

Readings:

2 Samuel 23:1-7

Daniel 7:9-14

Revelation 1:4-8

John 18:33-40

## What is Truth?

With Pilate we at times are found asking the question “What is Truth?” How do we even discover the truth? Jesus said “Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

But how do we know God’s voice? How many times have we prayed for more understanding?

Reverend Wiley Stephens asked “How many times have we prayed: Thy kingdom come?”<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to say “The concept of God's kingdom (*I will use Kindom*) is woven so tightly into the fabric of our faith.”<sup>2</sup> But what is God’s kindom made up of? Who designs it? What kind of king rules it? While we might think it is obvious if we are honest we are not always so sure what it means, and it is not always an easy question to answer. That’s why I believe often when we look at Jesus and we look at the teachings of our faith “we share Pilate's question today, "So you are a king?"

Stephens goes on to say “Pilate was confused, for a king in his thinking meant power and grandeur, not a humble, poor teacher... We should not be surprised at the lack of understanding of who Jesus was. John opened his Gospel with a premise that his own knew him not. And after 20 centuries and literally millions of church services and sermons, do we really know either?”<sup>3</sup>

What are we praying for when we pray for God’s kindom to come, when we ask God’s will be done on earth and in heaven? I believe we are asking for a new way of viewing the world. We are asking for the revelation of God in the midst of persecution or life struggle, we are asking for new hope and promise in the midst of the chaos of our world. We are asking for a new paradigm, a new reality.

“Our Gospel for today sees a paradigm shift. The king doesn't fit the mold to what they'd always thought of as a king. There was no obvious power, no prestige, and a bound prisoner about to be sentenced to death without pomp or circumstance.” Is this the kind of king we would celebrate with a day called “Christ the King” or “Reign of Christ” Sunday?

---

<sup>1</sup> Stephens, Wiley Rev. Dr. Dunwoody United Methodist Church, Dunwoody GA “Thanksgiving in Three Tenses” Nov. 23, 2003

<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> IBID

This is the last Sunday of the liturgical year and so it has been “designated as the Festival of Christ the King or the Reign of Christ. This is not an ancient festival like Easter or Christmas. In fact, it is less than a century old. It was first called by Pope Pius XI in 1925. Europe was in chaos. Inflation was rampant, and colonialism was at its worst. The seeds of evil that were to produce the terror of the Holocaust and World War II were being planted. Against all this chaos and evil, the Pope established the Festival of Christ the King to declare that Jesus Christ is king.

Throughout our journey of the church's year, we have been building to this point. Since we began our journey with the coming of the Christ child, the baptism of Jesus, the ministry ...in Galilee and Judea, we walked the way to Calvary and the Cross. We spoke of the empty tomb and our resurrected Lord. We've experienced anew the power of the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost. Now we dare to celebrate the future, to give to the world what it needs: a new paradigm, a new *kingdom* to pray for.”<sup>4</sup>

So this day is a day that is set when all the world around us is beginning to bustle for Christmas, when every store and organization is busy making plans, we are called to remember – to celebrate the gift of God first and foremost. We are reminded on this day that Jesus is more than just a baby in a manger – that he is one who taught us how to live, who suffered just as we do in the midst of a chaotic world, but who chose to shine light and teach us truth in the midst. Who longed for the earth to be ruled in love and generosity for all.

On this day we celebrate a sovereign Christ. “So that when we know what kind of king we have, we can sing with great faith, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her king.”<sup>5</sup> We celebrate today because we have begun to glimpse what God's kingdom on earth looks like. We have begun to discover that as we participate with the Holy in revealing the Christ to the entire world we will have the privilege of knowing God's rule over struggle.

And so we are called to notice God's reign even today.

I wonder did you notice that John's Revelation was written to seven churches experiencing persecution? Did you notice that all of these texts name God's revelation in the midst of everyday human struggle and existence? These texts tell us that God dedicates God's self to current realities. That God is in the midst of the real life drama right where we are.

As I thought about that I thought about us as a church. We are a congregation in a time of change perhaps not persecution, but perhaps we feel like we are persecuted at times as we live in a society that doesn't seem to see our value. Perhaps we hold back on expressing our faith because people will think us odd.

And yet at this time we are having facilities planning meetings as a committee, and in a couple weeks we are going to have a congregational meeting to discuss our progress, current plans and directions. Some have asked “Why would we engage in a building project in this time?” In our Hungry for Justice group we have begun to ask “How does this represent God's kingdom in the midst of our world?”

---

<sup>4</sup> IBID

<sup>5</sup> IBID

So I have decided to have us pause for a moment and be really honest with one another – some of us are excited about this possible change, others of us would rather it not happen, some don't believe it ever will happen, while some if given the tools might run a wrecking ball into the building this afternoon.

Let's be honest with one another – some of us are stressed and overwhelmed by the idea's of the costs, while others believe the money will come without a problem, some believe those people are really naïve, while others believe we just need to ask and have faith.

Let's be honest with one another – this is a bit hard, and a bit exciting.

Let's be honest with one another – we will come to know one another better in the midst of this time. But more importantly my prayer is that we will come to know Christ better. That God will be revealed more clearly to us than ever before. That God's kindom will be discovered in a new way in the community of Squamish. That the story of Squamish United Church in the coming years will be 'apocalyptic' – in that it will be a revelation of God's truth and kindom in the midst of our everyday lives. That people will see that this church is relevant as it seeks to partner with those who care for our broken, as it seeks to aid those who need God's presence the most.

My friends if we are beginning to look at transition and a possible building project with the goal to become a big fancy temple than we best not even take another breath towards the process. But if we are beginning a time of asking for funds for building projects that are going to help us shine the light of Christ in a new way in this part of the world than let us do so with great faith and hope and excitement.

Last night we had the opportunity to share together in fellowship, to give gifts towards the function of this church and it was a wonderful time and we are grateful for all who participated in every way.

We will in the season to come begin to embark on new fundraising projects and calls to community. Let's be honest and open with one another in the midst. Let's first and foremost love one another as we seek to discover the truth of how God is calling us to help Christ Reign this day.

And so that alone is one of the reasons I want to encourage you to come out next week for our new year's celebration, a celebration of giving together in community. The gift giving and fundraising for this day may not seem like it is for us as a church but it is. The more we come together as community the more we will discover the Christ in one another, the more we will love, the more we will grow, and the more we will desire to give to one another in every way.

We pray the kindom come in this place. Amen