

May 16, 2021

Our gospel lesson is known as the high priestly prayer, we are “listening-in” on a prayer between Jesus and God...

Jesus is essentially wrapping up his ministry by telling God what happened and what will be needed as the disciples move forward.

The prayer is very relational, between the Son and the Father, and for the sake of the disciples, who, in a very real way, are also us... Last week we heard Jesus call his disciples-- friends... Not servants, but friends, there is a deep mutuality and abiding love and respect for one another.

And in this mutuality, there is also a mission, Jesus prays, “As you have sent me, so I have sent them.” This sending is proclamation... You see, Good news travels... Inherently, by its very nature, good news flows from one person to the next... The good news, the truth, is that God is like a loving friend...

In this prayer, we see a lot of references to being “of the world,” and “not of the world,” and at the same time... This distinction is part of what we call Two Kingdom theology. The kingdom of God is here, right now, and at the same time the kingdom of God is not yet. We always live in this in-between time...

The two-kingdom theology, distinguishes that there are Human ways of doing things which are of this world... And then there are God’s ways of doing things,

which are not of this world. And when we pray, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We pray that the Kingdom of God becomes actualized here, among ourselves. In other words, pulling a little bit of heaven down to earth.

When we live in this in-between time, we are fully aware that we are in bondage to sin, and that we hurt one another. But we also live with the hope of resurrection, rising to new life amidst sin and death... Watching for signs of the Kingdom of God that are here and now... Watching for heaven on earth...

Today I’d like to share a few stories from this past week...

Tuesday morning Welca bible study... We had just read the lesson from the book of Acts and we were talking about the expansion of Christianity. And like all good bible studies, one topic brings up another and we get a talking... I love those conversations... Anyway, we were yakking, and we heard the outside door open.

I was wondering who it might be, thinking it might be someone just dropping something off or picking something up. Well, low and behold, it was a young gal, she was 19, she had just stopped by, and wanted to see the church.

She said her family attended when she was little, they moved up north when she was about five. She had memories; she remembered the red carpeting! She remembered the love of a pastor, who we think we know, but not sure...

She remembered making sugar cookies with a special friend who she called grandma. Well, we figured out who that was! And put them on the phone together! And it was beautiful to hear her end of the conversation-- as they reconnected...

She had visited a friend in Rochester, and on her way back up north, she decided to go out of her way and stop here, at Cross of Christ. Isn't that remarkable?

There was something about the community that was like a beacon of love that drew her here. And she had to stop by to see it, reconnect with it, feel it. My heart went out to her...

And I started to imagine how she was seeing the congregation, it was not about having the correct theology, it was not about how long she had been here, it was all about the red carpet and relationships. This was a loving home for her... This is a small glimpse of the Kingdom...

Wednesday night, we had our final confirmation class of the year. A week from today we will confirm four wonderful young adults. I've really appreciated these kids this year. Every meeting we checked in to hear how life was going, we said prayers.

As the last meeting I really wanted to spend time talking about why confirmation was important... We talked a lot about how life and faith intersect... We talked a lot about being loving, kind and gracious people. Because when it's all said and done, that's what it's all about. Being a part of the body of Christ, loving our neighbor, leading to a meaningful and abundant life. And by doing that, making an impact in the world...

And to me, it felt like a holy moment... I'm so thankful for those kids, I can't read their minds, especially with masks on! But they were attentive... And it felt like we connected... And for me, it was a small glimpse of the kingdom...

Ohhh, we are in bondage to sin, and hurting one another happens, but the good news is that God's kingdom also happens. Here on earth as it is in Heaven... How have you seen the kingdom of God recently? Amen...