated we think we don't want a king/queen...but we need one! Wow! Do we ever need one!

We need a powerful new Truth to rule our lives.

And that power is already within you.
Jesus' Universal Unconditional Love is in you.

You begin to recognize it more fully when you have courage and compassion about the truth revealed in you about you....in your heart! Remember...ssshhh!

God trusts you to rule your own life with dignity, compassion and graced do-overs in the light of truth...
which brings freedom and peace.

If you're not feeling free, you're not living true.

So here's the thing: Jesus can only rule for you, through you!
You have to see the kingdom and choose it for yourself!

And the good news is...God never gives up on any of us,
every moment redeemable, all situations...

in our family, in our church, in our world...until the truth is known and freedom is released. Peace.

God outlasts what is wrong.
God is the Alpha and the Omega, who is and was and will be.

The crises and the problems that beset us do not define us.
The truth empowers us.
This is our hope made really, real...
for those who believe with their hearts...not just their thoughts.

God encircles us in hope before and beyond all the times of our lives.
It is a shared, corporate hope built on trust that there is more than what seems to be...
and we've already experienced this in our own lives.
We know it's true.

Isn't it ironic!
Jesus is put to death because they were afraid he was a king.
Jesus is born into the world's hope that he would be that king!

Life happens and Christ still reigns.

It's Christ the King Sunday. Will you let him be king/queen
in your life and live into a new reality that is not of this world?

Ask yourself:

~What is truth? ...the truth most needed to be embraced in my life.

~What enduring hopes do I celebrate as gifts from God?

~What eternal truths shape my daily life?

Do I let shape my daily life?

~How am I an expression of hope into the world?

Don't just talk the faith, walk it. Don't just think, feel your life.

Don't just sing to yourself, dance with us!

You know, there is an additional verse to that popular song...singing in the rain...

It says:

Why am I smiling
And why do I sing?
Why does September
Seem sunny as spring?
Why do I get up
Each morning and start?
Happy and head up
With joy in my heart
Why is each new task

A trifle to do?
Because I am living
A life full of You, Lord!
I'm happy again!
I'm singin' and dancin' in the rain!
I'm dancin' and singin' in the rain...