

"King"

Luke 6:20-31

November 21, 2010

I ran into an incredible video clip this past week. I know that some of you have seen it because it has been sent to my email and mentioned to me in the narthex. The setting was Macy's Department store in Philadelphia. It is a huge place and at this time of the year it is bustling with early holiday shoppers. To entertain the shopping public the store brought in a magnificent organ and had an organist playing background music. But mixed in with the regular shoppers was the whole Philadelphia Opera Company. At the stroke of noon, the organist suddenly broke into the Hallelujah Chorus and the members of the Opera Company began to sing "The Lord God Omnipotent reignth - Hallelujah, Hallelujah ... Lord of Lord's - King of Kings." The words and beauty of the song stopped shoppers in their tracks and rang out over the shopping scene.

It was an incredible image. It made me think of shepherds keeping watch over their flocks one night long ago when right in the midst of their day to day activity the night sky was filled with a host of angels praising God. I try to imagine what it must have felt like to be simply walking around the mall, thinking about the Christmas rush and the gift that you needed to buy ... Or just being consumed by looking for one more thing to stick in the closet ... And suddenly finding yourself right in the middle of an overwhelming proclamation of the power and presence of God.

How would you feel?

Perhaps there are a lot of those moments in our lives. There are moments when all of the 'really important things' that fill our lives from day to day simply lose their importance for the moment and we chock up or tear up over some outside force that invades our world and, even if for just a moment, allows us to see beyond the moment to something greater.

Two things shape our worship time today. I'm sure that on the minds of most of us is the upcoming day of Thanksgiving with it's family gatherings, turkey dinners and football. Perhaps less central in your mind is the fact that today is the last Sunday of the church year. It is a day that is designated as "Christ the King" Sunday and forms the transition from reflection on the texts of Pentecost with their emphasis on the teachings and ministry of Jesus together with the growth of the church to the beginning of Advent - Advent where we step back into those scriptures that point us to the fact that God will send a savior Scriptures that lead us toward the Christmas message of the birth of Christ where we start all over with the story. Shepherds keeping watch over the flocks in the fields at night Suddenly there is a multitude of heavenly hosts ... Good news to all the world ... A savior is born ... Christ the Lord.

So how do you feel on this Christ the King Sunday as winter sets in and the Turkey begins to thaw? How do you feel?

There is a great "Peanuts" cartoon that came out some years ago just before Thanksgiving. Lucy's feeling sorry for herself and she laments, "My life is a drag. I'm completely fed up. I've never felt so low in my life." Her little brother Linus tries to console her and he says, "Lucy, when you're in a mood like this, you should try to think of things you have to be thankful for; in other words, count your blessings." To that, Lucy says, "Ha! That's a good one! I could count my blessings on one finger! I've never had anything and I never will have anything. I don't get half the breaks that other people do. Nothing ever goes right for me! And you talk about counting blessings! You talk about being thankful! What do I have to be thankful for?" There is a pause before Linus says, "Well, for one thing, you have a little brother who loves you." Another stunned pause before Lucy throws her arms around her little brother Linus as she cries tears of joy. And while she's hugging him tightly, Linus says, "Every now and then, I say the right thing."

There are moments of great revelation in our lives. Perhaps they are moments of thankfulness that are appropriate for the season. Moments that happen when we get caught up in the daily pressures of life only to be stunned by the revelation of something far more important than our everyday concerns. Or perhaps they are moments when suddenly we are moved by a word, an event, a sight or sound that helps us to see that there is something that is bigger and more powerful than me and my concerns and what turns out to be my small world.

There is a well respected theologian and preacher by the name of G. K. Chesterton that has said, "The Key to living sanely is to realize that we live in a world that is larger than our grasp, a far grander cosmos than we can ever fully understand, one given to us by a God who is wiser and far more benevolent than we can comprehend. Against the notion that we understand everything, if we are honest, we find that our everyday lives are shot full of mystery. He also went on to say, "The poet only asks to get his head into heaven. It is the logician [the one who tries to figure out everything by human logic] who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits"

And so we come to the last Sunday of the church year and to the season of Thanksgiving. In this last Sunday we try to sum up all we have come to believe from all of the scriptures for all of the seasons of the church year since we began to retell the story last Advent. And when we look at the whole picture we have to finally say ... "it's a mystery' I can't understand it all but that's alright because it means that there is something bigger than me something more important than me something more powerful than me. And that something is a God who has broken into my world as Jesus Christ and Christ is King. "Our Lord God Omnipotent reigneth Hallelujah King of Kings and Lord of Lords ... Hallelujah! And so I give thanks!

Can you imagine what it feels like to be standing in a mall full of the noise of busy shoppers ... worn by the hectic pace of the season and all you have to do weighed down by the drone of the press of all of your ongoing daily concerns And suddenly the heavens

open and the angels sing "Lord of lords and King of kings and He shall reign for ever and e-e-ver."

AMEN