

Pentecost #8

7/26/2020

Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

J.V.Trautwein

Celebrate (Introduction)

“As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today’s gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God’s reign, the great surprise is that God’s grace finds us first!”

Opening Hymn: [“This Is My Father’s World”](#)

Psalm 119:129-136

Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.
¹³⁰ The unfolding of your words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple.
¹³¹ With open mouth I pant,
because I long for your commandments.
¹³² Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is your custom toward those who love your name.
¹³³ Keep my steps steady according to your promise,
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.
¹³⁴ Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may keep your precepts.
¹³⁵ Make your face shine upon your servant,
and teach me your statutes.
¹³⁶ My eyes shed streams of tears
because your law is not kept.

Hymn of Praise: [“Beautiful Savior”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [1 Kings 3:5-12](#)

2nd Reading: [Romans 8:26-29](#)

The Gospel: [Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52](#)

Hymn of the Day: "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=50&v=oGKLmThF2to&feature=emb_logo

The Message: ([Video](#))

Do you remember these words from the song in the Broadway Musical "Camelot"?

*Each evening, from December to December,
Before you drift to sleep upon your cot,
Think back on the tales that you remember
Of Camelot.*

*Ask ev'ry person if he's heard the story,
And tell it strong and clear if he has not,
That once there was a fleeting wisp of glory
Called Camelot
Camelot! Camelot!
Now say it out with pride and joy!
Camelot! Camelot!*

*Yes Camelot, my boy!
Where once it never rained till after sundown,
By eight a.m. the morning fog had flown
Don't let it be forgot
That once there was a spot
For one brief shining moment that was known
As Camelot.*

Oh, the longing for the utopian, fantasy world of Camelot. The kingdom where nothing seemed impossible and life seemed perfectly romantic, happy, and in tune with everything that was good and right. The kingdom which made dreams come true.

Each of us has our own version of Camelot tucked away in that warm and melancholy corner of our minds. In many respects this personal Camelot sets before us our hopes, dreams, goals and motivation in our lives. One can easily say that our personal Camelot helps to keep us going when faced with the obstacles of life such as today. It is that kingdom in which we long to have citizenship. It is a kingdom which we wish to be the real world of our everyday lives.

The Camelot of our lives need not be in the realm of fantasy and need not be just a dream. We need only to turn to the message of Jesus about the reality of a Camelot for all of us in our present and in our future. This Camelot is the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven.

(It is interesting that Matthew prefers kingdom of heaven while the other Gospels prefer kingdom of God.)

This kingdom is not a political kingdom like the political kingdom wished for by the Jews or the political reign of King Arthur but a spiritual kingdom. This is as the close associate to Luther, Melanchthon wrote "Christ's kingdom is spiritual, that is the heart's knowledge of God, fear of God, faith in God and the beginning of eternal righteousness and eternal life." This is far beyond the Camelot of King Arthur, far beyond any earthly kingdom or utopian dream for it is a kingdom that cannot be destroyed by any pandemic or societal turmoil. It is both a kingdom of the present and a kingdom for eternity. This is the kingdom which Jesus came to proclaim, a new kind of kingdom of God which superseded or surpassed any of the former notions and dreams of the Hebrews.

Jesus' message of the kingdom of God is all about living in God's grace, a citizenship which requires living out this grace in love and forgiveness through charity, justice, compassion, reconciliation, and peace. We are the citizens and ambassadors to this special kind of spiritual kingdom.

The kingdom of God is not that which the world may readily recognize since its manifestation may at first seem to be very small and insignificant. It may be just a glimmer or spark within a person's life or within the lives of one or two people among the masses of humanity. But, just as the tiny mustard seed grows into a large shrub so can that spark of God's grace grow into a changed life, a committed group of people, and even a new societal direction. At first, this process maybe as uneventful as the simple task of placing yeast or a small piece of leaven into a dough mixture. As we all know, that yeast or that small remnant of leavened leftover dramatically changes not only the chemistry of the dough but also changes its very nature. This change gives the dough a new life and the result is bread.

You only have to look back to one person among the masses throughout history to see an example of this among humankind. One person infiltrated the life of mankind and changed the course of history. This one being introduced the kingdom of God to a relatively small band of men and women. Within a brief period of time this kingdom of God came alive, exploded so to speak, and infiltrated and changed the greatest empire known up until that time, the Roman Empire. All of this started through the brief life and ministry of a carpenter, be it a very special carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth.

The kingdom of God grew because, unlike Camelot, it fulfills the very hopes, dreams, aspirations and basic needs of the individual. On the other hand, like Camelot, it is lived out in very personal ways and demands a sacrifice in order to find its rich rewards. Any kingdom or nation of any worth and sustainability requires some kind of sacrifice by its citizens in order to maintain the reality of reaching common goals and dreams. In a very real sense, sacrifice becomes the involvement which is necessary for a growing continuation of life. It is necessary in order to have goals and dreams realized. This is particularly essential for us as we face the

circumstances of today. It is through sacrifice that we will be able to overcome all the adversities of today and realize the potential we have as a society.

This was the point of Jesus' parables of the hidden treasure and the prized pearl. In order for the manifestations or fruits of the kingdom of God to become a reality in our lives and in the world in which we live, we need to sacrifice the dreams of our imaginary, worldly Camelot. Those dreams must yield to the new life of the spiritual kingdom which brings eternal rewards. This then becomes our new Camelot through which the intangibles of the spiritual life will be lived out in a very tangible way. The kingdom of God then is not just some kind of mythical state of being but will come alive and be a reality through our lives.

Therefore, the Camelot of our dreams, when it takes the form of the kingdom of God, is not a fantasy. It is not *"That once there was a spot for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot."* No, in the kingdom of God the shining moment begins in the here and now and lives forever. That is our Camelot.

Anthem: Abba, ["I Have a Dream"](#)

Offering

We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Father of us all, we are experiencing troubled times during which we face issues that seem insurmountable. Help us clear our minds so that we may see the truth through all the clouds of despair, uncertainty, and deception. Let us find the wisdom to see and then live your love in order to find new life in the future. Continue to give strength and health to all care givers during this pandemic. Comfort those who have lost loved ones as a result of the corona virus. Bring healing to all who are physically and economically struggling during this time of suffering.

We continue to pray for those who have been overtaken by the corona virus and those who are caring for them in their desperate time. Help us be sensitive to all those who are suffering at this time and work towards alleviating their pain.

We pray for all whole need your comforting and healing presence especially Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Blest Be the Tie That Binds"](#)

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
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Ellicott City, MD 21042

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