

Text: John 18:33-37
Theme: "What Kind of King?"
#982

Jim Gronbeck
Christ the King Sunday
November 25, 2018

How do you picture Jesus? Our church has many different paintings that display artists ideas of what Jesus might have looked like. Do you picture Jesus...

1. Popular painting "Behold I stand at the door and knock" (Rev.)
2. Modern Jesus –with children
3. Da Vinci's "Last Supper"
4. 70's Jesus
5. Carving of Jesus from Kenya (was a gift to my Uncle who taught in the Seminary in Kenya)

It seems Jesus looks a lot like the people who painted the pictures. He's all white as a European in our paintings! It was interesting to me to see the Jamaican paintings of Jesus—He's black—just like they are.

How many times have we seen Jesus portrayed as He is in today's Gospel as He stands before Pilate? Pilate is questioning Jesus about the charge that Jesus claims to be a king. Jesus has no crown, no fancy clothes, no army behind him—in fact His followers have deserted Him. Jesus stands before Pilate as a common man without any trappings of success or power. He stands shamed and humiliated as Pilate thinks he

can determine Jesus' fate. The painting that you have in your bulletins is how I think of Jesus before Pilate. Not regal, not well-dressed, but a common person who has been mistreated and mocked.

Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus never gives a definite answer, just "Do you ask this of your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate responds, "Hey, I'm no Jew! Your own people have handed you over me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "MY Kingdom is not of this world; if it were you'd have a fight on your hands. But it is not of this world." "Oh, so you ARE a King?" Pilate retorts. "That's what you have said," Jesus fires back. Jesus said, "I have come into this world to testify to the truth..." To which Pilate hauntingly replies, "What is truth?"

Pilate was getting nowhere with Jesus. He ends up finding nothing offensive about Jesus, but hands Him over to be beaten and crucified just to placate the Jewish leaders. Pilate shows his true colors in dispatching an innocent man just to keep the Jewish leaders happy. He doesn't care about Jesus, or his question about the truth.

Today we celebrate Christ the King Sunday. We celebrate Jesus' reign as King of Kings, Lord of Lords. But if He is a king, doesn't He need

a Kingdom? Maybe the next question Pilate could have asked Jesus was, “Can you describe your kingdom? Where is it, if it is not of this world?”

Generally, a kingdom has boundaries—a city, a state, or a country. Disneyland is known as the magical kingdom: when you enter Disneyland you enter a different world of make believe and a place where storybook characters come alive. The boundaries of this kingdom are within the confines of a fence with certain gates for entry and exit. The boundaries are clearly defined.

Pilate had wondered if Jesus was a threat to the Roman Kingdom—the boundaries of the Roman Empire. He wanted to know if Jesus was going to try to make His Kingdom the territory that Pilate oversaw and protected for Rome. But Jesus assured Pilate that His Kingdom was not of that nature. In fact, our lesson from Revelation says that Jesus has made **US** His Kingdom!! All who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, all who confess faith in this humble, suffering servant of humankind compose the Kingdom Jesus has come to bring.

So Jesus’ Kingdom is one that truly knows no boundaries. Jesus’ Kingdom is an ever-increasing kingdom that reaches beyond the doors of our churches encompassing the entire world. When we welcome new members into our congregation we are reminded that the boundaries of the

kingdom go beyond our congregation. As we welcome our visitors we are reminded that the Kingdom stretches around the world. We are reminded of this as we travel to Jamaica to work with Christians in that country. And, as we learn more about Christians around the world and learn to share our resources with them, we are reminded of the global nature of the Kingdom Jesus established. We can quickly see that we are members of a Kingdom that stretches beyond all earthly boundaries when we recall All Saints' Day and our connections to Christians of all times and places.

Our lesson from Revelation reminds us that the humility and commonness which Jesus displayed before Pilate has changed since His death and Resurrection. Jesus has ascended to heaven, to reign with God at God's right hand. One day, John writes, Jesus will return; He is "The alpha and the omega, who is and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Jesus will return triumphant to judge the world and joyfully bring all who believe in Him to His eternal home. This humble servant has promised to return as the Almighty. Here we understand Jesus and the Kingdom are with God and have been for all time. They are like bookends, the beginning and the end. We are a part of this great and wonderful kingdom Jesus has established. It is still seen as a hidden kingdom. We are part of what is, and what has been, yet we are also a part of what is not

yet complete. The whole world obviously does not yet fully acknowledge Jesus as King. The whole world does not see the Kingdom as we see it. Just as Jesus came as a servant of all, so too we are called to be servants of Jesus as we become servants of one another. Our king came not as a mighty ruler to overthrow the rulers of this earth, but as a servant king who, in His death and resurrection has established His eternal and victorious Kingdom over the entire universe.

There is a story from Wittenberg, Germany, the home of the castle church where Luther first posted the 95 Thesis, which began the reformation. There is a large statue of Christ in front of the Castle Church. One Sunday afternoon, during the Hitler era, a group of Nazi youth beat the statue of Christ to pieces with clubs. They then painted these words on a nearby fence: "The reign of Christ is over." Later, a Christian youth group saw what had been done and took the paintbrush and can and stuck the pieces of the statue back together. Then they added three letters to the sign: "all." ***The reign of Christ is over 'all.'***

Today we celebrate the boundless and eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ with God our Father and the Holy Spirit. We celebrate that this great Kingdom has come to all who are baptized and believe in Jesus, that

everyone from little children to adults are given the glory and honor to be called children of God and a servants of Jesus Christ.

And so, "To Him who loves us and freed us from our sins by His blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever!"

AMEN!

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