

# Coffee to Go | Reign of Christ

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

reign, Christ, Advent, God, scripture, service

## SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

### **Karin Peter** 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the seasons, scriptures and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karen Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So this is our last week of the liturgical calendar year, of the Christian calendar year. It is the last Sunday of what's called Ordinary Time. And next week, we will begin a new year, a new cycle of the calendar with the first Sunday of Advent. So we're going to end our year, with the day that is called Reign of Christ Sunday. In some churches, it's called Christ the King Sunday, just depends what your tradition is. But basically, this is the day, Reign of Christ, where we celebrate, if you will, that the purpose of Jesus' ministry, death, resurrection has been fulfilled, that we celebrate that in in hope, and together as a people. So it's the time where we understand that God's purposes of God's mission, so God sends Jesus, and that's what we talked about through the Advent to Easter. And then Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, which we talked about at Pentecost. And then in Ordinary Time, the Holy Spirit sends the church which is us. So the Holy Spirit says disciples, in mission to offer acts of compassion and justice throughout ordinary time. So that's kind of how this purposes of God, purposes of Jesus, work with the liturgical calendar. So we're at the end of that time of the Holy Spirit sends us and we're going to start again, next week, with God sending Jesus and our preparation for that. So this week, we're at a place that is actually, the name of this section of scripture is called the judgment of the nations which I feel like we need to have like Doom Doom Doom kinda underneath that. It's a horrible, but it's the traditional scripture that we use in this cycle in a cycle for Christ the King Sunday or Reign of Christ Sunday. So let's get to it.

### **Blake Smith** 02:57

All right. Well, the passage comes today from the Gospel according to Matthew, the 25th chapter, and it is the 31st through the 46th verse, it is one that we are very familiar with, I think. But here we go.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him. And He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those that his right hand come you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you took care of me. I was in prison, and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when was it that we saw you

hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the King will answer them, Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me. Then he will say to those that his left hand, you who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, For I was hungry, and you gave Me no food. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me naked. And you did not give me clothing sick and in prison and you did not visit me. They then also we'll answer, Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty? Or a stranger? Or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you? Then he will answer them. Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Yeah, a lot of judgment in that. However, however, I mean, it's very appropriate for Reign of Christ Sunday. And I'll talk a little bit about what that is in a in a second, but very appropriate the reign of Christ Sunday as Christ comes into his own. It's the ultimate summary passage. You've, I've been teaching, I've been preaching, I've been talking, I've been healing. I've been doing all this. But here's what matters. Of course, we know that we have the greatest commandment and to love God with all of our heart, mind and soul and to love our neighbor as ourselves. And this is kind of what it looks like. This is kind of what it looks like. And so ...

**Karin Peter** 06:15

But it's not what we want it to look like, because we want it to look like we go to church on Sunday and do our duty and, you know, give our offering and go home. So this is harder.

**Blake Smith** 06:24

Exactly. There is a key here for me in this passage, because the the ones who are considered righteous, the ones that are on the right hand of God, don't even realize why they're there. It is so I mean, they have been so transformed and changed by the presence of God in their life, that it's just second nature. They that's just how they live. It's how we're supposed to live as disciples. So they're just as shocked as anybody Well, what did we do? We haven't said we've been waiting we've been watching for you, we haven't seen you. Well, that's kind of a message to us that God is always there. And in Christ is in the lives and faces of those we meet ... the least of these. So let me say just real quick, a little bit about Reign of Christ so that our listeners understand that's kind of a big churchy word and actually in Orthodox Christianity might be used, we don't typically use that language in Community of Christ. But, so for our old timers from the RLDS days, Reign of Christ, the Reign of Christ is Zion, it is the presence of the peaceable kingdom, which as we also know, has changed in our understanding over the years, and Community of Christ, we might talk about that more as sacred community and being equal to the reign of God when we are living in in God's preferred way of being together. And then for those who are spiritual, but not religious, who are kind of out there, it's just being in the presence of those who care for one another. So this is what it's about. And again, when we have truly been transformed, when we have accepted unconditionally, this love of God, it becomes second nature. We don't even think about what we do it, it is it is who we are. Doctrine and Covenants section 140, under Israel A Smith use the words, and these would resound with that RLDS portion, specifically, but we hear it again and again. And it's this, "Zonic conditions (which today we would call the reign of Christ

or sacred community) are no further away, nor any closer than the spiritual condition of my people justifies." That puts a lot of responsibility on us, on our spiritual condition. And have we been transformed, has it changed the way we engage with others and with creation and with God? Because Jesus is all about community and how that community cares for the least of these, or the little ones we might say. That's kind of our goal. That's kind of our goal. It's important how we care for one another, and I wish ... I I'm going to show my ignorance or my inability to memorize, but we had doctrine covenants in the last several sections where it talks about, we will know of our success by how our children are treated. And I wish I could quote that and I know there are many who can and so I don't have that at the tip of my tongue so. But this the sacred community, the kingdom of God, the reign of Christ is God's preferred future. And we might also note that it is for all nations. It's for everybody. It's not just about the Jews, it wasn't just about this new, growing Christian community, it is for all nations. And when we can come to that point of hearing that message, and being in that type of community, then we know that this kingdom, this "reign" has come near to us,

**Karin Peter** 10:46

Which is, as Seventy, Blake, which is what we're called to send out and proclaim to people, is it not? The kingdom has come near to you, the good news has been shared with you. And when we act like we've received it, then it's present.

**Blake Smith** 11:01

Yeah, yeah. So some questions we might ask ourselves. And I struggle with the way to put the sort of so I would say, first, how attentive am I? Or how attentive are you to the least of these? And you might say, Well, I see the least of these on TV, or in the news or that kind of thing. So I would encourage us to think more deeply this week about who are the least of these that are in our circle of influence or in our everyday life that we often look beyond? Or look past? And then as we consider those, ask ourselves the question, do I feel the same level of concern or indignation, with acts of injustice towards me that I feel toward ... Or maybe I should say the other way around, Do I feel the same level of concern or indignation with acts of injustice towards others, that I do about acts of injustice towards myself? So yes, I don't like acts of injustice towards me, but in the Reign of Christ, how others are affected ought to also deeply affect me. And then, finally, I would just say, Are we more willing to offer compassionate acts if we get credit for it, rather than if we do them anonymously?

**Karin Peter** 12:42

Yeah, now we're back to that status we talked about one of our previous episodes, where do I want to be acknowledged for what I'm doing, or am I willing to do it and not be acknowledged? Like the people in this particular scripture? Yeah,

**Blake Smith** 12:56

Absolutely. Yeah. The righteous, like we said, did that they didn't even realize they were doing it, it was just who they were. And that's what we're called to be.

**Karin Peter** 13:04

I love that part of, of the story, too. So Blake, I'm thinking about how we can experience it this week. And I think that being attentive to the least of these, to the little ones, to the needs of others, to those

who don't have voice or who fly under the radar, it seems or maybe simply go unseen. How attentive are we to people who have needs in our as you said circle of influence are in our community. So it might be elderly folks who live alone, or kids in the school free breakfast program? Kids who, who really have needs or people out of work? Or someone who's been recently widowed or divorced? How can we act with compassion as this particular scripture kind of instructs us to do? So how do we greet or visit or call on the phone people how to have you actually call not text, and have a conversation with someone to actually give attention to someone without expecting a benefit to yourself? So this week, think about that, who are you noticing, that might have a need that you can respond to, in a way that offers compassion and justice to them, without thinking about will it bring you attention or glory or gold stars for doing it? No benefit to you. Just a blessing to others.

**Blake Smith 14:56**

Yeah, the other piece of that Karin, that I was thinking about as you were saying that you is and I hear people all the time talking about, well, those people in the corner, they don't really need it, or they need to do this or they need to do that. And one thing that I learned several years back when I was working with folks without houses in the Cleveland area was the importance of just giving them the dignity of a look in the eye, or a smile, or a nod rather than just assuming you know the story, passing your judgment or whatever, and turning and walking away. I mean, there's something too about this passage that just says, I just do it. And I'm not going to make a judgement about it. So if you're not one that, you know, wants to stop by and give something to somebody on the street, try for a week just looking them in the eye as you pass, and even waving to give them the dignity of their of their personhood, that might make a huge difference, regardless of their circumstance.

So our blessing today comes from a book, *At the Stillpoint* by Sara Arthur, and it's really appropriate for us as we close out ordinary time. After 29 weeks of changing seasons and roaming thoughts, we have come to the end of Ordinary Time. The days are shorter now. Creatures have taken flight or burrowed underground. Tomorrow, Advent begins. Poets and writers have walked alongside us during these ordinary days. Now we turn to prophets and angels, minstrels and Magi. And perhaps we are ready, ready for the light shining in the darkness, ready to receive the one whose mystery we have explored in all its aspects for the past seven months. May you enter Advent with an imagination, well nourished, and a prayer life deepened by the readings you encountered during ordinary time. Amen.

**Karin Peter 17:05**

That's a great blessing.

**Blake Smith 17:07**

It's a great way to end our long period of Ordinary Time. So thanks for being with us again here at Coffee to Go. We invite you to join us next week as we continue on our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.