



*Sermon on Reign of Christ Sunday*

*Ephesians 1:15-23 NRSV*

First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois  
Reign of Christ, Sunday, November 26th, 2017  
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Our Epistle lesson this morning is from the letter to the Ephesians. Back when the Bible was written, letters were written a little differently than they are now. Letters in our time have a form similar to this letter to Santa that I came across this week. “Dear Santa, How are you? Well, enough of the chit- chat. Let’s get down to business. This year I want a big space Lego set, some jelly beans, a Sharks jacket and hat, and any Nintendo game. From Jake”

Letters back then had a lot more chit-chat than Jake’s letter to Santa. The Letter to the Ephesians began like this “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Now that is a friendly greeting! Such greetings would be followed by sentences of praise and thanksgiving. The letter to the Ephesians doesn’t follow this exact recipe though. The author of Ephesians adds a prayer following the thanksgiving and then goes on to explain how God showed his power by exalting Christ to reign over all. It ends with the same theme Frosty preached on two weeks ago from 1 Thessalonians 4: Christ’s reign is in this age and in the age to come.

Today is Reign of Christ Sunday, also known as Christ the King Sunday. This is the final week of our liturgical calendar. (The next year starts next week with the beginning of Advent). On this day we celebrate how God chose to exalt Christ to rule over the whole universe. We celebrate that Christ is Lord of all.

Guilt

That Christ is Lord of all is central to our faith, but, do we live our lives as though this

is our reality, that Christ really is our one Lord and Savior? Or do we follow the ways of this world instead? Do we live as though Christ is our One and Only?

Our pluralistic society highly resists the claim that any one thing is right, that any one thing is the truth. In our country it has gotten to the point that we can't even count on the news-- the one thing that once was trusted to be accurate and trustworthy. Now any "news" that doesn't agree with our views or that poses us in a bad light is labeled as "fake news." If even the news is fake, what is real? Everything is relative and nothing is certain. We are left to rely on our feelings to determine who and what are right and wrong.

This is not God's way. Our feelings have been corrupted by the fall. Since Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, we have had sinful natures. Our feelings, our gut instincts, lead us astray. Our world is evidence of this.

But there is one person who will never lead us astray. Jesus Christ. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. When we place our faith in Him, we can be certain of the truth.

..... But, do we put our belief into action?

Do we live our lives, order our days and weeks, around Him? Are we committed to growing in Christ-likeness, being His hands and feet in this world? Do we put our faith into action?

Grace

Here the good news. Even when we fall short, we, as Christians, are members of the body of Christ. We are joined to the One who stands above all worldly powers, both in this age and the age to come.

But what exactly do we believe about Christ the King? The early church sought to concisely state just who Christ is and what he has done for us. The Nicene Creed was written in 381 AD and states just that. It uses language from our Epistle reading today.

In Nicene Creed we proclaim...

"We believe in one Lord, Christ Jesus

the only Son of God

Eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God, Light from Light

True God from True God,  
Begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father...  
through him all things were made.”

You may notice how this is similar to the Apostles Creed. This first part addresses all the controversies over Christ at the time the creed was written. What it means is that Jesus is 100% God. Even so, he chose to become 100% man. The creed continues...

“For us and our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again  
in accordance to the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

This creed affirms that Christ evidenced God’s power when he became fully man so that he could become a perfect sacrifice in place of us. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice, once and for all, so that we, so that you, could be clothed in his righteousness and spend eternity with Him.

God exalted Christ and gave him dominion over the world for the benefit of the church.