

Pastor Roy's Sermon from Nov. 22, 2015 (Christ The King)

Christ the King, 2015

Children's Sermon: What is a king? Are there different kinds of Kings? Are some kings better than others? What is a good king? What is a bad king? Might a king be good to some and not to others? How is Jesus a King? (teaches how to live, love friends, be compassionate, stand against injustice/unfairness, help the sick) & How is he not a king? (in charge of armies, runs a government)

My kingdom does not belong to this world. (otherwise my followers would be fighting) What does Jesus mean by "My kingdom" and "this world?" Sometimes we assume that the world is planet earth and that his kingdom is mainly a heavenly/spiritual kingdom to which believers go for a better life when we die. In chapter 17 Jesus says of his disciples that they are in the world but not of it. Since God creates creatures, plants, and land, creation is good; and so, John's world is not creation.

Perhaps "in the world" describes not **where** Jesus' disciples are, but **who** they are. Might "the world" be our tendency to live in fear, clinging to what we cannot finally keep(?) rather than sharing what might give others, *and ourselves*, a deeper connection to life and God? "My kingdom does not belong to this world."

In the 4th Century, St. Augustine said that the Kingdom of Christ is to live in the world as a pilgrim. To live in a world of violence, greed, alienation, mistrust and despair, (hear this!) both outside and inside of ourselves. . .but not give in. To remain faithful in trust, in hope, in gentleness. Jesus' reign of pilgrims is not just made up of those who do not belong, it is made up of those who see that they do not belong. When we are living in the truth, we are not on the outside longingly looking in on the broken ways of the world, but we learn to be satisfied with enough. We learn to be patient in suffering, we learn that we not different from our enemy, we are one in their fears and losses and disappointments. When we reside in the truth, when we live in the reign of Christ, we are Pilgrims, sojourners, travelers who are never quite "at home." These pilgrims are strangers because they humbly love, because they seek to build bridges, to find points for working together. They seek peace. On good days. On the bad days, we confess our brokenness, that we pilgrims in many, many ways. That we are better than no one, but one with all.

Christ, the King. The King of pilgrims. "My kingdom does not belong to this world." A world of politics, and violence and intimidation, of posturing for one's own benefit. . .No, this king is a king of depth, of truth and reality. A King who calls his subjects to be washed in the water of grace and true freedom. To be washed in the water of God's promise of welcome. The name, child of God, freely given in baptism, a name of strength in unity in hope. Nothing more is needed but this first grace.

Jesus our King is king of love, mercy, peace, grace, and hope which is far more truthful and hopeful than anything arranged by politics, force, or choices we and our fellow citizens make. Yes, these other kings and kingdoms exist all around us. But this King's pilgrims first do battle within. We learn that the most difficult choice in life is the choice to receive grace, to let go of our need to compete and make our own way, to take care of ourselves, to establish ourselves, and instead, to rest in faith, in trust.

To pray with open hands and open minds. To rest in the presence of the one who chooses us. Who provides for us. The one who connects all the dots, who calls us to accept that all is well and good in God's care.

Let us give thanks to the creator who invites us to surrender to a most trustworthy King who teaches us to listen, to trust, and to walk the pilgrim path. This path of peace. Amen.