

11-25-2007, Christ the King Sunday B
Chapelwood UMC, Lake Jackson

Jesus Christ is Lord
Colossians 1:13-20

This is the last Sunday before Advent. Traditionally this Sunday is called “Christ the King Sunday,” and we celebrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation.

It is literally true that Christ is the Lord of creation. As Paul says, “...in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.” Genesis tells us that God created the heavens and the earth with a word. God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” God said, “Let there be a dome formed in the midst of the waters and let it separate the waters from the waters,” and the sky was formed. God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear,” and so the oceans and the continents were formed.

Isn't strange that God would create the world by speaking it into existence? We would expect God to form the world by hand, to make it. But the Bible is very clear that God created the world with word. The universe was created by the Word of God. Why is that important? John tells us, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being...And the Word became flesh and dwelled among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.”

Jesus of Nazareth was the Word made flesh. As the eternal Word of God, he formed all of creation and put into place the laws which govern every aspect of our existence, all the physical, spiritual, social, psychological and environmental laws.

I have a great love of science. I get excited about the latest discoveries in all areas of life. I have spent hours at a time pondering questions like, “What is gravity?” We know what gravity does, but no one really knows what gravity is. Why would a preacher care about such things? Because I believe that laws of nature reveal insights into the mind of Christ.

Every created thing, whether they know it or not, live under the authority of Christ, because we all live under the authority of the laws he put into place. We can acknowledge those laws and learn to live in harmony with them, or we can ignore them or rebel against them and suffer the consequences.

As Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you; until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass away until all is accomplished.”

Christ came to enable us to live under the laws he created by showing us by his own example how to obey them.

Christ also came to show us by his sacrificial death that God does not reject us when we disobey those laws. God wants us to live in obedience to the laws established by God's Word to spare us the pain of disobeying them and because the best possible quality of life will be ours when we all live in harmony with God's law.

But because we all have to live under the authority of the laws Christ established as the Word of God, Christ is Lord of all.

We know that not everyone accepts that reality. Paul tells us that someday every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. However, that will not happen until Christ returns. Until then, the reality is that many people, in fact, most people reject the idea that Christ is the Lord of all creation. One-third of the people of the world are Christians. That means that two-thirds of the people of the world are not Christians. For two thousand years the Church has been working diligently to tell the world the gospel story and invite people to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. There are still a few who haven't heard the gospel story. But their numbers are dwindling rapidly. The vast majority of people who are not Christians have heard what the Church has to say, and they have chosen not to believe our message. Very few of them will change their minds until Christ returns and they see him with their own eyes.

That means the mission of the church is changing. Our mission is becoming twofold: First, to teach the world how to live in obedience to the laws of Christ, even if they don't acknowledge Christ as their Lord and Savior. And second, to make certain that those of us who do acknowledge the Lordship of Christ are living in obedience to his will.

First, we need to teach the world how to live in obedience to the laws of Christ, even if they don't acknowledge Christ as their Lord and Savior. We need to teach people to love their neighbors, to be forgiving, to be kind and generous, to be righteous, to speak the truth in love, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Even people who don't acknowledge Christ to be the eternal Son of God can see that these are good rules to live by, that we would all have better lives if we would obey them. In fact, other religions already teach some of these laws.

If the human race is ever to live together in peace, we will all need to learn to live in harmony with the eternal laws which Christ established at the foundations of the world. Much of the suffering and destruction the human race has endured throughout our history is the result of people ignoring and rejecting these laws. We bring so much pain and heartache upon ourselves by hating our neighbors, by taking what belongs to others, by trying to force others to serve us, all of which are violations of the eternal Word of God.

Second, we need make certain that we, as Christians, live in obedience to Christ. Jesus said, "Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." I think if Jesus had to choose between us calling him Lord and living in obedience to his will, it would be far more important to him that we live in obedience to him and his eternal laws.

Jesus told a parable about a man with two sons. He told them to go out and work in the garden. The first boy said, "No." But later he went and worked in the garden. The second boy said, "Certainly, father." But he never worked in the garden. Jesus asked, "Which of these would the father be more pleased with?"

Of course, what pleases Jesus most is that we who call ourselves Christians live the way he taught us to live and that we teach others to do the same.

So, today, on Christ the King Sunday, let us ask ourselves, "Is Christ truly the Lord of my life?" What changes are you working on to more fully conform with the way Christ would have you live?

If you can't name any changes, congratulations. You must have achieved perfection. If you haven't achieved perfection and you are not working on doing better, is Christ really the Lord of your life?

As long as we are in this world, we should be constantly trying to learn more about the ways of Christ. We should be learning more about the laws Christ established to govern this world. And we should be working at living in harmony with those laws.

Not in order to win God's love and approval. We already have that. But in order to have better lives and to help the people around us have better lives. When all of us live as Christ wants us to live, God's kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven, and we will all share in the fullness of life.

Let Christ be the Lord of your life.

Dr. Wesley Welborn
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