

# "Out of this World"

Daniel 7:9ff & Revelation 1:4b-8

John 18:33-37

November 26, 2006

Have you recovered from the feast of Thanksgiving? It is an amazing thing ..... if the size of the feast indicates the amount of thankfulness, I am really a thankful guy. .... Personally, I have mostly recovered from my gluttonous acts on Thursday [it will however take some time to lose all of the pounds associated with the meal].

Of course, it will probably take just as long to recover from the experience of Friday as it will to recover from the Thanksgiving feast. What a pleasure it was to again join the crowds on the annual Friday, early morning dash for stuff. Who wouldn't get up at 5:00 AM and rush off to the mall for the deal of a life time on stuff that you just don't need. But we do it. It is a little harder here in Bottineau - but if you are near a larger town [as we happened to be] it seems like the thing to do. It is good sport - good family fun - it is good for the economy. It is all part of 'what we do' as Americans. And perhaps, as I think back on it now, these two days define our culture as much as any two days during the whole year.

It sounds a bit harsh as I think about saying that. It seems harsh to suggest that eating too much and a greedy dash for stuff defines who we are as people. Our culture is not really all self-serving greed. The people that we sat down to table with on Thursday [no matter how much we stuffed ourselves] - those people are not bad, uncaring people - certainly, I'm not. The people who were a little surly [if not just down right pushy & angry] in the wee hours of Friday morning, packed in with the crowds of other shoppers were not bad people living in some corrupt society - they were probably just out for the fun of the chase, the stories to tell - I was. I am not really that greedy for stuff [I hope]. To put the best 'spin' on it I might imagine that they were just a little short on cash and looking for just the right 'deal' so they can give a nice gift to someone else. We are all 'good people'.

Still, it does seem to me that these days of "Thanksgiving" and "the day after ...." do give us a 'snap-shot' of our world and our lives. And I find myself wondering how the lives that we live fits with our faith.

Today is "Christ the King" Sunday. We come to this Sunday at the end of each church year [I am sure that it is only coincidental that it comes at the same time as the after Thanksgiving Day sales]. We come to this day at the end of a long church season that is supposed to be a season of growth of faith as we have been learning about the teaching of Jesus and what it means to be a Christian. We have heard

**about self sacrifice and servanthood. We have heard the call to peace on earth and good will to all. We have spoken about the source of true blessing. And having heard it all for another year we come to the conclusion that it is Christ that is king - Christ that we want to rule in our lives. Then we rush the malls!**

**I find myself pondering what it all means. What does it mean that we feast the way we do and get a bit crazy on the day after? And then, what does it mean for us to say that "Christ is King"?**

**Today we proclaim Christ the King. This 'celebration' in the church is actually a pretty new. Its roots go back only to the late 1800's, when the world's great empires--British, American, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Japanese--were all either at war or about to go to war somewhere. The pope at that time sought to address a world that was destroying itself, as one nation sought domination over another, by writing a letter in which he spoke of Christ as the true King. In the letter, he reminded the empires that God is present with the whole human race, even with those who do not know God. After World War I, a single Sunday was designated to celebrate Christ the King. Eventually, Christ the King Sunday was set on this day - the last Sunday of the church year. Think about it. A world divided - nations seeking power, domination. Generally speaking, not bad people - but not following the rule of love and forgiveness that Christ continues to call us to.**

**What does it mean to you to say that Christ is King? It is good church language - but does it really mean anything to us as individuals as we live out our lives? We often call upon Christ in prayer and during the Christmas season we hear songs that refer to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords but too often it does not seem as though we comprehend or believe what we are saying. It is always interesting to me to read some of the information that comes out of the polls that are conducted in our country. A recent Gallop Poll conducted in the United States showed again that more than 86% of all Americans considered themselves Christian, but interestingly enough - less than half knew who preached the Sermon on The Mount. The same Poll showed that 60% of the country was in Church last Easter, but one out of four did not know what Easter is about or what we are celebrating at Easter. So when we name Jesus as King, when we call him Lord, I find myself wondering what it means to us? In what way is Christ King for us?**

**Jesus, Himself, said that His kingdom was out of this world. Confronted by Pilate in today's Gospel text, it seems as though there is an expectation that the kingdom of Jesus would have been like any other kingdom. But there is none of the usual trappings - no currency bearing His likeness, no palace, no royal air force, no taxes to support His government bureaucracy. - - - The images from both Daniel and Revelation are really out of this world.**

**A throne of fire - coming in the clouds - an 'ancient one' with white robes and hair of pure white, white as wool seated on the throne. It is something that it out of this world. Yet, even though His kingdom is not of this world - He is to be our king. How can that be? Do you ever ask yourself how it is that Christ rules in our world and in our lives? In many ways it seems that we are content to let Christ be king in word only - or perhaps we are content to think of Him as king in the 'sweet by and by' but not in the here and now. For right now - we have to get to the mall.**

**I believe that there is a challenge set before us on this 'Christ the King Sunday'. I believe that the challenge is allow what seems to be so 'out of this world' into our world - into our lives. It is so very easy to let the world rule our lives and leave Christ in out of our world. But Christ came to rule in our world - to bring peace to the nations - peace to our individual relationship - peace to our lives. He come to rule by grace and forgiveness. He come to rule in love. We thank God for such a king whose great desire is to give us life.**

**AMEN**