

## John 18:33-37

### Christ the King

November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

*“The story is told about Hendrik Kraemer, a remarkable lay missionary from the Dutch church who spent much of his adult life in Indonesia. He was in his native Holland when WW II broke out. The Gestapo dominated the nation of Holland, forcing Dutch Jews to death camps like Buchenwald and Dachau.*

*Late one night a group of Dutch laypersons came to see Hendrik Kraemer. They said to him, “Dr. Kraemer, what shall we do? Our neighbors are dying. We don’t know what is going to become of us as a nation. Please, please, if you can, tell us what to do. We have got to do something, and we have got to do it now.”*

*And Hendrik Kraemer said to them, “I am not going to tell you what to do, but I will tell you who you are. And if you know who you are, then you will know what to do.” He opened his Bible to 1 Peter 2:9 and began to read:*

*“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God as his own, to proclaim the triumphs of Him who has called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.”*

*Dr. Kraemer closed his Bible and asked, “Do you know who you are? Then you’ll know what to do.” Thanking him, the group left his house. That night, they formed the Dutch Resistance.”* “If You Know Who Your Are You’ll Know What to Do” by Ronald J. Greer page 12

Did you hear who you are? According to 1 Peter you are **“a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation and a people claimed by God as his own...”** and you have a purpose, **“to proclaim the triumphs of God who has called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.”**

Our Revelation scripture puts it more succinctly in verse 6, Jesus has made us **“a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father...”**

If you know who you are you will know what to do! Jesus certainly knew who he was. He was sent to earth by God to “free us from our sins by his blood...” He knew he was a King, The King and his trial before Pilate revealed the source and meaning of his kingdom.

In verse 33 of our scripture today Pilate begins Jesus’ trial with a short sarcastic question, *“Are you King of the Jews?”*

In this short passage 2 kingdoms clash and the rulers of each kingdom are brought on trial. One is the Judge and the other the accused, but which is which and who is who?

Pilate asks a sarcastic question that we too ask of Jesus, “Are you a King?” It is also the question the world asks of Jesus when it doesn’t see the results in Christianity that it is looking for. It is a question that all of us must ask and answer even to this day.



Jesus stood before Pilate as a humble prophet. Pilate sat in his judgement seat in his palace a regal representative of the Roman Empire and Emperor. Pilate as he looked on Jesus in his humble clothes and soft demeanor asked with scorn and disbelief, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus immediately turns the table on the accuser and becomes the inquisitor, in verse 34 he asks, *“Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?”*

Jesus answers a question with a question and gains the upper hand. At this point Jesus becomes the Judge as he always was and will be and Pilate becomes defensive so Pilate replies in verse 35, *“I am not a Jew, am I? Your own chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?”*

It was obvious to Pilate that Jesus was not a pretender to the throne. His wasn't an earthly Kingship. But why was he here? What were these accusations that came to him with such violent urgency?

Jesus quickly gives him a 2 point reply. In verse 36 he tells Pilate what his Kingdom isn't. It isn't violent. And in verse 37 He tells Pilate what it is!!!! "The truth."

Now the references in the book of John to "the Jews" over the years have been the basis for a lot of anti-Semitic hatred. Whenever that has happened it is obvious that those who act out of hatred to Jews; they do not understand these verses, they do not live by them, they do not know Jesus and they do not know themselves.

In these verses the term "the Jews" is more than a racial designation. It is a phrase unfortunately used by the writer of John to designate all those who reject Jesus as the Christ. Pilate, indeed, despite his plea, "Am I a Jew?" is a "Jew" in terms of how the writer of John designates that term, because Pilate rejects the Kingship of Jesus Christ.

When we deal too literally with the phrases in John, we often miss their point and meaning, and it has engendered hatred through the years by those whose very acts and attitudes of hatred towards Jews show they also reject the Christ, the Prince of Peace who was a Jew!

Jesus in fact in verse 36 **shows that his kingdom is not an earthly one.** It is not a kingdom built on physical force or violence. It is not a kingdom built on coercion, manipulation, prejudice, terror or fear. It is not a political kingdom, as Pilate feared.

For Jesus says, **"If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be FIGHTING to keep me from being handed over..."**

No, Jesus rejects an earthly political kingdom violence, coercion and force. His *"kingdom is not from here."* This very violent world.

This small phrase *“my kingdom is not from here”* points to its source in heaven with God. His power and kingdom are from beyond and have broken into this world and will bring back to heaven all who follow him into the reality of the kingdom of God. A kingdom that is present in all who believe in Jesus for remember the scriptures referenced today refer to us as being **“made into a kingdom” and being a “dedicated” or “holy nation”**.

The kingdom of God is present here today in Jesus Christ and will be completed beyond this earth. Jesus has brought the Kingdom from Heaven to earth and when we are in relationship with him, we are in an eternal relationship and kingdom.

So political power and might and violence are not of Jesus’ Kingdom, so what is? In verse 37 Jesus tells us what His kingdom is. It is TRUTH!!!! **Simply truth is of the kingdom of God. And what or more correctly who is truth? Jesus Christ!!!**

Remember Jesus said, **“I am the way, the TRUTH and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.”**

Jesus embodied the truth of God. His teachings explained the truth of God. His death and resurrection and the shedding of his blood on our behalf validated the truth of God.



The kingdom over which Jesus reigned in our scripture today was not political or religious, it was truth! Jesus as Christ the King is the King of Truth. And I am not talking about just doctrines and theological constructs, but that Jesus embodied truth. To know Jesus is to know the truth is to know God.

And truth has to do with more than just the facts of Jesus’ teachings and life. To know truth, to know Jesus is to be in a

relationship with Jesus. **Jesus embodies the truth of God making him the way, the truth and the life.** God did not send us a set of propositions, or new laws to live by, God sent us a person to follow, to model our lives around to show the way to God.

It is about this Person that we each must answer Pilate's question, "Are you a king?" If we answer "yes" then we begin to know who we are. We are the brothers and sisters of Christ the King. We are a part of Christ's kingdom and priests of God.

Now when we pray the Lord's Prayer the first two sentences are, ***"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."***

The first phrase identifies whose we are. We are children of our heavenly Father. And not just us individually, but we together as a group for remember Jesus has made us into a "holy nation, a new kingdom." And he has made us priests.

Now, the second phrase of the Lord's Prayer defines what we should do as priests of God. **"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** Remember when we know who we are we will know what to do. We are to pray and use the power of the Holy Spirit that God has given us to bring into this world what is in heaven. We are to bring the Kingdom of God from Heaven onto earth.

Think of this in heaven there is no sin, sickness, evil, death, mourning, crying or pain. Jesus came from Heaven to earth to bring God's kingdom onto this earth and while here Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, freed those captive to sin, preached the good news, cast out demons and more. Jesus brought the reality of the Kingdom to earth and then he gave us the authority, power and the job or commission to do the same!

In Matthew 28 when Jesus says, **"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..."**

Jesus means that the same power and authority that He received from God has been given to us to use to bring the Kingdom here on earth.

We indeed have been given the power and authority to bring what is in heaven here to earth. We are to do it in prayer and in action and in holiness. Just as Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, forgave sin, preached the Good News we are to do the same and empowered to do the same as God's children.

Mother Teresa wrote this, *"When a poor person dies of hunger, it has not happened because God did not take care of him or her. It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needed."*

*We have refused to be instruments of love in the hands of God to give the poor a piece of bread, to offer them a dress with which to ward off the cold.*

*It has happened because we did not recognize Christ when, once more, he appeared under the guise of pain, identified with a man numb from the cold, dying of hunger, when he came in a lonely human being, in a lost child in search of a home."*

To pray *"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* is to seek to use the power and authority God has given us here on earth to see his kingdom come.

To pray this is to **not** see the Kingdom of God as just some place way out in the future in the sweet by and by. To pray this is to seek to bring the Kingdom into place today and participate in the kingdom of God right here and right now.

It is to pray for healing of body, soul and mind. It is to then work for concrete manifestations of that kingdom like we do here at Vista Church.

Like today we are taking up the Thanksgiving Offering for Snack Packs for hungry children at Coronado school.

So, today, I am going to give all the opportunity to pray for healing of body, soul and mind for yourselves and for others. To come before God and ask God what you need to do for Him to manifest God's kingdom here on earth in yourself, your family, your church and your community. What is God saying to you and what are you going to do about it?

I invite you to come forward now and pray with me and or a Stephen minister for healing of body, soul and mind; to pray for guidance and direction in manifesting Christ's Kingdom in this world.

I invite you to take the risk of faith. This is risky business to ask for healing of body, soul, or mind for self or others. The risk is if you ask and God says 'no', will you still believe in God? Will you take the risk to ask knowing the answer might be no?

And here's a further risk. What if God says 'yes' and answers your prayers for healing? Can you stay the same if God says yes and simply return to your normal life? Will life ever be 'normal' again if God says 'yes'? Take the risk of faith and if you or a loved one needs prayer come forward at this time.

**Remember who and whose you are!!!**

In Jesus' name Amen

I invite the Stephen ministers to come forward along with any needing prayer.