

November 20, 2022

The Reign of Christ

The Last Sunday of Pentecost

Luke 23:33-43

The reading this morning is full of sharply contrasting opposites. Sometimes that is good in order to get a glimpse of the big picture. This passage is jam –packed with great expectations just waiting to burst forth. The reading is sad yet comforting. If that helps at all?

As Christians we are told to take comfort in the fact that Jesus lived a full human experience here on earth. In a few weeks we will see Him being born into our world. Right now we listen to his death. That was the human experience as we knew it back then. You are born and eventually you will die. We are to take comfort that God's Son participated in our human reality. Little did we know that eternity would pierce human time and change everything.

In this reading we are actually witnessing the expansion of the human experience. Jesus's death and resurrection would destroy that limit of the human experience called death. The light of the resurrection would

destroy death like and atomic burst of light. Thus expanding the human experience into eternity.

Kings and Queens reign here on earth. Jesus was being crucified for being a King. More dangerously the King of the Jews. Yet it would be the Jews who would want Him dead and hand Him over to the Romans for death. He was a threat to Rome's control of Palestine. A King is at the top, ruling and controlling those below them. This does not sound like Jesus at all. The understanding of Kingship would also be greatly expanded by Jesus. Many ideas and concepts would be blown away with His coming and going.

In this passage Jesus is being crucified as a criminal and with them. Crucifixion was the lowest form of a punishing death. Roman citizens and the wealthy were beheaded. It was thought to be more dignified and less painful. The end is still the same. Most of the time wealthy people bought their ways out of a death sentence. This does not happen with Jesus. To the on-looker, He is neither wealthy or a King. So the people present mocked Him for being a King. They had no clue that He was the King of all creation. As a King, Jesus identifies with the poor in His manner of death.

The contrast between Kingship and crucified criminal means that no human being is left out of Jesus's experience or promise. Jesus knew what it was to be the highest, the lowest and everything in between. To the Christian this means that Jesus can empathize with everyone

and what they go through in life. Jesus shared fully in our human experience. With His resurrection we now can share in His experience. He expanded our earthly experience by participating in it. That is why this Sunday is where it is in the church calendar. Next week we start Advent, which prepares us for Christmas. The moment when Jesus was born into our world and would start His human experience.

As Christians we are to take comfort that Our God sent His Son to participate in our human reality. He participated fully in it from birth to death. Then He expanded it to include eternity with His resurrection. We have a Saviour who understands us because He was one of us. This is very empowering. We can be bold in approaching Him in prayer or petition. We can talk directly with Him and have a personal relationship with Him. We do not need an earthly or celestial mediator to talk with Him. How we develop our relationship with Him is in our control and how we choose to do it. That is very revolutionary in the world of Christianity.

God Bless you all and have a great week, Pastor D