

John 18:33-37

Christ the King

November 20, 1994

Sometimes a yesterday casts a long, long shadow of darkness. I remember Leanie. Seven times during world war II her home was destroyed by allied bombs. Seven times she emerged from the bomb holding her two year old child, only to find rubble and burning. That yesterday cast a long, long shadow of darkness in her.

Sometimes I think that I can escape the dark shadows of my life by pretending. Maybe if I think they are not there, they won't be there. I'm like a child playing peek-a-boo. What I don't see isn't. But of course it is. The more I pretend about the shadows, the deeper the darkness they cast until the past overshadows the present.

During a time of deep darkness, God sent Daniel a vision. Daniel lived when there was no visible hope, no cause to be optimistic. The tumor is inoperable. I want a divorce. Your child has been killed. Our army is defeated. Daniel lived in a moment like that.

Out of the future shone a light: Daniel says, As I watched in the night visions I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was giving dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

In that moment in time when God's chosen people had no dominion, no king, no glory, when they were served by no nations, when they were not even a nation themselves, God promised one of their own would rule over all. Forever.

While there was not a single reason to be optimistic, the people lived by the light of this hope.

The one seen by Daniel from afar, has now been given a name, and that name is Jesus.

I was surprised by the words of a prayer I prayed this week. I read the gospel for this Sunday before I shared the Lord's Supper with one who is not able to be here with us. I began to pray about Christ the king. I heard myself saying, praying, We thank you Lord, that the king who will rule forever is Jesus.

That is why we give thanks, and have hope. It is not that there will be someone who will rule forever, and have dominion that is over all people, like the nameless human being Daniel saw. For who knows what such a nameless ruler would bring. But we have hope because we have seen and heard and received Jesus, and we know he is the good shepherd. We know he is the good Samaritan who stops to help the beaten traveler. We know he is the only Son of God who is gentle and full of peace. We know he is the one who touched lepers to heal them, not afraid of being contaminated by them. We know he is the one who embraced children, and forgave the woman caught in adultery. We know he is the one who shared his peace with Peter who denied him three times, the one who called the disciples his own even though they slept through his time of trial. To Jesus is given dominion and glory and kingship that all people and nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

The days that have passed and are passing cast dark shadows over your heart, and your soul.

But now the light of God's future day, the day of Christ the king is shining. Through faith in Jesus you walk not in the shadows of your yesterday, but in the light of God's tommorrow. Jesus who was crucified, who died weak, suffering, has been enthroned in the place of highest honor.

And you who now live in weakness, suffering are given power to believe. The light of Jesus comes to cast out all darkness.

And so people of God's kingdom come. Come, join tommorrow's feast, Christ with us, in us. Come and taste the light of God who will enter you to cast out all darkness. Come, receive your king, Jesus.

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