

Vendée Christ the King, 20 November 2016, La Chapelle Achard. W.

Jeremiah 23 : 1 – 6

Psalm 46

Colossians 1 : 11 – 20

Luke 23 : 33 -43

Father, glorify your Son,

Lord Jesus, teach us,

Holy Spirit, inspire us.

*Please sit down. **Take prints of Pantocrater** – it means ‘all power/dominion’.*



If you have ever been to Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio in Martorana, Palermo, you will have seen the magnificent 12<sup>th</sup> Century mosaic of Christ Pantocrater in the ceiling. Christ is the King of the cosmos including this galaxy, this solar system, this planet and, of course, our lives.

Just as the small pieces of a mosaic come together to make a beautiful picture, so I hope that the small pieces of this address will come together to give us a picture of Christ the King and his kingdom.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to pray, 'thy kingdom come'. I was taught that this, with 'hallowed be thy name' and 'thy will be done' are all governed by what follows, 'on earth as it is in heaven'. God's Kingdom is on earth and in heaven. (Matthew 6 vv 9 & 10) Of course the prayer ends with 'thine is the kingdom'. In prayer, we recognise Christ as King.

The Jews would think back to their first kings; Saul, David and Solomon. In Jesus' teaching, he picks up the theme in the Old Testament that David's line would be established for ever. Yet David died and was buried in Jerusalem. However, Jesus Christ, born of David's line, lives for ever. His tomb is empty. The Kingdom of God is not limited.

Particularly in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Kingdom of God is the principal theme in Jesus' message. They record some fifty parables and sayings about the Kingdom of God. But his kingdom is not to do with overthrowing the invading Roman regime. As Bruce Chilton puts it, 'the biblical noun, kingdom, refers more to the fact or force of rule than to the territory governed'.

Nor is the Kingdom of God like the British monarchy, it is not merely by heredity, with or without switching.

If Christ is King, then his kingdom is like some of these ideas from St Luke's Gospel:-

'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God'; (6 v 20)

'Jesus went through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God' – and went on to tell the parable of the sower; (8 v 1)

After the apostles returned from being sent out, Jesus welcomed the crowds and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured; (9 v 11)

Jesus said, ‘Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear’ – *and after referring to birds and lilies* – ‘your Father knows what you need. Instead, strive for God’s kingdom, and all these things will be given you as well’; (12 v 22)

The kingdom of God is like mustard seed, (13 v 19) yeast, (13 v 20) things which grow and influence things around them.

Neither wealth nor possessions will obtain for us the kingdom of God.

Some of the marks of the kingship of God are love, mercy, forgiveness, healing, providing the necessities of life, things which God gives to us and things we can give to

one another. So we all should reflect love, mercy, forgiveness in our lives and whenever we participate in any act which promotes healing or provides the necessities of life for someone in need, then we are acting as loyal and obedient citizens of the Kingdom of God under Christ the King.

Christ is King over everywhere and everything. He reigns from two thrones: one throne is the cross: the penitent thief said, ‘Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom’ and he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise’; the other throne is where he is seated at the right hand of God. He reigns over all life, all existence, all creation, on this planet, in this solar system, in this galaxy and in the whole universe.

And we are to live as his subjects, slaves even, in obedience to him.

One particular way in which we obey him is when we do this Eucharist. What we are doing is in remembrance of him as he told us.

Think of the mosaic of the Pantocrater again. As the many pieces are put together to make one picture, so may Jesus take every piece of our lives and put them all together that he may be glorified

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col 1 : 11 & 12) Amen.