

Neither Camelot nor Plan B, but IIWII – John 14:15-21

May 25, 2014 Saint Marks UMC, Charleston, WV

- I. Introduction of Camelot/King Arthur perched on the end of the “run” -- looking ahead to a future, in which Arthur wanted people to remember
- II. [Play the “*For One Bright Shining Moment*” MP3 clip from *Camelot*]

Each evening, from December to December,
Before you drift to sleep upon your cot,
Think back on all the tales that you remember
Of Camelot.
Ask ev'ry person if he's heard the story,
And tell it strong and clear if he has not,
That once there was a fleeting wisp of glory
Called Camelot.
Camelot, Camelot,
I know it gives a person pause,
But in Camelot, Camelot,
Those were the legal laws.
Where once it never rained till after sundown,
By eight a.m. the morning fog had flown...
Don't let it be forgot
That once there was a spot
For one brief shining moment that was known
As Camelot.
- III. Jesus was not playing it like King Arthur, nor Jackie Kennedy (in reference to JFK's 1,000 day presidency – either as really said by Jackie, or as the words put into her mouth later by her biographer.) Jesus was describing the *glorious time of His walk on earth/His Camelot/His brief shining moment* -- that would not end, but would continue.
- IV. Apocryphal conversation between Jesus and the angels upon His arrival back home/*Ascension* (next week's text) –
 - A. I call it “apocryphal” because we don't have records of conversation about what goes on in heaven except (a) God at creation, “Let us make the human in our image” and (b) the conversation between God and the Satan, like two riverboat gamblers in the beginning of Job. (Maybe also the Book of Revelation, but somebody else will have to explain that to you.)

B. Jesus describes how the Kingdom of God will be coming on earth as it is in heaven // Angels ask how? // Jesus said: with these disciples I've left behind // Angels recount their failures and fall downs of these disciples, and then say, "What's your Plan B? // Jesus says: "There is no Plan B. The Kingdom will come on earth as it is in Heaven, *WITH THESE*.

V. I I W I I – (explain) The short hand version, that we say here at Saint Marks, of the expression: "It is what it is."

A. *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* Not words of Judgment Threat NOR Performance based relationship with Jesus

B. Simply *It Is What It Is* – like *if I drop a ball, it will fall*

VI. What happens when we *abide*? –

A. Lecturer I heard this past week: two ways to see our relationship with God

- i.** The first: God in one circle; us in another circle – outside of first circle, and trying somehow to get the two circles connected
- ii.** The second: God in one circle and us in another circle, which two circles are within one another.
- iii.** Actually how we see God has much to do with the way we see ourselves, and *vice versa*. If we tend to see ourselves as lacking and if we have a poor self-image, then we will mostly see God as a judgmental, fault-finding God. If we see ourselves as in our baptismal name: Beloved child of God, precious and beautiful to behold, then we will tend to see God as a loving, forgiving God. And *vice versa*, if we have been raised to see God as a judgmental, perfectionist seeking God, then we will tend to see ourselves as forever lacking and will have a poor self-image. If we see God primary as a loving, forgiving God, then we will tend to more easily accept in our hearts our Baptismal name of "beloved child of God, precious and beautiful to behold."

- iv.** Actually, I have hypothesized, there are two types of Christian.¹ One sees humanity as basically broken, in need of some sort of fixing, be it through the blood of the lamb, works righteousness, or “something” to repair/restore us. The other sees humanity as made in the image of God, whose primary task is to grow up into the full potential of the divine DNA, that is within. Both type of Christian have plenty of need for the doctrines of forgiveness and reconciliation, but where you begin: “broken in need of fixing” or “made in God’s image and growing” will radically change how you read scripture, see life, see God, and see yourself.
- v.** If you find yourself in the latter category, that is your basic definition is *made in the image of God* then the words **“If you love me, you will keep my commandments”** is simply a statement of fact. This IS how your life will be lived. Ever growing more and more in God’s love and in the following of God’s recipe for abundant living (aka “commandments.”)
- B.** Picture the three circles on tear off sheet. [copied from bulletin below.] Inside us (the large circle) is that circle of God on the very inside. (The middle circle is Jesus, our path to God.) If we want to find God, we may go to the mountain looking, but even on the mountain, we find God within us.)

¹ Which of these two types is usually linked to which notion of “Adam and Eve” you interpret from Genesis 3. If you tend to read this as a story of “universal stain of sin” then you are probably a product of the western Christian [Augustinian inspired] Church, and an adherent to the first form of Christianity described. If you do not believe in the “universal stain of sin,” you are most likely a product, at least in tune with if not a member, of the eastern Christian [Athanasian/Ireanean inspired] Church, and will find yourself more in tune with the latter described version of Christian, herein. The latter version is also greatly informed by *Original Blessing*, by Matthew Fox.



VII. One final image: from *Dorotheos*, one of the 4th/5th century Desert Fathers.

A. The line over the circles represent each human life.

B. As we move along the life line toward the center of our being and thus closer to God, the proximity of our life line and that of others is closer: we also draw closer to one another.

C. I I W I I [It is what it is.]

D. And it is ***ALL God's children*** who are made in God's image. We don't get to pick and choose those with whom we are to be in relationship. Loving God = following God's commandments = loving all of God's Children.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.