

November 21, 2021

Isaiah 9:1-7

A Child is born/Christ the King Sunday

Young people's message: The prophet Isaiah tells us that Jesus will have many names. He lists them for us: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. These were just some of the names prophesized about Jesus. They all reflect an aspect or quality about Jesus's personality. They tell us something about who He is. God the Father also has many names and they all mean something also. The Jews called God: Yahweh, Elohim and Adonai. The Moslems have 99 names for God. Names and nicknames reflect qualities about the person that carries the name. However, names only express a part or a small part of who the person truly is.

So do you have any nicknames? Do you know what your names mean? They all have meanings that express a quality. Most names and nicknames do not fully express who you truly are.

As I reflect back on my own life, my first nickname was put on me by my younger brother. It actually stuck so that my mom still uses it today and most of my family. The name was Jake. I have wondered for years where he came up with that name. I often suspected that it might be connected to Jake, "The Snake" Roberts of WWE fame. Or the politician of the time, Jake Epp. Then in seminary I was called Darko. Slavic folk will chop off the last few letters in a name and add either ko if you're a male and ka if it is a female. Mind you I was also called Turku by the rector. It is a diminutive meaning Turk because I would ask the

hard obvious questions everyone was thinking but would not say. Turks were seen as trouble makers. Later on my friend Fr. Thom called me Sasha after my dog. I still do not know what that one means, but it stuck also.

In your life you may be called many names by different people and groups. Sometimes those names may reflect back to you how people see, know and understand you. They are not perfect. Sometimes nicknames are given as a cruel joke. Like if you are six feet tall and they call you tiny. The names we have put on God and Jesus reflect how we understand who they are and what they do. They are incomplete because we are using human language which is limited, to describe the infinite. The names we use for God and Jesus help us put things in context and define our relationship with them.

Adult's message: Today is also Christ the king Sunday. I thought it might be nice to go back to the older lectionary. This day is of great importance to us as Lutherans. It was a carry-over from the Roman Catholic calendar. We felt it was important enough to keep in it our calendar as well. The Anglicans also did the same. Sometimes we need to remember that we have a rich church history before 1517.

Christ the King Sunday reflects the wonderful dual reality that we live in. We live under a government rule in this present world as well as a spiritual kingdom or reality where Christ is the King. In short we live in two kingdoms at the same time. The physical earthly kingdom of the present and the spiritual eternal kingdom where Jesus is King.

Calling Jesus a king is actually reclaiming the title and giving it an honoured meaning. Remember that Pilate had the title, Jesus King of the Jews placed over Our Lord's head while He hung on the cross. Pilate did it only to mock Jesus and to upset the Jews and the High Priest. After Our Lord's resurrection we have reclaimed the title and understood it in a very different light. This is what we are celebrating today. We are celebrating Christ's spiritual kingdom of which we all belong. I found it interesting that in the Greek language they equate the term Messiah with king. There was no qualification on the word. It could either mean a physical kingdom or a spiritual one.

The feast of Christ the King also marks the end of ordinary time in the church calendar. This is the last Sunday before the start of Advent. The feast is placed where it is for a reason. Advent is bookended with the feast of Christ the King and Christmas. Christ the King prepares us for the birth of the infant who would be the Son of God. Christ the King Sunday prepares us for the revelation of Christmas. When God decides to participate in His creation and take on flesh and become one of us.

So what does this spiritual kingdom that we belong to look like? Many have said that it is completely different from the natural world we live in. Others have said that it supersedes our natural world. Jesus is the One who has given us a peek into this world. Jesus 's spiritual kingdom is one where the poor in spirit inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a place where those who mourn are comforted. Where widows and orphans are looked after. A place where the meek inherit the earth. Where those who crave righteousness are satisfied. Where the pure in heart actually see God. Where the merciful are shown mercy. A place where the peacemakers are called the children of God. Where those who are persecuted because of righteousness inherit the Kingdom of

God. It is a strange place where the first shall be last and the last shall be first. A place where our reward is the same. Regardless if we have worked eleven hours or one. God is generous with all of us and we are equal. It is a place where we all will rejoice.

Psalm 28:10-11, The Lord is King forever, may the Lord bless us with peace. God bless and may you have a great week, Pastor D