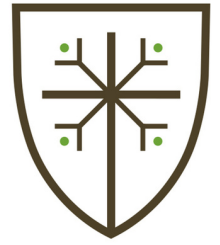


SERMON NOTES



CHRIST *THE KING*

November 26, 2023

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"When the Son of Man Comes"

PREACHER

Rev. Adam Radcliff

TEXTS

Ezekiel 34:11-23

Ephesians 1:16-23

Matthew 25:31-46

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. In your life at work, school, home, etc., where do you see opportunities to practice the kind of compassion Jesus talks about?
2. How is the compassion of the righteous (the sheep) different from that of the unrighteous (the goats) in the gospel passage?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, we recognized "Christ the King" Sunday, the Sunday before Advent begins. And Adam Radcliff lead us in considering the question, "When the Son of Man comes, are we ready for him?" by looking at two points: When he comes, what will he do? And what has he already done?

What will he do?

The title, Son of Man is used over 80 times in the gospels and has deep Old Testament roots. It is Jesus' favorite way to talk about himself, relating as one of us. If we read the description in the book of Daniel of the Son of Man, it is terrifying and glorious at the same time. A Judge with gleaming white robes and hair, angels gathered around him as he judged the earth. But Jesus, when he was on earth, by all appearances was rather inglorious. And that is how everyone saw him. But on that day, when he comes again, there will be no mistaking who the king is. Everyone who ever lived will be gathered before him.

On that day, on judgment day, we are presented and exposed for who we really are, just as we see in our gospel reading. Jesus divides the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the unrighteous. The lives and minds of the righteous are marked by compassion. And not just compassion for those they love, but compassion for the poor, the weak, the sick, the prisoner. Especially those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. When we show mercy to others, we do it to Jesus. This is the evidence that our faith is real – when it is expressed in love, especially towards the least. If our faith doesn't produce that kind of fruit, then we simply aren't Christian. Jesus isn't teaching a social justice gospel here. Costly compassion is the inevitable consequence of conversion, not its cause. Love for the least in the inevitable fruit of a living, true, gospel faith.

What has he done?

Passages like this week's gospel reading wake us up to the eternal world. But in every warning, there is also an invitation that gives us hope. The story we read occurred just hours before Jesus would be betrayed and crucified. This tells us that the rescue plan, the plan to gather his sheep to him, was in place before any of us were even born. We can never earn the kingdom by our own works. And so, this coming Son of Man who is both king and judge, is also the Good Shepherd who knows each of his sheep and has come to bring them home. The ground of our assurance on Judgement Day is that "the Lord is my Shepherd." He provides, and protects, and will preserve me to the end to give me eternal life.