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**Christ the King 2020**  
*Colossians 1:12-20 & John 18:33-37*

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Bill stopped in at a small rural general store, looking for a bottle of mustard. The shelves were loaded with salt, bags, and bags of salt. Abe, the merchant, said he had some mustard, but would have to go down to the cellar to find it. So, Bill tagged along with him. There, to his surprise, were more bags of salt. Everywhere he looked he could see salt.

"Say," said Bill, "you must sell a lot of salt in this store!"

"Nah," said Abe sourly. "I can't sell no salt. But that feller who sells me salt -- boy, can he sell salt!" (Source Unknown.) The power of persuasion is what we are dealing with today at this feast!

Today we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. When the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ the incarnation gave the world a clearer understanding of God's nature. We discovered God does not rule the world through the weapons of coercion and violence. As unlikely as it may seem, God rules the world from a cross of suffering love. Although Christians praise Jesus as the king of all kings, we still have a hard time understanding the meaning Christ as king.

So, in the Epistle to the Colossians this morning, Paul presents a superior view of Christ as King with a deep understanding of His death on the cross. And even though Jesus was the Son of God through whom all things were created, He willingly die for the world to reconcile it to God. He rescued humanity from darkness and brought us into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. (Colossians 1:12-20)

Unlike earthly kings, Jesus reigns from a cross. There is no place for violence in His kingdom, yet He suffered violence from the kings of this world. The inscription on His cross was true. He was a king, but not the king his people wanted. His kingdom, however, unlike all other kingdoms, will last forever. (Luke 23:35-43)

Yes, Jesus is different from earthly king. He had no interest in political power, yet Jesus' power is stronger than political power. The claim of the church is that, in Christ, we are dealing with the presence of God as an historical person. Perhaps it is why we sometimes lose the vision of Christ's divinity. The Jesus of history, according to the Bible, is also the cosmic Christ.

Not surprisingly, Jesus never called himself a king. During his ministry he always turned aside attention from himself. One day a man calls him "Good teacher," and Jesus says, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." (Mark 10:18) This qualifies Jesus to be the king the world needs. He had no self-seeking ambition. He wasn't infatuated with power. His only business was His Father's business. Jesus took the concept of kingship and turned it into servanthood. There has never been such a king in history as Jesus. Therefore, He is God's king; the King of kings and Lord of lords.

**We understand why Jesus chose the way of self-sacrifice. He was hoping to persuade people to follow His way of life. Was he mistaken? Sometimes it seems like it. These are difficult times to believe in the power of persuasion. How often have doctors and scientist used persuasion to get people to abide by the covid-19 guidelines but to no avail. But Jesus was sure that it was the only way. He bet his life and did what he had to do for this very idea. And while his enemies have come and gone, Jesus is still here, preaching his gentle way of persuasion. Is this the true way, do you think, or could it be that we are only fooling ourselves? Let's listen to Jimmie's story.**

**Jimmy was a little six-year-old boy. One evening, he was as stubborn and rebellious as he could be. He was rude to his mother; he quarreled with his brothers and sisters and made the evening unpleasant for everyone. Finally, his father sent him to bed without his dinner. He went up the stairs and everything about him spoke of rebellion. He was an angry child.**

**Late that evening, his father went to his room, sat on the bed beside him and put his arm around him. That finished Jimmy. He snuggled up in his father's arms and cried. He could handle his father's rebuke and stay angry. But he couldn't handle his father's love. That melted him, and his rebellion faded away. That's how it is with the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross. His love for us is overwhelming.**

**There are several ways of saying what that cross means. The cross has come to mean God has come to our room and sat down on the bed next to us. In our rebellion, we were spoiling life for ourselves and for others. But God wants us to know that he still loves us. So, he sat down on the bed next to us and put his arms around us.**

**And with all the forces working against him, Jesus still counts on persuasion to change lives. And that is really the only thing that will change you and me. The cross reaches deeper, takes hold harder, and holds on longer than any other force in the world. And it is from where Christ reigns. That is why we call him Christ the King.**

**So, my question to you this morning is, do we need a king? The answer is a resounding yes! He is the difference between chaos and cohesion. We all seek someone to bring order and cohesion to our lives. We've tried it on our own and became fragmented like a jigsaw puzzle. With Jesus, all the puzzle pieces of the self are in place and a person is transformed into a meaningful whole. The church testifies there simply is no other in whom all things come together with such a compelling ring of truth. But can you accept a king like Jesus? Yes! Ultimately, He will be revealed as the only true king, the Messiah who alone has power. Then the cosmos will sing, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!"**

**Amen!**