

1: ⁴ Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

18: ³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from 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." ³⁷ 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."

["Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again." Says the liturgy we just sang.]

If we are in the ordinary mainstream of Christians we might well add under her breath, **"even though I have not a clue of what that means."**

Three weeks ago, we celebrated another high, holy day in the Church Year: All Saints Sunday. And we had those 357 banners here to remind us of the relationship we share with the saints.

In my sermon that day, I noted that while many people think of heaven as being a place "up there" where we go when we die, the author of Revelation tells us, ***No, when the Kingdom of Heaven is fully realized, it's going to be here – on earth redeemed – with the people resurrected. Here. Not up there.***

And we remembered how in Matthew's account of Jesus' first sermon, he announced: **"Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven IS AT HAND."** And in the prayer Jesus taught, the first petition is that God's kingdom will come, **on earth as in heaven.**

And some of you remembered – even after that Sunday's worship the statistic quoted in the sermon: In the Gospels, **"kingdom"** is spoken about **115 times**, and **"save" + "saved" + "salvation"** is mentioned **46 times**.

So, on All Saints' Sunday we remembered how the **time and place of the saints gone on overlaps with** the **time and place where we live**.

Today, we celebrate that Jesus is indeed the King of that Kingdom. That gives us great assurance. The story I was told said:

A sick man turned to his doctor, who had come to make a house call [which gives you an idea of how old is this story] and said, "Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side."

Very quietly, the doctor said, "I don't know."

"You don't know? You, a Christian man, do not know what is on the other side?"

The doctor was holding the handle of the door; on the other side came a sound of scratching and whining, and as he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness. Turning to the patient, the doctor said, "I brought my dog with me when I came to your house. But I left him out in your living room with your wife when I came into your bedroom. He's never been in this room before. He didn't know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing. I know my Master is there and that is enough."

Indeed that is reassuring to know that we are in that same relationship with Christ the King, before we die, so that after we die we can trust in the goodness of the hereafter.

But, we must not forget that Jesus said "**the Kingdom IS AT HAND**."

Christ is **COMING AGAIN** – for what?

In this absolutely powerful means of grace, Holy Communion **collapses three time zones into one**: **PAST**: "Do this in remembrance of me" with the **PRESENT**: "this IS my body," with the **FUTURE**: "we feast with all the saints at the heavenly banquet."

Past, present, future.

Christ HAS died; Christ IS risen; Christ WILL come again.

Christ will come again. Some Christian churches seem to focus most all of their attention on that thought – when, the rapture, being caught up, being left behind, etc., etc.

Other Christian churches seem so uncomfortable with that whole idea that they never consider it, except for the idea that we go someplace nice once we die.

But IT **IS** a **CRITICAL PART** of the whole Christian message.

Christ HAS died; Christ IS risen; Christ WILL come again.

Christ is going to come again, and SET THINGS RIGHT.

Christ is going to come again, and we are going to know Him face to face, like meeting someone for the first time that we have only spoken to by letters, telephone, email, or FaceBook.

Christ is going to come again, and ALL CREATION WILL BE REDEEMED – ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

You see – because Christ **DID COME** and was crucified, and because Christ **IS RISEN**, the **resurrection power** was **not just a pleasant outcome for Him and His disciples** – much more than that: **everything has changed!** Death has been conquered. Justice will be accomplished. All creation will be redeemed – HERE!

Everything that we do whilst we are alive is being planted on the other side of that veil. In our weekly study just finished, by Bishop N.T. Wright, he put it like this:

[Therefore,] what you do in the Lord is not in vain. You are not oiling the wheels of a machine that's about to roll over a cliff. You are not restoring a great painting that's shortly going to be thrown on the fire. You are not planting roses in a garden that's about to be dug up for a building site.

You are ... accomplishing something that will become, in due course, part of God's [redeemed creation.]

✦ **Every act of love, gratitude and kindness;**

- ✦ every work of art or music inspired by the love of God and delight in the beauty of God's creation;
- ✦ every minute spent teaching a child;
- ✦ every act of care and nurture, of comfort and support, for one's fellow human beings;
- ✦ and of course every prayer, ...

– all of this will find its way, through the resurrection power of God, into the new creation that God is making ... [W]hat we do in Christ and by the Spirit in the present is not wasted. It will last all the way into God's new world. **In fact, it will be enhanced there.** N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, pp. 208-9

What we do on this side **“will be enhanced there.”** Resurrection redemptive power operates **something akin to a matching grant.**

What we plant in our daily lives – not just big things – but every little thing – will be planted on the other side.

It's almost too much for the mind to comprehend. (But Saint Paul did warn us that it ***is exceedingly more than we can ask or even imagine.*** Ephesians 3:20)

See if this helps: I've been **watching a lot of Christmas movies in this past week of holiday**, in Jane's and my annual Thanksgiving get-away (thank you SPRC, for this Pastor Appreciation gift!) In some of the classic movies, I confess I turn my head so that the moisture in my eyes is not witnessed. Even when I know what is coming. But, here's the trick: what brought on that emotion **RIGHT NOW** is something that was **PUT ONTO FILM DECADES AGO**. Many of the people who portrayed this goodness are now long since dead. None of them ever knew me. Yet the goodness they portrayed translates even past their lives into something that my soul recognizes as powerful goodness in my life right now. The goodness itself goes on and on.

Christ HAS died; Christ IS risen; Christ WILL come again.

We HAVE lived. We ARE living. And the goodness we plant in our daily living WILL BEAR FRUIT AGAIN. Christ is King. Resurrection still redeems. So be it.