

Sermon - November 22, 2009

King Jesus! My Lord, Savior and Friend

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

Following Jesus – Faithfully, Gratefully

Last Sunday we sang a great old hymn - *Take My Life and Let it be, consecrated Lord to Thee, Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.* And in that hymn are also these words - *take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold.*

And that verse is a response to the Biblical story Jesus told of the widow and her two mites - Jesus praised the woman because she gave her all to praise and thank God.

In a true sense you and I can mean and do the same thing as the widow did, and as the hymn said – *not a mite would I withhold.*

If we commit ourselves to be Christians, followers of Christ, to love him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, to do everything to please and praise him then – that means - our offering to God is not just what we put in the offering plate, It is what we do with all the rest of our money, with our lives, too.

But – I know for me, how I start something often affects how it ends up. So – if I want my life to be a witness of my faith in Jesus Christ, then how I handle my money can influence how I live my life.

Here's how it should work. You earn \$100 - the first thing you do is make a thank offering to God for the job and the pay. You give a tithe - 10% or some percent. First you give thanks to God, and then you let that idea – thanks be to God – you let that idea guide you in how you spend all the rest of your money and your time.

You and I start each week off right, we worship God, and with our offerings we remind ourselves that in everything we do we should show and share with all our minds and hearts and souls and strength our love for God and for each other.

That's faithfulness. And I keep these two dollar bills in front of me to remind of my call in Christ. One is a bit of a joke – It has a picture of Jesus pasted right where Washington's picture would normally go. It's all God's money. The second is the

dollar bill one of the SOS homeless shelter men gave to the Building to Share campaign to show his thanks for our helping him.

And by our gifts – we show our thanks to the one from who all things come, and Offer our gratitude. If you haven't returned your commitment card for 2010 - it will help your officers tremendously if you would - Thank you.

Let us pray

It's almost Thanksgiving, almost Christmas, and this morning the scheduled Is from Scripture reading takes us back to Holy Week.

In 33 A.D. Pilate, the Roman Governor of Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified was confused. Pilate was confused about the talk, the charge, that a beaten and bleeding man in front of him was being called a King. Pilate didn't think much of the Jews, and this was craziness. Crown of thorns? King?

And Jesus simply seems to say – Pilate - it's a bigger issue than you know.

And we're not far different from Pilate. We're a bit confused, too, by Jesus. Because of all that happens in our world that seems so far from anything Christ-like, anything ruled by Jesus.

Another madman discovered in Cleveland, bodies everywhere. A psychiatrist blows away 13 people in Texas.

And wealthy congress persons in Washington, with life time virtually free health care, debate bitterly whether 40 million of the citizens who elected them to serve the best interest of all – should have any insurance at all.

We sing it here - O Worship the King, All Glorious Above. The Choir will sing, Rejoice the Lord is King. And we are confused. Maybe some day Jesus will be King and rule this world with justice and mercy and kindness and love. But now, now it seems if Jesus is anything he is king of that kingdom that we pray each week will come.

Maybe we do kind of understand what this King thing is about, about a King whose way is, whose kingdom, is not yet our way, our kingdom. But most of the people

we know out there, who are not Christians, probably think our talk is babble bubble, is weird, maybe a bit crazy. Jesus is your king? Huh?
And we ask that question our selves. Jesus is king? In a world so far from good, how is this possible?

For we do want need a Jesus who has something to say to the troubles in our lives, or we want no Jesus at all. No King Jesus of a kingdom that makes no difference in my life.

Or maybe, maybe this King Jesus does speak to our day. Maybe his word to Pilate of a kingdom not of this world, is true – and makes all the difference in this world for you and for me.

Maybe Pilate, who saw him face to face, found a truth in Jesus he could not face. That there is a kingdom, there is a rule of god, that encompasses all of existence, and in Jesus Christ we have seen just the smallest little bit of what this Kingdom is like. What life is really supposed to be like.

I wonder sometimes, don't you, - about why we live in such disorder and chaos, such ugliness and nastiness and meanness, such pain and sorrow, when it is obvious all around us, in the stunning and spectacular beauty and wonder and orderliness of creation all around us, and within us...

Maybe, maybe, Jesus truly does rule a kingdom not of our world, not of this crazy sinful broken and hurting world? And maybe there are images of Jesus that make more sense for us, help us get a truer better sense of who Jesus truly is.

Maybe before we try to figure out what Christ the King really means, we should look again at the ways in which Jesus Christ is our Lord, and Savior and Friend.

I confess I really don't hunger to have a king run my life. Nothing from history makes this a good choice. But yes, in the midst of all the chaos and turmoil, the wars and rumors of war, the sinful violence of people, the power of disease and death... I hunger for glimpses in our world of the wonder and goodness, the justice and peace, the promise of God's rule.

Of what the kingdom of this world could be like if it were more like the kingdom of God we pray for every week - Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.

And that we have – more than glimpses. We have the life of Jesus, the risen and living Lord of life. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. Are we weak and heavy laden, burdened with a load of care? Yes. And in his arms he'll take and keep us, we will find a solace there.

Take it to the Lord in prayer? Yes. Eighty and eight and hearing nearly gone, and family, too. Young, but along with friends, out of work and hope, and strain on family and relationships, too. The tests are back and the word is cancer and I'm frightened beyond words at what I'm facing, and for my loved ones.

And – are you king Jesus, are you? Or are you my Lord and Savior, my friend in need. That's what I need. Not someone to rule me, but someone to love me with a never ending love. You stilled the stormy sea once, didn't you? Won't you calm the stormy sea that is my life?

Lord, is it, that while the world is not yet the kingdom of our Lord and King, in this world that is a part of your creation; in this world we can find ample evidence of the presence of your power, your goodness, and your love?

The simplest confession of the early Church was = Jesus Is Lord. It was a straight forward statement that reminded the followers of Jesus that it was his word and his way they were to follow in all that they did in life. What ever they said or did was to be said or done to please Jesus Christ.

It was a powerful world changing concept. Persecuted. Crucified by Rome. And - at the same time, the Christian faith was growing as it never has since, and was soon overwhelming the Roman Empire, and tearing it down by offering a new hope to all people. With no army, navy or air force, and every law against them Christians lived such Christ like lives they won millions to their faith.

And it could be happening now in China as devotion to Christ as Lord is moving the minds and hearts and loyalty and faith of millions of people.

People do know; do understand the limits of this world, of all earthly power. Our little systems have their day and cease to be.

People do want to live in touch with the wide immensely larger world of creation, And loyalty to Christ as Lord can make this happen. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.

And he does. Like a great ruler. Peter, then, who betrayed Jesus Christ. Peter, Jesus said, on this rock I will build my Church. And Jesus, whom Peter betrayed three times, Jesus asked Peter 3 times, Do you love me, and told Peter to feed his sheep, and so erased the 3 times Peter had denied Jesus.

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins to bear.

Or hear the words of Mike Yanoelle, a Pastor and writer, as he faced his death from cancer.

Mike wrote – It's like swinging on a trapeze. Once you've found the courage to swing you never want to let go. And then, suddenly you see another trapeze swinging toward you. And you realize you are being asked to let go. And its then you see, on that other trapeze, Jesus - and his strong hands reaching out to catch you.

What a friend we have in Jesus.

Is Jesus King? Lord of Lords, of all things. Yes, of course. As old as the language is, we still get the point, and we agree! King of Kings, Lord of Lords. Savior, and my, and your, and our , forever friend.

Who will not despise nor forsake you, but will be with us, even through the valley of the shadow.

Have you ever had a friend so faithful, a forever friend? Walk with him this week, As Lord of your life, as your savior, and as your Friend. And in such company – all good things are possible. Amen.

David W. Robertson, Pastor