



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 24, 2013

End Time 4 - Christ the King

Sermon Text: [Colossians 1:13-20](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Genesis 49:8-12](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 98](#)

Second Lesson: [Colossians 1:13-20](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 23:35-43](#)

The Promises of End Time ***"...you will be with me in paradise."***

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

It's an old saying, right... "You can't judge a book by it's cover"? It basically means to not let appearances deceive you, or appearances can be deceiving. It's Christ the King Sunday and we gather together, and what do we hear in our Gospel? Jesus as a common criminal hanging amongst common criminals, being executed for the amusement of Jerusalem at a festival. It doesn't look real kingly. Mel Brooks' History of the World – Part 1, It's Good to Be King, doesn't exactly apply here.

You have to wonder, what did the people think when this guy who couldn't even carry a piece of wood to Calvary is there hanging on a cross and he says to this thief next to him, *"today you will be with me in paradise."* Do you think people thought he was just delusional? Maybe the pain had gotten to him and he already had lost it and he was already out of touch with reality? *"Today you will be with me in paradise."* You're hanging on a cross dying a slow agonizing death, and you're talking about paradise? Talk about nuts! What kind of fruitcakes would ever have followed this guy who thought he was something? Appearances can be deceiving.

The same thing took place in Colosse. Paul had not founded this congregation, but he wrote to them. He was troubled because appearances were deceiving to them. Others had founded the congregation. Epaphras had been there. Priscilla and Aquila I believe were from that area. They had taught the Gospel, and then some Johnny-come-latelies came in and started teaching them that "Jesus is your Savior, but that's just the start. There is more fullness that you need to learn." It appears that they talked about worshiping angels as though they were also worthy of worship. It kind of kept putting Christ into the background a little bit farther and a little bit farther as you were focusing on all these other things. Maybe it's because someone who has died as a criminal just wasn't that appealing. Maybe angels had a little more zing to them, so the people were embracing that teaching. Or maybe, I don't know, maybe what happened to the Christians at Colosse is what happens to us, only it happened a lot quicker to them, that they kind of became bored with Jesus and wanted something a little more exciting.

Whatever the case was, Paul writes to them and he just basically writes the same theme over and over. The whole theme of the book is, Jesus is superior, Jesus is

supreme. You heard it in what I read to you, didn't you? *"...in everything he might have the supremacy."* These are the paragraphs right after his greeting and his thanksgiving for the people. It really sets out the theme. He uses words that he doesn't use in any of his other letters. It seems like he's using some of the terms that the people that were teaching falsely in Colosse had been using.

He talks about *"visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities"* in verse 16 if you saw that in there. Those four terms that he uses are different ranks of angels. Paul never really uses those words in other places. But it seems like he is saying, "You people that think the angels are so wonderful and worthy of your time, they didn't redeem you. They didn't die on the cross for you. They didn't present themselves as an atoning sacrifice for your sins and give you full redemption. In fact, Jesus is so far superior to them because he is the One that created them. He created everything that exists. He is the most important thing! From him and through him all things have their being and exist. He is superior to angels because without him, the angels wouldn't have been created. So why are you worshiping something that the Creator created instead of worshiping the Creator himself?"

He also goes on to say how Jesus has the supremacy because he is the One that rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. He is the One that redeemed us and gave us the forgiveness of sins. In him all the fullness (it seems to be one of their buzz words in the Colossian false teachers), all the fullness of the deity lives because he is true God from all eternity. He is not just a choice among angels to worship. He's not just a choice among other things to be interested in. He is supreme and beyond all because he is the One who created us and redeemed us. That's what he talks about the whole rest of the book.

Christ the King Sunday...it's pretty fitting. Jesus is supreme. He is supreme because he is above everything else because he created it and he redeemed us. We just sang that in the hymn of the day. The end of that first verse...*Not unto us but to your name all honor be given For matchless mercy, forgiveness, and grace...*it sounds exactly like what Paul was talking about in here. We have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. So to him be all glory, not to anything else.

You can shake your head and say, "What was wrong with those Colossian Christians that they got sucked into worshiping angels?" But I think you have to take a step back and ask yourself, when you just sang that first verse of that hymn, did you thrill at the thought that Jesus is worthy of all glory because of his matchless mercy, forgiveness, and grace, or is it just another hymn verse? Have we become so acquainted with this idea that Jesus is the source of our redemption, that he is our Creator, that we don't stop and have our jaw drop at it anymore? Do we stand in awe of our King? Or are we just slightly amused or interested in our King from time to time? We're never that way, are we?

I thought about that this week a lot. I thought about it from Wednesday morning on actually. I haven't been thinking about much else when I've been driving. Wednesday

at chapel, we had Fox Valley Lutheran here. Pastor Schaser gave a very nice chapel. He talked and displayed Law and Gospel very well. Then afterwards he talked about things at Fox Valley Lutheran. It was a nice presentation. He would say things like, "At Fox Valley, we get to study God's Word throughout the day." The kids sat there like you are. Then he said, "And we have a robot club." "Ooooooo!" It echoed off the walls in the basement. "We have soccer." "Ooooooo!" "We have football." "Ooooooo!" "We have God's Word." (Cricket.)

I have nothing against robots, unless they try to take over the world. I have nothing against sports. But it just made me stop and think. Have I become bored with Jesus as well?

We didn't have much time to do anything else in class after that, so I asked the 7th-8th graders about some of these things. I said, "Why are we bored with it?" They said, "Well, because we've heard it every day that Jesus loves us and has taken away our sins." That's what one of them said to me. I think they probably hit it spot on, didn't they? Familiarity breeds contempt of a type, is that fair? That I just don't thrill to sit down and learn more about my Savior, I find other things I'd rather do because quite frankly they interest me more at times. Have you ever found that in yourself?

So when you think about that, how different are you or I from the Colossians who got sucked into the thrill of worshiping angels? You and I can get distracted by the things of our life. Even sometimes things that are good and Godly can distract us.

What I mean is this...God has blessed me with five children. As I care for those five children, it should be one of the ways I thank God for salvation. Caring for them is a means to glorifying Jesus who saved me. It's not the end in and of itself. At least that's God's plan, right? But as I parent my children, or as I provide for my children, and maybe it's this way for you, I don't always think I'm doing this for Jesus. Do you? Do we do it simply because we love our children? There's nothing wrong with that, but are we missing a step in there? Jesus is supreme in everything. That's all areas of our life, not just the time that I spend sitting in a church or at a church meeting or at a church study. He wants to be supreme in all of my life because he created and he redeemed me. If Satan can trip me up by separating me completely from Christ, he's happy. Or if he can trip me up by getting me to focus on something just slightly to the right or to the left of Jesus and have that become the most important thing to me instead of Jesus himself, don't you think he's also pretty doggone happy?

I can't stop thinking about it this week because I can see it in myself too clearly. And I think if we're honest with ourselves, we can each see it in ourselves. Yes, we love our Savior, but our sinful nature loves a lot of other things at times more than we love our Savior. That's why it's call sin.

The other thing that the 7th-8th graders gave me as an answer on why we do this is that we are sinners. It's kind of the answer for everything at times in class. We're sinners. We have a sinful nature. Okay, yes, that's true, but what does it mean?

I think that answer is truer than what they even knew. I think we are sinners who don't recognize at times that we are sinners. We are sinners who don't think that we need Jesus to call us out of that darkness and provide full redemption for us. Sometimes we kid ourselves into thinking, "Yes, I sin. But I'm not as bad as someone else." Or "I'm really trying hard to be close to Jesus." Or "I'm trying to serve him." And we don't see our failures as sins. We just see them as coming up short maybe a little bit at times. So we say we are a sinner, but we underestimate really what that means.

That means that we deserve nothing but hell. We don't deserve forgiveness. We don't deserve Jesus to have staggered to Calvary with a cross on his back and then die on a cross with my sins on his back. I don't deserve that. Neither do you. Yet that is what he did for us.

That's why we sing *Not unto us but to you be glory* for this mercy, this amazing grace, this matchless mercy, all these things that he has done so that we can be his children. If we take it for granted, then we're selling him short, aren't we? If we say, "Yeah, yeah, I know, but tell me something a little more interesting," then woe to us and let us fall on our face in front of the cross and say, "Jesus, forgive me for such wretched sin."

The One who was full God from all eternity came and took our place. He took away our sin. Then because he knows how weak we are, he gives us for all time his body and his blood so that we can come and hear him say, "This was given, this was poured out for you for the forgiveness of your sins." Something tangible. Something we taste. Something we can smell. So that God says to us, to every last one of our senses, "I love you and I've taken away your sin." Don't take it for granted! Marvel at it! Rejoice in it! And let it shape you and change you so that you have a greater desire to live for your Lord. So that honestly, when you get up in the morning you say to yourself, "I'm a sinner who deserves nothing from God, but he has given me another day to glorify him, another day to enjoy his blessings. Lord, help me not to love any of them more than I love you."

The more we focus on his Word and his Sacraments, the more we spend time getting to know him more and getting to know ourselves for what we really are, what Scripture says we are, the more we will rejoice. The more we will say that Jesus is not only our Savior, he's our King, he's our Lord, and we want to live for him. That will come, but it really only comes through effort that we put into being close to him in Word and Sacrament. He will bless us. He will produce the growth. But if we don't spend any time with that Word and Sacrament, he isn't going to be able to do it.

So don't be deceived by appearances. Get familiar with the Gospel. Don't let that familiarity breed a type of contempt. Amen.