

In Him All Things Hold Together
- Jeremiah 23: 1-6; Colossians 1:11-20

Today we celebrate the end of the Christian year by also celebrating Christ the King Sunday. As the year ends, we declare Christ as the King of our lives and all that is.

In our reading from Paul's Letter to Collos'saē, he uses words to address the problems of real churches with real people struggling to understand a faith newly embraced. As with all of us, when confronted with new ideas and new world constructs, the temptation was to take the unfamiliar and fit it into the existing world-view. The Gentiles of Collos'saē began their views with Gnosticism; however Paul's worldview began with Jesus Christ and was shaped by Jesus Christ, the "firstborn of all creation".

While serving as pastor of congregation several years ago, a young couple adopted 2 children, ages 2 and 5, from Russia. I was amazed at the adjustments they had to make, English words being crooned to them sun-up to sun-down, moving from an institution to a home filled with love and every need fulfilled, from sparse food to feasting on foods grown on the family farm, from 1-2 outfits to closets filled with clothes for every occasion and toys - more than the entire orphanage had owned! Everything was different: the food, the smells, the sounds. They were forced to make incredible adjustments.

Paul says that becoming a Christian is like that. It is not simply a matter of fitting Jesus into our present way of thinking. We are transferred, moved, departed, from one kingdom to another, from one way of living to another. Nothing is as we have known it. Everything is changed.

With Christ the King of our lives, nothing remains the same. We are different. We are changed. We are new creations! We are claimed, named, and made children of The King!

Christ Jesus is not LIKE God, not an exemplary follower of God, but in fact God. Clearly, this passage points out that the work of Christ seeks not only to reconcile the people to God and free us from the powers of this world, but "to reconcile the Powers themselves to God." Therefore, the powers and principalities of this world do NOT dominate. You see, there is no need to fear the actions of the leaders of this world, for Christ came - God with us - Emmanuel, for the call of the Christian life is to seek to transform the systems of this world so that they emulate the grace, mercy, and compassion we experience in the kingdom of God.

Paul makes it clear that Christ is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything." Think of how many church arguments, mission

statements, or personal disagreements might be resolved by simply asking the question, "Does this allow Christ to have first place?"

When we come to the table, we come to the feast of the King. We come at the invitation of the King to be reconciled with God and with each other. We receive the food of royalty. We gather at this table with members of the Royal Family and no one is turned away, all are fed, and we are bound by the grace, forgiveness, mercy, and love of God through Christ the King. As we approach the table we come with hearts filled with love for one another and we proclaim Christ as King, acknowledging his lordship over all of life, all of creation.