

Coffee to Go | Proper 29 | Year B | Reign of Christ

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Christ the King, Reign of Christ, kingdom of God, Community of Christ, Zion, peaceful discipleship, hope, justice

SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:00

Karin, welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So where are we with Jesus this week. Well, Blake, we have reached the final Sunday of the liturgical or Christian calendar for this particular year, which is called Year B in the liturgical cycle, and the last Sunday in the Christian year is, it's called a lot of things, but they're all based on this one idea. And I'm being very careful about it. Those in many traditions, it's called "Christ the King Sunday" and what it's, what it's meant to be, is this kind of acknowledgement that as we follow Jesus through the year and all the different things happen, that really the culmination of the gift of the embodied Divine One in Jesus Christ in the world, was that the way of God, the community of God, the Commonwealth of God, the kingdom of God, the queendom of God, however you want to say it has, has been made real in the message and ministry and life and death and resurrection of Jesus. So in Community of Christ, we, right now, refer to it as "Reign of Christ Sunday," that the kingdom to which Jesus pointed, and that's how it's usually phrased in the Scriptures, the kingdom has come near, that way of being together in a community with a divine center has come as near as ever in, on Reign of Christ Sunday. So in Community of Christ lingo, we might say that Zion has come, or Zion is near, or Zion is where we act in the ways of God. And that's kind of helpful language if you're a RLDS/Community of Christ. For many of us, we prefer to use the community language. And so you'll hear me say community of God, or I will say way of God, and kind of a nod to my west coast, Eastern Taoist influences out here. So, we are in Reign of Christ Sunday, and it is the last week of the calendar. And next week we are going to begin the new Christian year with the first week of Advent. So we're with John, the Gospel of John, where Jesus is talking about kingdom and kingship. So keep all that discussion of that language in mind. We're not trying to use patriarchal or hierarchical language. We're just trying to be faithful to the text.

Blake Smith 03:30

And that text is, as you have said, from the Gospel According to John. And it is the 18th Chapter, the 33rd through the 37th verse.

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I'm not a Jew am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have

you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "so you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Why does this matter? Lot of King language there, [yeah,] and in this passage, it's apparent that Jesus is straddling the religious and the political world. So yes, there is deep theology here, but Pilate's question is not theological. It is political, or perhaps even legal, or he's asking, Are you a revolutionary? Have you come to start rebellion? Are you going to be causing problems? And he's looking for a truth, and I say that with emphasis, a truth, because he's not looking for the truth, but enough of a certain kind of truth that will confirm what he's been told by the Jews that have handed over Jesus, and that is that Jesus was treasonous and that he was calling for his own kingdom. He was coming to take over. Jesus doesn't deny Pilate's question. What he does is that he clarifies it. He says, "My kingdom is not of this world." So, even under the threat of certain death, Jesus, Jesus acknowledges that a Kingdom that's different from the oppressive powers. And Jesus speaks a truth that Pilate doesn't want to hear. It's not really the answer to his question. It's not what he wants to hear.

Karin Peter 06:06

Don't we do that? Blake, so many times we do that. We ask a question wanting to hear a certain answer, don't we? Yeah.

Blake Smith 06:15

Yeah. So it left Pilate. Pilate, and as the if you're when you read on through the passage, it leaves him in a very peculiar place, yeah, because he's wanting just, just say, Yes, you want to be king, so I can get this done. But it's not that cut and dry. It's not it's not so clear. So, some questions that we might ask ourselves are, what truth do I turn away from or not want to see? And when do we come at a question with a particular answer in mind? And maybe even, how do we respond when we don't get the answer we were hoping for? We might ask ourselves, if we truly are seeking honest dialog, or do we prefer confirmation of what we already believe?

Karin Peter 06:31

This is really a period of time in our context. Blake and I both live in in the USA, but there are other nations that have similar divisive political conversations that have devolved into hate-filled speech and this kind of unrighteous indignation at the other and it seems like truth is something that is a commodity to be thrown around at will, to be modified at will, to be co-opted at will. It's a very difficult time to really seek the truth that Jesus is speaking of when we're just clobbered with this ridiculous dialog that distorts what we, what we believe as Christians.

Blake Smith 08:10

Yeah, I mean, we've completely created this environment where it's not safe to have open and honest dialog and hear, really, hear one another. We just, we're kind of set in our way, and to say otherwise

just brings on a lot of anger and mistrust by others. So yeah, it's a tough place to get to the kind of truth that Jesus is talking about. So a last question that we might ask is, do I leave my discipleship behind when involved in political action or discourse?

Karin Peter 08:50

Are you talking about Facebook posting, Blake?

Blake Smith 08:54

Well, yes.

Karin Peter 08:56

I think I've seen some of that.

Blake Smith 08:57

Yeah. And it's interesting that we might be able to, or think that we are able to make that separation, but those who are reading and listening and watching don't make that separation, and they're watching to see how we would respond, [yeah, and...] it is the image that they get of Christianity.

Karin Peter 09:18

I really want my political discourse and my political dialog, my political involvement, to reflect my discipleship and in all the ways that we talk about as moving towards Jesus, the peaceful one. So how can we experience that this week? Well, we can look for signs of Jesus, the peaceful one, of the peaceable reign of Christ this week. Last week, at the, we looked for signs of hope, little pieces of hope. But this week, we're going to look for indications of the reign of Christ already established in our life. So whether you're seeing good deeds taking place or kindnesses or acts of justice or or a news story or an Instagram post, where are you finding aspects of God's community, God's reign, visible this week, where what do you see?

Blake Smith 10:20

And there are no doubts that there are days when it may be hard to find that, but I can honestly say that when we are intentional about that, we can find those places and that can give us hope as well, so...

Our blessing today is called finally, and it's by Ray Simpson, found in *Celtic Blessings for Everyday Life*.

May everything in you be blessed, and may you bless everyone and everything.

May you be bathed in the blessings that the great blesser delights to shower upon you.

May you be saved from the sourness that corrodes the person who neglects to bless.

Bring forth buds of hope. Bring fruitfulness to the stagnant earth.

May flowers and beauty bloom on it, may friendships grow on it, may songs birth forth and dancing, loving, creating, after stagnant, barren years. The blessing of God and the Lord be yours. The blessing of the perfect spirit be yours. The blessing of the three be pouring on you mildly and generously, more and more and forever. Amen. a great blessing to send us off this week. Thanks for joining us. We invite

you to join us next time on Coffee to Go for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.