

## Christ the King – Year C

Today we celebrate the feast of “Christ, the king” – or the Reign of Christ. It is the last Sunday of one church year, and next Sunday we will begin a *new* church year. We have been in “*cycle C*” – and next Sunday will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent in *cycle A*. In nature, we are in the middle of the change of seasons also – as the seasons “*cycle*” around us. We have so many examples of the circular or *cyclical* nature of things... and yet we persist in our linear way of thinking. In our linear thinking, we have beginnings, middles, and ends. One thing follows another in a discrete order. There are things *past*, and things *present*, and things still to come in the future. And this linear world view often co-exists with a certain *dualism* – a point of view that is *either/or* – *yes or no*. Something *is* or it *is not*. Linear thinking, dualism, these come to form part of our *worldview* – and that worldview affects how we live. To give a concrete example of how our worldview affects us, go back in history to a time when we thought the world was flat, that the sun and moon revolved around this flat earth. People did not set off in ships expecting to come around to the other side. When our understanding grew, however, our worldview changed. Things that were thought *not possible* *became* possible. The *reality* did not change – only our perspective, our *worldview*. And *that* change made what we *thought* to be impossible now in the realm of possibility.

Our worldview – how we perceive things, how we believe things relate to one another – affects how we live and operate. When *how we see things* changes – our very lives change.

What Jesus invites us to – what he continually preaches – is a change in our world view, a change in how we see things. That is what we have been experiencing in this past year as we delved into the Gospel of Luke. Luke shows us a world turned upside down – the mighty brought down from their thrones, the lowly lifted up, the hungry filled with good things. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus’s inaugural address – his first “sermon” – appears when Jesus reads from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then hear the next verse: “And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “*Today* this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Today – Today is an important word in Luke. Near the beginning of Luke’s gospel, we hear, “Today in the city of David a savior is born...” After proclaiming from Isaiah, Jesus says, “*Today* this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” When Jesus meets Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector, he says, “*Today* salvation has come to this house.” And in our Gospel this morning – as this gospel and our church year draw to a close – we hear Jesus say to the good thief, “*Today* you will be with me in paradise.”

Today – meaning right now – at least in our linear view of things. But what we are confronted with in this gospel depiction of the crucifixion of Jesus is Christ *the king* who is crucified and yet rules. We are ruled by one who suffered and who suffers still. We are committed to a king-dom, a *realm* of God, a way of living out the way of Love that is TODAY – and yet is to come. The paradise we *and* the thief are promised is for *Today* - even as it is still to come.

In a linear model, things cannot be in two places on the continuum at the same time. But if we can change our understanding of how things are, if we can change our *worldview* and see things in the round, in cycles, in a spiral that circles around the Stillpoint that is the Christ in whom, as we heard in Colossians, all things hold together, then something can be both now and yet to come, both something that happened but is happening still. If we can let go of our linear view of time, and adopt something which is what modern quantum physics tells us is closer to reality, then we can begin to see that when Jesus says, “Today this passage is fulfilled, *today* salvation has come to this house, *today* you will be with me in paradise” - he is saying NOW and NOT quite Yet at the same time. It is *both/and*.

Today's gospel – giving us the story of the crucifixion for a celebration of the Kingship of Christ – seems like a contradiction – but it seems that way because we look through the lens of a worldview that says power and domination rule. What we are saying when we acclaim this Christ crucified as King is that the way *he* lived and preached is what really rules.

When we look out across a flat horizon, we do not fear that we will fall off the edge, because we have come to know that this earth we call home is round. And that worldview gives us the courage to fly, to trust that the sun is still out there even when we cannot see it. That worldview also gives us the grace to know that the world does not revolve around us, as shattering as that realization can be.

When *how we see things* changes – our very lives change.

When we look at the crucified Christ, we do not see the victory of the Roman rule, or the destruction of Jesus, because we have come to know that in that confrontation between hatred and love, in the worldview of the reign of God, Love always wins. We see the one we believe rules over us and all creation. As we heard in the letter to the Colossians, we see the one “in [whom] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through [whom] God was pleased to reconcile to [God] all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.” It doesn't look that way through the worldview of power, just as sailing around the world doesn't look likely through the worldview of a flat earth. The reality is no different, but the way we choose to look at the world changes everything.

In the worldview of the kingdom of God that we see revealed in Jesus, the poor matter, we need to free the oppressed, and we are called to love one another. When we really live out of that worldview, everything changes, and everything *will* change.

In our offertory hymn, we will sing, “King of Glory, King of Peace” – and many of us may have difficulty singing, because there will be a lump in our throat perhaps – brought there by a very real experience of what I’ve been talking about. The *General Seminary* hymn was Wayne’s favorite. And it is. Wayne was here among us, and Wayne *is* here among us. That is how things are in the kingdom of God – here and not yet.

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: We pray not that you *let* us all into the kingdom, for we are already there, but that you let us all into the way of *seeing*, into the worldview of the Kingdom, where all *are* one in your Christ, who reigns. Amen.

[Jeremiah 23:1-6](#)

[Psalm 46](#)

[Colossians 1:11-20](#)

[Luke 23:33-43](#)