

November 21, 2010
Christ the King

"Jesus Is the King We Need!"

COLOSSIANS 1:13-20

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

There is a hamburger commercial that shows a hungry young man biting into a huge two paddy hamburger interspersed with bacon, cheese, onion rings, rich sauces, lettuce and tomatoes. When he puts his mouth over the burger and bites down, a deep sense of satisfaction comes over his face. Those burger people have a way of convincing you that you need to have a burger like this even though it is unhealthy and laden with artery clogging cholesterol.

Satan is even better at offering people a way of life that looks so good to the sinful and hungry human nature but is so bad for us. Spend more money on yourself. All your problems will go away. So what if money becomes a god to you. Lash out against those who hurt you, it will feel so good. Give in to the lustful thoughts and create fantasies for yourself. Put more trust in yourself, your feelings, and how nice a person you are to make yourself acceptable to God. Look to Jesus as your guru or spiritual leader, not the Son of God who died for your sins on the cross. That Jesus is so much more appealing and satisfying.

Paul wrote his letter to the Colossian Christians who were being influenced by what we would call new age voices. They were promoting a Jesus who could channel your powers to make yourself acceptable to God. They were not promoting the Jesus of whom Paul said, "But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight without blemish and free from accusation." On this Christ the King Sunday we want to use these words just read to you to see more clearly that Jesus is the King we need.

Only Jesus can rescue us

There is no one who can rescue us from the darkness, no one except Jesus. "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son, he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." What joy we find in having Jesus as our King of kings and Lord of lords. He did what our heavenly Father asked him

to do. It says that he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. When we came into this world, we were part of this dominion darkness. We were born in sin, and sin showed itself early in our lives even as little babies. In this realm or dominion of darkness we were destined for eternal death and separation from God.

Do you remember those 33 Chilean miners who were trapped 2000 feet down in the darkness of the earth after their mine collapsed? There was no way they could rescue themselves by digging their way out. They had to depend on other people to drill holes down to where they were trapped to provide them with food and water, and eventually a hole large enough to rescue them. Such was our spiritual condition without Jesus. We are without God and without hope. We are totally dependent on God to rescue us. Jesus our King did what we could not do.

And how did our God carry out the rescue operation? It says that "he brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Imagine a kingdom where you have a king who loves you with an intense personal and powerful love unlike any love you have ever experienced in your life. That is the kingdom your God has for you. He was willing to give up his own Son to do everything necessary to bring you into his kingdom. All other religions of the world teach us that we must do something to get God to love us. Last week it was reported in the news that Muslims gathered by the million to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca to atone for their sins. God's plan from all eternity was to carry out the rescue for us by having Jesus atone for our sins.

Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords because of the ransom price he paid to bring us into this kingdom of love. It says that we have redemption in him, the forgiveness of sins. Ephesians tells us, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Jesus stepped into our darkness and paid the ransom price. He suffered the darkness of hell itself so we can be free.

There is a little story to illustrate what redemption is. You have heard it before, but it is worth repeating. Some years ago, an elderly gentle was taking a walk and notice a twelve your old boy holding a rusty old cage with two sparrows in it. He asked the boy how was able to get the sparrows in the cage. He said, "I trapped them with a net." The poor birds were frantically flying against the rusty wires of the cage to get free, but they were trapped inside. Said the man to the boy, "And what do you plan to do with these birds, young man?" With a devilish gleam in his eyes he said, "I am going to poke them with this stick, kill them and feed them to my cat. "Will you take ten dollars for the cage and birds?" said the man. That was a lot of money in those days. "Twenty and not a dime less, said the greedy boy." The man reached into his pocket for a twenty dollar bill. He took the cage into a park, and released the birds. Joyfully they flew to freedom in the nearest branches of a tree.

Christ is my King. With Martin Luther we confess, "Has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased on won from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, now with gold or silver but his holy, precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and death. All this he did that I should be his own and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness." Oh, the joy of living with Jesus our King in his Kingdom of Love that never fails. "The King of Love my Shepherd is. His goodness fails never. I nothing lack when I am his and he is mine forever."

Only Jesus is God

This wonderful King Jesus who takes care of you will never fail you or disappoint you because of who he is. "He is the image of the firstborn over all creation." The word here in the Greek for image is the word "icon." Have you noticed lately how writers enjoy using the word "icon" and "iconic?" The Russian Orthodox worship their icons which they say remind them of God. We do not need such icons. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Later in this letter Paul writes of Jesus. "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." The Christmas song, "Mary Did You Know" has the line that says, "Mary did you that when you kissed your little baby you kissed the face of God."

How powerful is this King, your Shepherd, who holds you in his loving arms? He is the firstborn over all creation. "For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him." Jesus made all things, even the things that are invisible, reference to how he created thrones and dominions of the angels who watch over us and keep us. As you sit listening to this sermon your human heart is busy pumping blood, 1500 gallons a day, through 60,000 miles of blood vessels, feeding and nourishing each cell. What a King we have in Jesus, the creator of all things.

The creator of the universe also holds everything together and keeps it running. "He is before all things and in him all things hold together." Jesus holds everything together. The sun and earth stay in their respect locations because Jesus holds it together. Isaiah 40 says of the stars, "He brings out the starry host calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing." We can sing these words to Jesus our King. "He has the whole world in his hands. He has the whole world in his hands."

Our King Jesus is in control of his church. "And he is the head of the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have supremacy." Jesus rose from the dead. He is now sitting at the right hand of God and he is the head of his church. We live in an unsettled world where people who travel by plane this week will have to go through body scans and pat downs because of the danger of terrorists attaching explosives to their bodies and taking them aboard an airplane. Even greater dangers exist in the church because of false teachers who imply that Jesus is not enough for us, and the words of the Bible are not all true. Then then we remember that Jesus is our King of kings and Lord of Lords. He is our refuge and strength an ever present help in time of trouble.

Because of who Jesus is he is able to bring us a peace this morning that this world cannot give. "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Look at what your King Jesus offers you today. He gives you perfect peace with a perfect God and he allows us to be perfect people who enjoy his unending love in this life and for all eternity. This is a peace that this world cannot give. Are you hungry, hungry for more in life? "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good." Jesus is and always will be the best King we have. Amen.