

#52 10-11

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Psalms 100

Matthew 25:31-46

Ephesians 1:15-23

The Dominion of Heart Eyes

15I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason 16I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18so that, *with the eyes of your heart enlightened*, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. 20God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. 22And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

You wanna know what I love about Jesus? It isn't his 'Lordly' power, his stature in the world hierarchy, his riches . . . No, it is the fact that he was fully human, and he achieved his position of ueber-mensch - his "immeasurable greatness" - his "working of his great power" - through "a spirit of wisdom and revelation". Paul makes reference to this acquiescence of faith through the "eyes of your [enlightened] heart". And that is what makes Jesus Lord - the fact that only those with enlightened hearts can see that this power comes from the moment we realize that we are all a part of each other - Jesus is a part of us - God is a part of humanity - and all humanity has that touch of connectedness.

This is the last Sunday of the Church year - a day that is often celebrated as Christ the King Sunday. This terminology can be a stumbling stone for so many. We have learned not to trust monarchies - absolute power corrupts - and to think that a human could be King, we know that there must be some weakness in the armor of a human King. So we would like to think of Jesus as not really being human - he was more God than man.

Perhaps it is because we don't want to have to experience the pain, shame and doubt when we realize our own feet of clay that we want to make an exception of Jesus in the human race. But the reality was he did it! He managed to be a human, to live his life with incredible integrity, and by doing so, he showed humanity a way that life *could* be lived, which we are *all* to this day still trying to figure out.

Take for example the political discussions we have all over the world: Socialism, Capitalism, Libertarianism, Anarchy, Monarchy, Dictatorship, Democracy . . . and all the various versions of these concepts and various understandings of all of these according to the various cultural contexts, you'd think we would have it all figured out by now!

The world has been trying to figure out what form of dominion is best to rule its inhabitants since time began, and we still haven't figured it out. And yet, today we call Jesus our King - definitely. When we recall the Gospel for today we get an idea from Jesus himself as to what this power is based on:

"31When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

In this Kingdom the value of life is determined by how much compassion is being offered, and not one word is mentioned about the economics of the foundation. So what is this "kingdom prepared for you from the foundation

of the world"? What is this "foundation of the world"? Is it the gold, oil, diamonds, uranium, ore, and all those other things which we humans have set a value on which we can dig up from the literal foundation of the world?

These things which the earth can give us, which over the history of humanity we have set a value on has truly thrown us all into a confusing tailspin. It is a false sense of value. Is one baseball player truly of greater value than our entire region? No! But yet, the economic system that we have today tells us that is so. Is the family in the Arab world which inherited the land from which oil pours out, really of greater value than all the teachers in the US? No! And yet, these are the standards which guide our world today.

All our scriptures on this day are telling us that the truth is so radically different than what humans can comprehend today about power and values and dominion – the truth is that, "*with the eyes of your heart enlightened*" the nations could eventually come to see that the ultimate glory comes when we value all humans as being greater than things. When we see with eyes of compassion – when our hearts are in our eyes and our lives are focused on doing what our hearts and eyes know, then we will bring about God's Kingdom.

Jesus knew this – Jesus did this! And it was so disturbing to those people who had invested their power in a different sphere that he had to be killed in order to try and keep this revelation a secret. It rubbed against the ability for so many people to comprehend. For they had invested all their thoughts and lives to understanding a different world than the one Jesus was pointing out that God wanted. But there is no keeping God's truth a secret – and in order to prove it - Jesus was given justice – he showed the world who had the true power! The power of life and death was refused those who wanted to prove that their way was right.

Compassion is the power of God, the most valuable resource this world has is compassion. And yet, we humans haven't figured out how to put a value on compassion. And it destroys our world. Lisa Ling, in a Special to CNN, wrote an article in Dec. 2008 that exemplifies this concept:

World's most valuable resource, a curse for most Nigerians

Trash litters its cities. Electricity is sporadic at best. There is no clean water. Medical and educational services are limited. Basic infrastructure is severely lacking.

These are not conditions that should plague one of the richest oil states in the world. Hundreds of billions of dollars has been made from the Niger Delta's oil reserves and many people have gotten very rich. Conversely, the average Nigerian has suffered as a result of the country's oil prosperity. The United States Agency for International Development says more than 70 percent of the country lives on less than a dollar a day -- the population is among the 20 poorest in the world.

I don't believe I have yet to clearly answer the questions I mentioned earlier: "what is this 'kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?' [and] What is this foundation of the world?" In light of this article which shows us that most valuable resource from the earth actually destroys lives, well, we know that ain't it.

The truth is, the world was founded on a relationship that humanity has with God - a foundation of spirituality, interconnectedness, compassion, love, peace, joy . . . According to our faith heritage, God and Adam and Eve were all doing fine together until Adam and Eve discovered their own egos, and that separated them from God and even from each other.

Christ is the King because he shows us that the way to true power is through compassion, not ego. When our eyes can see the humanity around us and feel the desire to serve them, there is the true dominion of God, and it is our dominion as well – for we are all related to each other and to God, through our being touched by the life of Jesus. When we know this we carry our hearts in our eyes – and seek God's power through compassion.