

## Crazy Love

*Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."*

Power. The word itself conjures up an almost endless array of images: military might, personal charisma, political might, physical force, social influence, wealth.

For those outside the circles of power, finding a way to push inside seems to be the key to success and happiness, but Jesus says no, that is not the way in at all.

On Christ the King, we are offered an insight to the nature of power and of powerlessness; we learn about capital "T" Truth. As we see Jesus standing before Pilate, we see a true reflection of the fragile nature of worldly power.

Pilate, who thinks he has power, in fact has little, and the power that he does have, the power to put Jesus to death, will be overturned. Jesus, who appears utterly powerless, is the only one who knows where true power comes from and what it means.

Who could possibly believe that this beaten and bloodied man is the Alpha and the Omega—the one who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty?

Is it any wonder that in our time people think that we're a little bit crazy and foolish to go to church to learn how to follow this man?

I have been remembering Presiding Bishop Curry's sermon at General Convention several years ago in which he said, "It's quite possible that what the world really needs most right now are a few more people who are crazy enough to love the world the way Jesus did; to claim his Truth as our own."

The truth is that if we want to be Jesus' disciples, be those who would live our lives following Jesus without fear into deep compassion, forgiveness, mercy and hope, then we are called and summoned and challenged to be just as foolish as Jesus.

Bishop Curry talked about the way Jesus displayed his love and compassion and it is enough to make you think. If we listen to Jesus long enough, we hear him say things like, "Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing" (1 Peter 3:9). Who says things like that? We also hear him say other things like, "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Mt. 23:11). That is something Pilate would have never understood.

And what the world calls 'wretched' Jesus calls 'blessed.' Blessed are the poor and the poor in spirit. Blessed are the merciful, the compassionate. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst that God's righteous justice might prevail.

Blessed are those who work for peace. Blessed are you when you are persecuted just for trying to love and do what is good even when the world screams for more violence and retribution.

Jesus said, love your enemies, and bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you. And as people were killing him he prayed, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

Are we bold enough to claim this man as our king; to trust in his way of being in the world over our default of fearfulness and violence?

In today's world where hate is increasingly being encouraged from the halls of power, it might seem like utter madness to think that real power is found in compassion and forgiveness. It is hard to believe that peace and forgiveness might just be stronger than retributive violence. And maybe it is foolish to claim in this day and age that the Church has anything to offer to a world who is often downright, and sometimes rightfully, embarrassed by our presence.

But the answer for us is not to make our message easier to become just one more stop on the escape from the world highway. “We need more people with the insane courage to love like Jesus, to give like Jesus, to forgive like Jesus, to do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God — like Jesus.”

As Bishop Curry said, “We must dare to believe that we can change the world from the nightmare it often is into something close to the dream that God dreams for it.”

Sunday we will gather to dream the dream that God can still use us in this world as a light in the darkness. We will stake a claim that this crucified king has the power to set us on fire with new life and hope in the face of terror and sorrow.

I am still just crazy enough to believe that God is real and that Jesus lives and that we have a vital role yet to play. I hope you believe with me and invest generously in the belief that we can change things!

Even if that change is simply creating a place to come once a week to hear of hope, share the sacred Eucharistic meal and go back out into the world just a little bit braver, a touch more hopeful.

Can we change the world by what we do here at Christ Church? Can we create world peace or solve world hunger? Probably not. But we can do small acts with great courage that help us all remember that God’s world is ultimately good, that we need not fear, and that one drop of hope at a time, we can change ourselves.

We can leave this place, go back out into our community and be that person who makes a difference by taking the time to show love and kindness to someone who needs it. This won’t make the evening news, but it will make one life just a little better.

Grace and Peace,

Stephanie+