

CHRIST THE KING

Nov. 25, 2007

Col. 1: 15-20

In Him lie all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge Col. 2: 3

In Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. Col. 2:9

Most people know Jesus is important. They know he made a big difference in the history of the world as a spiritual leader. For many people, he is like Buddha, or Moses or Socrates or Mohammed. A great spiritual addition to the world. People in Colossae thought like this, and respected Jesus, along with others.

But Paul writes from prison to set them straight, and to set us straight. Christ occupies the center of creation. No person does that. Christ brings salvation and restoration to God. No religious leader does that.

(Col. 1:19-20 from "the Message")

"He was supreme in the beginning and - I leading the resurrection parade - he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding."

Now that sure knowledge can lead to arrogance, as it has when some Christian leaders used violence to enforce their belief in Jesus Christ as King. But Paul is not writing that way. He is not arrogant. He is not violent. He preaches from humility, the same spirit Jesus had. He writes with considerate love. He started out his letter by thanking them for all the service they were giving the church, before he set them straight about right belief.

Paul sets us straight. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, Lord of all creation. He is the visible image of the invisible God. Christ always was, always will be, equal with the Father. He is the head of the Church, the highest authority on earth. He requires first place in all our thoughts and activities. His interests need to be our top priority.

Most people know Jesus is important. His name has become a common swear word. People go to him to bail them out of trouble. They know that if they do what Jesus did, life would probably have less trouble. Someday they may even get religion and ask Jesus to be the center of their lives, but then they would have to quit doing some of the things they like to do, such as cheating, alcohol and other drugs, swearing, adultery, gossip, lying. They see Jesus as a fun killer.

But Paul writes from prison to set them straight, and to set us straight, too. Jesus is not a fun killer, Jesus makes a better life than those things.

(from "The Message" Col. 1: 21-23,)

Even Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler knew Jesus was important. He sure was getting a big following. So he asked, are you a King?" Jesus reply meant "not in the sense in which you use the word. But in a deeper sense, I am. Only, my kingdom is a dominion not over people's bodies but over their minds and souls, and is maintained and extended not by violence and force of arms but by persuasion of the truth finding its way from heart to heart and winning for me willing subjects."

He didn't say all that. Instead, he said "my kingdom is not of this world". But that is what he meant.

Pilate didn't get it. He obviously figured Jesus' kingdom was no threat. The King of England wouldn't see the king of rock and roll as a threat. But if Pilate only knew. If Pilate only knew how much more powerful was the Kingdom of God than the Kingdom of Rome. The kingdom of spirit is much more powerful than any country you can live in.

When Jesus is your king you have a much more powerful life than if a president or prime minister or king of your country is your leader.

Jesus was born in poverty, in a barn. Shepherds came to worship him. With a king like that, you'll be able to treat the poorest people of the earth as if they were royalty. Who else can show you how to do that?

Jesus suffered pain and the anguish of death. With Jesus as your king, you'll be able to see suffering as temporary and death as a door to a higher life. No doctor, no friend, no other leader can lead you through that.

A teenage girl got messages on the internet from a boy who showed an interest. She felt loved. After a while the messages got critical telling her how awful she was. She felt rejected. She committed suicide. Later, her parents found that the messages were not from a boy at all, they were from a woman down the street who was pretending to be a teenage boy. She was angry with the girl for saying something bad or doing something she didn't like to one of her children. She was hurting back, because she was hurting.

This does not happen when one has King Jesus at the center of their attitudes.

Jesus prayed blessings on the ones who were killing him. When Jesus is your king, you'll be able to forgive your enemies. A president, or a boss, or a commanding officer can't get you to do that.

Jesus healed people. As a subject of King Jesus, you can do it too. Jesus' life and death and resurrection broke the barrier with God and saved us from sin and death. No other leader can do that.

Countries and corporations are postponing carbon emission standards as long as they can for the sake of making money. Polluting countries like the US and China are hurting the atmosphere and the globe for the rest of the countries. This would not happen if Jesus Christ was King of the country.

Jesus was in on creation. He loves it and asks us to care for it. When the creator is your King, you'll have the power to treat all creation as a special gift. You'll learn to protect it to honor your King.

Jesus Christ is king. This means that using bombs and guns to solve political problems will not work. Only the way Christ works will change evil to good. Assassinations and terrorism and corporations that get rich by making others poor do not rule. They will not win.

Jesus Christ is at the beginning and the end of time. He is at the place where you are going and the place where you have been. Who better to tell you how you fit into the world? Who better to go the place of your past pain and heal it? Who better to steer you toward the purpose of your life and open doors for you?

(Col. 2: 6,7)

You aren't whole unless you have a king other than yourself. You are also complete through your union with Christ. Make Jesus Christ your King.

The Kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever.

King of my life I crown thee now.