

Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Nov 25, 2018

Are We Respecting Our Ancestors? – Reign of Christ Sunday (Psalm 132)



**If your children keep my covenant
and my decrees that I shall teach them,
their children also, forevermore,
shall sit on my throne.
(Ps 132)**

A lesson from the psalm

It's one of the most boring chapters in the Bible – it's the first chapter of Matthew – remember the long list of 'begats' in the first chapter – it goes back to Abraham – the one with whom God made the covenant and gave the decrees that would enable and guide them to bless creation together – and it includes David, the monarch God favoured most – 42 generations of the line of ancestors into which Jesus was born – 42 generations until this covenant-making, promise-keeping Creative Energy, with fervour and finality, took flesh and dwelt among us – after all the law and the prophets, showed us in everyday life what God's loving intention was for us when the Trinity sowed their image within us – to be with God in community blessing the earth – that's what Christ reign in the Commonwealth of God is all about – we respect that ancestry, obscure as much of it might be to us, when we take up that gift and mission as our inheritance and become agents of God's reconciling love in our time and place – when we accept Jesus Christ's invitation, like in our picture this morning, to sit on that throne with him – but let's be clear what kind of monarch God become – what kind of respect the Trinity longs for in their children

Provocative points to ponder – as always, too many to cram into one sermon

- Early in my ministry, I read a book by a Mennonite scholar named Donald B Kraybill – called *The Upside-Down Kingdom* – he saw the Gospel of the Commonwealth of God breaking into many cultures and turning their complacent systems of control and callousness upside down – think about it for a moment – Jesus' way of exercising his lordship is through an open and inclusive friendship - Jesus' war chariot is a borrowed donkey – faithful Jews would see it and remember Zechariah's words about God coming with humility to bring peace on earth – Jesus' throne is a cross – stuck in a garbage dump outside the Holy City – Jesus' triumph is a terrorized and traumatized community that has faith, against overwhelming evidence and odds, that this Jesus, together with the Creator and the Spirit in some kind of divine community, actually rule the world with their reconciling love – and they have taken the message of God's promise to Abraham to the very ends of the earth – not perfectly, by any means – but always in ways that the Spirit can use to work her reconciling love

Transformations this witness to God's living Word in Jesus Christ might provoke ...

- So, this is our ancestry – we are the children of this covenant-challenged people, reaching back well over 100 generations by now – remembering and respecting God's reconciling love, given to us so we can bless creation with it, transforms the way we see things – we are 're-deemed' – see or consider things anew – and with that transformed insight, we act differently – we have a different impact in the world – forgiven, freed, healed, saved – all for the purpose of becoming agents of this upside-down kingdom, this commonwealth of reconciling love, that was finally delivered in its fullness in person by our Creator
- Exploring the transforming promises of that God is what we do each Advent – that starts next week

Your Notes

Prayers of the people offering thanks, seeking help, and being wowed

*[The form and flow of thanks, help, and awe is taken from Anne Lamott's wonderful little book on prayer, **Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers** (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012).]*