



CHRIST THE KING

Christ The King

November 22, 2020
Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace
www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org

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Pray:

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



In our first passage from Ezekiel, GOD promises to take over as shepherd of His scattered flock. When our leaders fail us, we must not despair but remember that GOD is in control and that He promises to return and care for His flock. Thus, we know that we can turn to GOD for help. He is still in control and can transform any tragic situation to produce good for His Kingdom.

A bad shepherd is not only selfish but destructive. A minister who muddies the waters for others by raising unnecessary doubts, teaching false ideas, and acting sinfully is destroying his flock's spiritual nourishment.

In contrast to the present evil (imperfect) shepherds – or leaders – of GOD's people, GOD will send a perfect shepherd the Messiah – my servant David.

Psalm 100 is an invitation to enter joyfully into GOD's presence. His faithfulness extends to our generation and beyond. David tells us to acknowledge that the LORD is GOD. How can we do that? We acknowledge Him when we shout our praises, appreciate His status as our Creator, accept His authority in every detail of life, enthusiastically agree with the guidance He gives us, and express our thanks for His unfailing love.

GOD is our Creator – we did not create ourselves. Many people live as though they are creator and centre of their own little world. This mind-set leads to pride, greed, idolatry, and if everything should be taken away, a loss of hope itself. But when we realise that GOD created us and gives us all we have, we will want to give to others as GOD gave to us. Then, if all is lost, we still have GOD and all He has given us. GOD alone is worthy of being worshipped – and we need to remember GOD's goodness and dependability – and then worship Him with thanksgiving and praise.

Paul prayed for the believers to know GOD better. How do we get to know someone? By reading biographical information or historical data about them? That will help you know a lot ABOUT that person; but it won't enable you to actually know them. If we want to get to know someone, we have to spend time with them – there is no shortcut. The same holds true with GOD. Reading the Bible, great works of theology, and devotional material is wonderful – but there is no substitute for knowing GOD personally. That is our challenge. We need to study JESUS' life in the Gospels to see what He was like on earth 2000 years ago – and get to know Him in prayer NOW. Personal knowledge of CHRIST will change our lives.

The hope we have is not a vague feeling that the future will be positive – but it is complete assurance of certain victory through GOD. This complete certainty comes to us through the Holy Spirit who is working in us.

The world fears the power of the atom – yet we belong to the GOD of the universe who not only created that

atomic power but also raised JESUS CHRIST from the dead. GOD's incomparably great power is available to help us. There is nothing too difficult for Him.

Having been raised from the dead, JESUS is now the head of the Church, the ultimate authority over the world. JESUS is the Messiah, GOD's Anointed One, the One Israel longed for, the One who would set the broken world right. As Christians we can be confident that GOD has won the final victory and is in control of everything. We need not fear any dictator or nation, or even death or satan himself. The contract has been signed and sealed; we are waiting just a short while for delivery. Paul says, in Romans 8: 37-39, that nothing can separate us from GOD and His love.

FULLNESS refers to CHRIST filling the Church with gifts and blessings. The Church should be the full expression of CHRIST – who Himself fills everything. When reading Ephesians, it is important to remember that it was written primarily to the entire Church, not merely to an individual. JESUS is the head, and we are the body of His Church.

The image of the body shows the Church's unity. Each member is involved with all the others as they go about doing GOD's work on earth. We should not attempt to work, serve or worship merely on our own. We need the entire body.

In our Gospel passage for today, GOD will separate His obedient followers from pretenders and unbelievers. The real evidence of our belief is the way we act. To treat all people we encounter as if they are JESUS is no easy task. What we do for others demonstrates what we really think about JESUS' words to us – feed the hungry, give the homeless a place to stay, look after the sick. How well do our actions separate us from pretenders and unbelievers?

JESUS used sheep and goats to picture the division between believers and unbelievers. Sheep and goats often grazed together but were separated when it came time to shear the sheep. Our Old Testament reading also referred to the separation of sheep and goats.

The gospel parable describes acts of mercy we can all do every day. These acts do not depend on wealth, ability, or intelligence – they are simple acts freely given and freely received. We have no excuse to neglect those who have deep needs, and we cannot hand over this responsibility to the Church or the Government. JESUS demands our personal involvement in caring for others' needs. The prophet Isaiah tells us in chapter 58: ⁷ *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?*

There has been much discussion about the identity of the brothers and sisters in this parable. Some have said they are the Jews; others say they are all Christians and still others say they are suffering people everywhere. Such a debate is much like the lawyer's question to JESUS – "Who is my neighbour" in Luke 29. The point of this parable is not the WHO but the WHAT – the importance of serving where service is needed. The focus of this

parable is that we should love every person and serve anyone we can. Such love for others glorifies GOD by reflecting our love for Him.



What is the kindest thing that you have ever done for another person? Why did you do it? There are many people in our parish who have been and still are a part of the Kairos ministry. For those of you who are not aware, Kairos Prison Ministry is a **Christian-based ministry** which addresses the spiritual needs of imprisoned men, women, youth and their families. By sharing the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, Kairos hopes to change hearts, transform lives, and impact the world. Our dear friend Garry Roth was asked why he did what he did with Kairos and he answered that he was a follower of JESUS CHRIST who felt led to do his small part.

As the final days of JESUS' life drew near in Matthew's gospel, JESUS' preaching took on a growing sense of urgency and clarity. The story that JESUS tells –

sometimes referred to as the parable of the sheep and the goats – cuts right to the heart of authentic Christian discipleship. On Judgement Day, only one thing will matter: how did you treat the person who came to you in need?

Some of the so-called “corporal works” of mercy are referenced in the Gospel. Five corporal works of mercy – there are a total of 7 – the number that symbolises perfection in the Bible – are laid out by the King (representing GOD) as He welcomes the righteous to eternal life:

1. When I was hungry you fed me.
2. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink.
3. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.
4. When I was naked, you clothed me.
5. When I was in prison, you visited me.

The other 2 works, added by the Catholic tradition, are taking care of the sick and burying the dead. Those who neglected these basic works of mercy are considered

unrighteous and are turned away and suffer eternal punishment.

What point is JESUS making here?

Neither group realised that their choices to show compassion or to show indifference toward those in need were showing their love or lack of it for JESUS. – it is very possible that some of the righteous were good people but not particularly religious. They followed promptings in their hearts and, in doing so, showed their love for CHRIST. It is also possible that some of the unrighteous may have seemed very religious – like the Pharisees of JESUS' time – publicly worshipping GOD all of the time and constantly talking about their love for GOD. Their actions, however, showed that their hearts were far from GOD. JESUS' point is simple and direct. Loving JESUS is about loving our neighbour, especially our neighbour in need. Such actions are done or not done in the simplest of circumstances. JESUS is directly identifying with the poor. Why are they “seemingly done almost spontaneously – without thought of salvation? We

discipline ourselves to follow JESUS, taking up our cross, consciously being kind, sacrificing our preferences for the sake of others so that, in the end, loving kindness comes so naturally that we don't even realise what we are doing. Having consciously practiced the steps of kindness and thoughtfulness, we can spontaneously dance the mystery of love.”¹

May we pray:

In your unbounded goodness, O GOD, you sent your Son to be a shepherd for all your people. Bestow on us the virtue of courage that we might imitate His compassion. Grow within us a spirit of servant-leadership that we might imitate His ministry This we pray in the name of JESUS. Amen

¹ Harris, Kym, OSB, GOD's Word Daily Reflections 2020, St Paul's Publications – CHRIST the King 22 November, 2020

Life Application Study Bible

GOD's Word 2020

Daily Prayer 2020

Celebrating the Lectionary Year A – Garratt Publishing – p247-48