



The Rev. Anthony Estes, Associate Rector

November 22, 2020

The Last Sunday after Pentecost: The Feast of Christ the King

Readings: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46

In 1925, when Pope Pius XI inaugurated the first *Feast of Christ the King* in an encyclical that came out that year, he addressed the problems that he thought had contributed to the First World War, and was suggesting that the key to long and lasting peace would be for Christians around the world and all of its people to “seek the peace of Christ and the Kingdom of Christ”... that the key to peace would be basing it upon a kingdom and a ruler whose kingdom would not end — someone who couldn’t be deposed, someone who couldn’t be thrown out of office, someone who couldn’t be voted out.

Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, has to reign for there to be peace on earth.

Every time we celebrate this feast, we remind ourselves that our true allegiance, as Christians, is to Jesus Christ, the King. The prophets call him “The Governor of All Nations.”

And our gospel today pictures Jesus Christ as King, coming in glory at a time in the future with all of his angels, calling forth sheep and goats out of all the nations, separating between the two...rewarding the sheep, because they visited him when he was sick, clothed him when he was naked, gave him something to drink when he was thirsty, and so forth and so on.

And the sheep in this parable say, *“Well, you know, I really don’t mind going into the Kingdom of God and going into that great reward, but if you could you please clear something up for me, that would be great: When did we ever see you naked or in jail or alone or sick or thirsty or hungry?”*

And Jesus says, *“When you did it to the least of my sisters and brothers, you did it to unto me.”*

Then he turns to those who are one his left, the goats, (goats being long associated with sin) and says, *“Now, you cursed of my father enter into the eternal fires. Why? Because when I was hungry, you did not feed me. When I was thirsty, you did not give me anything to drink. When I was naked, you did not clothe me. When I was in prison and when I was sick, you just didn’t show up.”*

And the goats begin to speak and say, *“OK...um...that’s fair, I guess. But when did we ever see you in those states?”*

And Jesus replies, *“When you didn’t do it for the least of these, you didn’t do it for me.”*

We are going to sing some great hymns today and they are all going to imagine the kingly majesty of Jesus Christ. And we long for his coming. We long for his return. After all, this is what Advent is about...looking forward to his Second Coming.

And it will be a great and glorious day. But It will be a glorious day for those who live in conformity to the rules and the principles of Christ, Our King.

It is a day that people who do not live in that way are not looking forward to.

It’s kind of like when we were kids and our parents would tell us to go do something, and they would leave, and instead of doing it, we would party...and the next thing you know, you hear the rattle of the doorknob.

The Day of the Lord will kind of be like that. And we will have to give an account for our actions.

And this day of judgment that Jesus is talking about is not specifically about people who aren’t Christians, who aren’t believers, who aren’t followers. Jesus is talking to his disciples when he is telling this parable. Jesus is talking to the church.

He is coming back. We we will have to explain what we have done with all of the time that we have been given...because the day is sure to come. What we must do is to receive Christ in everyone that we meet and feed the hungry that is Christ and give something to drink to those who are thirsty that are Christ. And to visit those who are sick or in prison that is Christ.

Today we’re going to renew our baptismal promises, one of which is to seek and serve Christ in all persons.

Christ Church, this is our feast day! We need to remember what we’re really doing and what we’re really here for is to serve Christ. To live our lives in a way that anticipates his return so that he won’t catch us with our work undone...or even untried or unattempted.

And today we welcome new members to our community. And I hope you remember the importance of this day and the importance of what we are called to do: to seek Christ in all persons, to live our lives in a way that our behavior reflects the fact that we are in relationship with God and his son who is the King of the Universe...who knows all and sees all and will judge accordingly.

I am not trying to scare you. I want to remind you that who we love — our Lord and our Savior — is the agent by which God will bring peace to the world. And when he comes again, I want to be on his right side. Don’t you? I think you do.

So my question to you, Sisters and Brothers, is what are you going to do before the rattle of the doorknob begins?