

The Lord of All
Revelation 1:4b-8

November 26, 2006
Dr. J. Howard Olds

The sermon today is captured in a little chorus we often sing. It's printed on the back of your bulletin. Will you sing it with me?

He is Lord! He is Lord!
He is risen from the dead and He is Lord!
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.

It's Christ the King Sunday, a day to celebrate Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. As John the Apostle says:

CHRIST IS LORD OF THE EARTH.

The Bible opens with these words, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" The Bible ends by saying, "*I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the dwelling place of God is with people.*"

In spite of all the arguments and political debates of our time, according to a Newsweek Magazine survey in 2005, eighty percent of American adults and eighty-one percent of American teenagers believe God created the universe.

The Psalmist said, "*The earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it.*" Here in Revelation we discover that God not only made the place, He put Jesus in charge of running the place. "*Christ is ruler of the kings of the earth*" (Verse 5). When Jesus was brought before Pilate in the kangaroo court which sentenced Him to death, Pilate asked Jesus, "*Are you the King of the Jews?*" Jesus replied, "*Did you come up with that on your own or have others been talking with you?*" Then Jesus said this: "*I'm not the kind of king you think I am. If so, my followers would be fighting for my release.*"

While people are shuffling for power, prestige, and wealth, Jesus reigns. Maybe Christ and Christ alone can turn the tides of terrorism, poverty, and disease that plague our world. Christ is King.

Here is the truth. If Christ is King, we don't need to be. We don't need to run the world. We need to bow in adoration to the One who does. Did you hear the old joke about Bruce Pearl, Kevin Stallings and Rick Pitino who all showed up at the Throne of God? The Lord said to Bruce Pearl, "*It's so good to see you. You've done such great things for Tennessee basketball, come sit on my right hand.*" When Kevin Stallings arrived at the Throne of God, the Lord said, "*Kevin, you've been a blessing to Vanderbilt basketball, come sit on my left hand.*" Rick Pitino arrived a short time later; he took a long look at Pearl on God's right hand and Stallings on God's left hand and then said, "God, would you mind getting up, I believe you are sitting in my chair." If you let God be God and Christ be King, you don't always have to be moving God out of His place. It is a happy day in

anyone's life when we find the courage to crown Christ the Lord of all.

CHRIST IS LORD OF LIFE.

Jesus said, *"I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly"* (John 10:10). We are not congealed stardust, an accidental by-product of cosmic chemistry. We are not just something, we are someone.

A teacher asked her students to list the Seven Wonders of the World. Most responded with an expected list of the Pyramids of Egypt, the Grand Canyon, the Panama Canal, St. Peter's Basilica, China's Great Wall, except for one little girl who was having trouble with her list. "There are so many, I can't just pick out seven," she lamented. "Well read me your list," requested the teacher. The little girl replied, "To see, to hear, to touch, to taste, to feel, to laugh and to love." Are these not the wonders of the world really, the wonder of life and community together?

When I count my blessings at Thanksgiving, I don't thank God for my bank account which never seems to be enough, food of which I always eat too much, the place I live which is more than most of the world can dream of. When I count my blessings, I thank God for the gift of life. If I fail to live, all other gifts are useless.

Actor Jim Carrey said, "I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see it's not the answer to life." I suppose most of us would like to take Jim up on that offer. But, down deep, we know better. We are always looking for the best, not knowing that the best is now, this shining sliver of time that God has entrusted to you and me. He is the ruler of life and Jesus has something to do about that because He redeems life in such a way that it makes it worth living. Christ came that we could live life—full of love, free of sin, consumed by a purpose bigger than ourselves.

John said, *"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father to him be glory and power forever."* To Him, you know who fills us with love and frees us from sin and gives us a purpose larger than ourselves. Oh, yes, that is life and we are invited to live life, not in shame or guilt or bitterness, we are invited to live life in all of its abundance. You will know life to the fullest when you crown Christ King of your life.

CHRIST IS LORD OF DEATH.

Christ is the firstborn of the dead. If God has the power to raise Jesus from the dead, there is hope for you and me.

Every once in a while someone asks me, "Are you afraid to die?" I've pondered that question more than most of you and I can honestly say, "No." Why should I be? Yes, I am afraid of suffering; I am fearful of weakness; I am afraid of humiliation; but I am not afraid of death. You see I believe in the words in John 14, *"Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many abiding places, if it were not so, I would have told you and I go to prepare a place for you that where I am, there you may be, also."*

My Savior has gone before me, the Firstborn from the dead. I believe He has prepared a place for me, that where He is, there I shall be also.

That hope redeems my fear of suffering—for He suffered too.
That hope redeems my fear of weakness—when I am weak, I am strong.
That hope redeems my fear of humiliation. He endured the Cross, so I'll take my cross and follow close to Him.

The greatest freedom we enjoy is not freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, but our greatest freedom is freedom over death. When you are free to die, you are genuinely free to live.

Our lives are in God's hands. Paul said, "*Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord.*" John Wesley put it this way on his death bed, "Best of all, God is with us." Emily Dickinson said, "Let's go on in, the fog is rising." Peter Pan said, "Death is going to be an awfully big adventure."

CHRIST IS LORD OF ETERNITY.

"*Look, he is coming with the clouds and everyone will see him*" (Verse 7). Pessimists say, "Look out." Optimists say, "Look around." Psychologists say, "Look within." John says, "Look up, look up all the way up, until you catch a glimpse of Christ in charge of eternity."

Sandy and I enjoyed a quiet Thanksgiving. We did go out to Opryland to see the Rocketts. I enjoy the precision dancing, the toy soldiers, the rag dolls, but none of that was really why I wanted to go. I wanted to go to see again the Nativity scene and hear the story of the One Solitary Life. As December dawns upon us, I need to be reminded, it's not about black Friday, or White Christmas, or even about church services; it's about Jesus Christ. For you and me sitting in this room of faith, it is Christmas. We ought to be respectful of everyone else in the world, but for you and me it is the mass of Christ, it is Christmas, the celebration of His birth.

He was raised in an obscure village.
He worked in a carpenter shop.
At age thirty, He became an itinerant preacher.
He never wrote a book.
He never held an office.
He never owned a home.
Soldiers gambled for his only possession—a coat.
He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

But all the armies that ever marched,
All the navies that ever sailed,
All the Parliaments that ever sat,
All the kings that ever reigned put together,
Have not affected the life of humans as powerfully as that
One Solitary Life.

Today I want to be reminded that He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. Today I need to know that of His Kingdom, there shall be no end. Today I need to be assured that He shall reign forever and ever, forever and ever, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Amen.

Is He the King of your life? He wants to be! Amen.