

THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING YEAR 'B' 1985

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Each year during my ministry I held a service
for the Handicapped.

Now, in 1985, they are becoming more accepted
in society.

At this service at Cessnock, they came in buses from
Sydney and Newcastle Crossroads; and some
from a Cessnock group and Abedare.

READINGS: Daniel 7: 13–18
Revelation 1: 4–8
John 18: 33–37

INTRODUCTION:

It was Friday morning! And it was dark! The air was chilly, and Pontius Pilate shivered as he listened to the brassy notes, sounding from a trumpet, signalling that Annus was at the gate with the prisoner – Jesus of Nazareth.

Pilate did not wait for them to come in! He went to meet them. He sat on a chair of bronze and ivory, no a high platform facing the praetorium gates.

Jesus was brought before Pilate – bound! An accusation was made against Him, saying, “He claims that He is a King!”! ... THIS man? – in a soiled robe! – with his wrists bound! – and His face cut! – a K-I-N-G?

Pilate could not believe it; and challenged Jesus: “Are you a king?” It was a simple question, but he did not get the answer he wanted; and it frustrated him.

WE know – that Jesus Christ is Lord and King! And we celebrate Him today! – In the Scripture readings. – In the hymns and prayers. – And we celebrate Him together!

One morning when I was attending Chapel in a Psychiatric Centre, with some of my friends there; one patient arrived wearing a gown and a party hat like a crown.

With folded arms, he said, “I am a K-I-N-G – you must bow down to me!”

I said to him, “Good morning, O King – are you coming into Chapel this morning? – Let me come with you”.

“That will be fine”, he said, and we walked into the Chapel together – and I sat with him throughout the service. Of course my friend was only pretending – and I knew that. But Jesus was a real King and Pilate did NOT know that.

Then Jesus upset Pilate all the more, by saying, “My kingdom is not of this world” – What did He mean by that? – My kingdom is NOT of this world.

I will tell you a story, that will help you understand.

(1) THE BROKEN VASE:

Once there was a king who had a very valuable vase. It was so beautiful that he had it placed in a museum, so that the nation could share its beauty.

Resentment on the part of a Royal Servant, lead him one day to plan how he could spitefully destroy that vases.

He hid in the museum until the attendants were out of sight. Then he caught hold of this masterpiece of pottery – and raising it above his head, he threw it on the floor with a – C-R-A-S-H! And he slipped away unnoticed.

The attendants came rushing to the scene, only to discover the vase / s-m-a-s-h-e-d to pieces – broken beyond repair. When the king was told about this tragedy, he loved that vase so much that he issued instructions to have a Potter employed to repair the damage.

A Potter was found, and he worked patiently for many months – and with great skill, he sorted out the broken pieces, and delicately pieced them together till the vase was restored to its original beauty.

(2) JESUS CHRIST AMONG US:

The Scriptures tell us how an enemy of God, whom we call SATAN, delivered God's creation a s-m-a-s-h-i-n-g BLOW! in an attempt to destroy mankind – God's most treasured possession. – You and Me!

Satan thought he had ruined God's creation once and for all – Y-E-S! What God needed – was what the king needed; someone to restore His treasured masterpiece — mankind!

As there was NO ONE among His creation who could repair the damage done by Satan He decided to do it Himself. So He sent His only Son – Christ the Lord – who was with God at the beginning of creation...

By His mighty power, He created the heavens and the earth – the sun and the moon and the stars – He created the universe, and He created mankind.

So He came to us! – He laid aside His heavenly robes, and became clothed in the garment of humanity. – He became like you and me –fully human, in order to find the broken fragments, and piece them together again.

SO – down the hot, dusty streets of Jerusalem, He went. – Along the pebbly shores of Galilee, – into villages and market places – across the country-side, in search of the broken pieces of humanity. DID HE FIND THEM?

YES HE DID! He found then alright! In people like the blind Bartameus – and the boy who had fits – the 12 year old girl who died – the leper who was regarded as unclean – the sick – the dumb – the lame – the deaf...

The adulterer – the harlot – the despised tax collector – a Church leader – the rich – the poor – CHILDREN. He went among them all! Picking up the broken pieces of His humanity; and gently placing them back into God's masterpiece of design.

He continues to do this today! – Christ the King! – Why! – He found ME! – a broken piece of humanity. – He picked me up and forgave MY sin, and placed me in God's great masterpiece of Salvation History.

He is still carrying out this work among people like Crossroads – or through places like Caloola – or the little School at Abedare for Handicapped Children – or places like Centre Industries in Sydney.

But like Pilate not everyone recognizes, that behind this work of placing people back into their rightful place in the community, and life itself, is Christ The King! He is not recognized because He is NOT the sort of king that one would expect...

For, you see, His Kingdom is NOT of this world – and yet, it is IN this world that He is at work! He hasn't got a Rolls Royce car – He doesn't possess an army of soldiers, and guns – and aeroplanes – and submarines. YET He is working in our midst! – Christ the King!

(3) CHRIST THE KING:

Jesus – are You a King? – Are You really a KING? – Yes! Of course You are! We know that You are at Your Father's right hand in Glory – working through people like us...my friends of Crossroads – Sydney and Newcastle. My friends from Cessnock and Abedare...

We KNOW that Christ the King, whom we celebrate today – is coming again to us – to wind up the affairs of this world. And we are going to know Him when He comes.

Do you know how we are going to recognize Him? – Well, I'll tell you. The first thing He is going to do, is to heal the Handicapped. The Prophet Isaiah assures us of this!

He tells us that when the Messiah comes – “Then shall the eyes of the blind see. The lame shall leap like a deer. The ears of the deaf will hear. The lips of the dumb will sing praise to God” (Isaiah 35:5). That, is how we will know Christ the King!

Why! This is what Jesus told the disciples of John the Baptist when he sent them to Jesus to ask if He was the One who would come, or should we expect someone else?

Jesus told them to go back to John and tell him what you both hear and see; – “The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are brought back to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor” (Matthew 11:25-30). All this He did during His short ministry in the world. This, was how John the Baptist would know Him!

But there is something else we will recognize about Him. – The nail prints in His hands that will remind us how He became Handicapped for us – you and me – the whole world! That He might lead us to perfection!

The same Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 14:9,12) tells us that the Day of the Lord will bring suffering, and turmoil and cruel bondage, but you will see Satan – the slanderer – the one who leads us astray – the one who accuses us before God every day — and you will see his reign brought to an end!!!

CONCLUSION:

When Jesus claimed that His Kingdom was NOT of this world, He was simply saying that He does not lead men and women – boys and girls, by exercising power over them!

He leads us from within us – by witnessing to the truth that sets us free. The truth hurts some people; but it liberates others. Like a shepherd calls His sheep, Jesus calls us. Those who listen to Him – hear the truth, and they follow Him – and this – Christ the King leads us to God – to freedom and love. He is already in the process of doing this very thing!!!

Come! Let us worship and adore Him!