

“Faith Matters” # 25 – Christ the King – November 26, 2017

Most of our western world is aware of only 3 special days in our Christian calendar: Christmas day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. But the Christian calendar is far richer than that. The new year begins next Sunday, with the season of Advent. That season has 4 Sundays to prepare us for Jesus’ coming to us at Bethlehem. Some churches use part of that time to anticipate his second coming.

The second major Christian season, called Epiphany, focuses for 7 weeks on how Jesus became widely known in the holy land as teacher, preacher, healer, and leader. The third season, Lent, is a period of 40 days (not counting Sundays) when we acknowledge how far we have strayed from the teachings of both the Old Testament and of Jesus. Lent ends just before Easter.

In the season of Easter, which lasts 7 weeks, we discover how Jesus’ resurrection enables the whole world to know him as Saviour. The final season, Pentecost, focuses for 25 Sundays on how the Holy Spirit led the early church, and now leads us to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

Today is the last of the 25 Pentecost Sundays and concludes the Christian calendar year with a great climax – for today is “Christ the King Sunday”. It’s a day when many churches sing Charles Wesley’s magnificent hymn:

“Rejoice the Lord is king; your sovereign Lord adore; give thanks, O mortals, sing and triumph evermore.... For Christ the Saviour reigns, the God of truth and love; when Jesus purged our stains, he took his seat above... His reign can never fail; he rules o’er earth and heaven: the keys of death and hell are to our Saviour given. Lift up your heart; lift up your voice; rejoice again I say, rejoice.”

We’re not obliged to adhere to the Christian calendar, but at least we can know that those 3 well known days, Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Sunday are only a small part of a cycle that can lead the worldwide Church closer each year to our Saviour, our Lord, our King.

(by Rev. Willard Pottinger – Erskine Presbyterian Church, Hamilton)